



WOODNIG NEWS

Newsletter
of the
Woodworking
National Interest Group

Issue 29

October 2007

New Woodworking Information Sheets

Welcome to our latest edition of *WOODNIG NEWS*. This newsletter aims to help keep you up to date with what is happening in health and safety in woodworking and to let you know about HSE plans for your industry. This edition will be the last one in hard copy and we will in future be using the woodworking web pages (see back cover) to keep you informed of developments relevant to the industry.

Included with this edition are the four latest publications in our Woodworking Information Sheet (WIS) series:

- WIS4 *Noise reduction at band re-saws;*
- WIS6 *COSHH and the woodworking industries;*
- WIS13 *Noise at woodworking machines;*
- WIS40 *Safe use of four-sided moulding machines.*

WIS4, WIS6 and WIS13 are revised and updated versions of existing sheets, while WIS40 is being published for the first time. If you would like more copies of these, or other publications, see the back page of this newsletter for contact details.

The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

In July, this new Act received the Royal Assent and will come into force on 6 April 2008. It sets out a new offence that allows a corporate body to be prosecuted where there is a gross failing by an organisation's senior manager(s) to take reasonable care for the safety of their employees or members of the public, which causes a death.

The Ministry of Justice is hoping to release advice about the Act this autumn.

New faces

Since our last *WOODNIG NEWS* there have been personnel changes in the section dealing with woodworking within HSE's Manufacturing Sector.

Alan Scobbie left HSE last year and his post has been filled by Brian Coggans. Brian moved from the section that deals with the food industry where he had been for five years. Before that he was an inspector specialising in the engineering industry. He is looking forward to the challenges of his new role.

If you need to get in touch with Brian, he is based at the Glasgow office and his contact details are:

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Tel: 0141 275 3040
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AUCTION SALES

HSE is advising people who buy second-hand machinery from auctions of the possible dangers. This warning has been added to the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk/woodworking/auction.htm.

There are lots of bargains to be had at auctions. If you look around you will find that woodworking machinery can even be bought on internet auction sites like eBay at what look like knock-down prices. If you are tempted to bid for a 'bargain' machine at an auction sale or on the internet be very careful. What you thought was going to be a cheap deal could turn out to be very expensive indeed. You might have to fit extra guards or braking.

Before you can use the machine you have to be sure it is safe and complies with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER 98). You owe it to yourself and your employees to get this right.

If you buy used machinery it has to have the same safeguards as if it was new. If the seller doesn't bring it up to standard, then you could be stuck with a very large bill to put things right.

Here are some of the questions you need to ask before buying:

- Is the machine complete with all its guards and safety devices?
- Does it meet the standards required by PUWER 98?
- Is it fitted with a brake that stops it in 10 seconds or less?

- Will it need new limited projection cutter tooling?
- Can it run at the right speeds for modern tooling?
- Is there a manufacturer's handbook?
- What is its service record?

Once you have the machine in your workshop it is your responsibility to make sure it complies with the law. If an inspector visits and finds a machine that doesn't comply, you could be faced with a notice that stops you using it until it is put right or, ultimately, with prosecution for using unsafe and illegal equipment. And even if the machine does comply, you could still have a hefty bill if it needs parts and servicing.

You won't get a guarantee and you won't get a refund if things go wrong, so it is really important that you find out about the machine first. Ask the seller if the machine complies with PUWER 98. If it doesn't or if they don't know, you could be buying trouble.

Second-hand machinery is available that you can be sure complies with the law. Reputable dealers, including those who are members of the Woodworking Machinery Suppliers Association (WMSA), will be happy to give you the assurance that the machine you buy is up to the right safety standards.

You can check on woodworking machinery standards by looking at the guidance in the Approved Code of Practice L114 *Safe use of woodworking machinery* ISBN 978 0 7176 1630 5.

Time to clear the air!

This is the slogan of HSE's Respiratory Disease Programme and this year we are planning to make the woodworking industry the focus of a campaign to increase the use and effectiveness of local extraction ventilation (LEV) in woodworking premises.

The aim of the project is to influence LEV suppliers to design and install better systems and to help the industry buy better systems and keep them well maintained. To do this HSE will be producing technical guidance for designers and suppliers and clear guidance for employers on buying and using LEV. Publication is planned to coincide with World Asthma Day in May 2008.

During 2004 HSE carried out a large study of the industry and found that 27% of the workers in the sample had

exposures over the Maximum Exposure Limit. LEV was often found to be ineffective with typical faults being:

- holes in filter bags and splits in ducting;
- capture hoods too far from the source of dust;
- poor balance of extraction between machines.

