

Safetyline 49

H & S UPDATE JANUARY 2005

Safe and Healthy Working, a Scottish initiative for SME's has launched a free on-line tool to tackle **workplace health and safety risks**. The e-learning journey takes a trainee through a virtual office environment that includes a reception, manager' office, filing room and kitchen. The trainee has to identify the different office hazards and can access information and advice about the control measures required. An accompanying guide acts as a useful resource throughout as well as future reference material. You can find it on www.sahw.co.uk/office-hazards.cfm.

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*The Electrical Contractors Association has published guidance on **safe use of ladders and stepladders**, with support from HSE and it is free to download on [www.eca.co.uk/files/hs/](http://www.eca.co.uk/files/hs/)*

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A leaked Government report from Britain's top medical scientists shows the extent of the health damage caused by breathing in **second-hand smoke**. The Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health reveals that exposure to second-hand smoke can lead to a significantly increased risk of lung cancer and ischaemic heart disease. The report concludes second-hand smoke represents a "substantial public health hazard".

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*The European Agency for Health and safety at Work has published a **report on safety and young people**, which states that the majority of most adolescents enter the job market with little knowledge of risks. The 152 page report gives over 30 examples of how EU countries have integrated occupational safety and health into different levels of their education systems. The report can be found at <http://agency.osha.eu.int/publications/reports/313/en/index.htm>*

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TNT Logistics and W H Smith have been fined after the driver of a delivery lorry lost part of a finger in an unsafe practice involving a forklift truck. The accident occurred while the driver and a W H Smith employee were using the forklift to try to remove the pole supporting the canvas side of the load compartment, in order to remove a pallet. The man's finger got trapped while trying to remove the locking pin of the pole using the forklift to "assist". The Local Authority enforcing officer commented "When a company visits your workplace, you have a **duty to monitor the work practices of companies on your site**. Both companies have to co-operate and co-ordinate safety activities."

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*A reminder to those of you who have installed **oxygen deficiency monitors** where using compressed gases and cryogenes, the sensors need replacing on a 12 month basis to ensure the equipment is functioning correctly and give confidence that the environment is breathable. The sensors fail "safe", i.e. they will go into alarm condition and can only be silenced following the replacement of the sensor. Electrical disconnection of the unit will silence the alarm, but is illegal if significant quantities