HSE inspectors will be playing an important role in getting improvements during their site inspections. The key messages are:

- Make sure your LEV is designed properly – ask the right questions.
- Keep your LEV in good working order – don't forget the 14-monthly inspections.
- Make sure the system is used properly.

HSE Noise-control programme 2007-2008

HSE has launched an inspection programme on control of noise. During the year inspectors will visit woodworking premises and will expect to see evidence that noise risks have been eliminated or reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable.

Where noise risks remain, inspectors will be looking for evidence that the risks are being well managed and that suitable health surveillance is in place. Remember, hearing protection is normally the last line of defence – where possible, it is always better to control noise at source.

To help you manage noise in your workplace HSE has launched a website providing detailed information on good practice with links to further advice, examples and guidance. Visit www.hse.gov.uk/noise/index.htm to find out more about established good practice for managing noise risks in your sector. Two of the revised information sheets enclosed with this newsletter (WIS4 and WIS13) also deal with noise in woodworking.

BETTER BACKS CAMPAIGN

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are the most common form of ill-health disorders at work in the UK and across Europe. One million are affected every year in Great Britain alone.

Problems include back pain, neck and upper and lower-limb disorders and repetitive strain injuries.

The aim of HSE's 'Better Backs' campaign is to help employers prevent MSDs. They will be encouraged to:

- prevent manual handling and MSD injuries through sensible precautions;
- promote the benefits of staying active with back pain, which is often the best therapy;
- prompt people with back pain to try and get back into normal activity.

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

With slips and trips and falls injuries remaining stubbornly high, HSE has decided to run a new publicity campaign in February-March 2008. The campaign will focus on slips, trips and falls, and will run in national newspapers, commercial radio and the web. There will be a co-ordinated effort in 2008 by HSE's field inspectors to develop and extend the effect of the campaign.

Annual statistics booklet

On 1 November, the annual statistics from the Health and Safety Executive and Health and Safety Commission on workplace health, safety and enforcement will be released. This includes a pocket booklet which provides headline figures and messages and also sets out progress against HSE targets for reducing ill health and injury in the workplace. The booklet will be available on the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk.

FATAL ACCIDENTS

Sadly, there have been several fatal accidents in the industry over the past year.

In October last year a 59-year-old man died after exposure to DCM (dichloromethane) from a stripping tank. In November, a 17-year-old apprentice was killed when sheets of wood from racking fell on top of him and a 60-year-old man died in January after being struck by a pack of timber being loaded into racks by a sideloader.

In the last few months there have been two fatalities during on-site unloading of timber components for the construction industry. With foresight and an understanding of the obvious hazards, action could have been taken to avoid all these tragic accidents.

Wood Action Group

HSE now meets representatives of the woodworking industry trade associations to liaise with them about the challenges they face, to get their help in bringing HSE's message to their members and to map out a strategy for improving health and safety standards.

Meetings are two or three times a year and the current membership includes:

British Woodworking Federation
Furniture Industry Research Association
Timber Trade Federation
National Association of Shopfitters
Woodworking Machinery Suppliers Association
Construction Industry Training Board
Timber, Packaging and Pallet Confederation
UK Woodchain
British Furniture Manufacturers
Trussed Rafter Association
UK Forest Products Association

If you think you would like to be a part of this forum or would like to be included in our circulation list please let us know.

HSE's woodworking web pages

Don't forget to check out HSE's woodworking web pages. Information specific to the woodworking industry is available in one place, with links to a range of other relevant web pages. Free guidance is available to download. Visit the site at www.hse.gov.uk/woodworking/index.htm. We are always trying to make it better, so please let us have your thoughts on how we can improve it – you can e-mail Brian Coggans at brian.coggans@hse.gsi.gov.uk.

• YOUR VIEWS • YOUR VIEWS • YOUR VIEWS • YOUR VIEWS •

What do you think of **WOODNIG NEWS**?
What would you like to see in future online editions?
Send your views to Brian Coggans.

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NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM HSE

Details of recently produced HSE publications which may be of interest to the woodworking industry are listed below.

Welfare at work: Guidance for employers on welfare provisions Leaflet INDG293(rev1) HSE Books 2007 (single copy free or priced packs of 20) ISBN 978 0 7176 6264 7) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg293.htm

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended): A brief guide Leaflet INDG401(rev1) HSE Books 2007 (single copy free or priced packs of 10) ISBN 978 0 7176 6231 9) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf

Further information

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from HSE Books,

PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA

Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995

Website: www.hsebooks.co.uk

(HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk.)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's

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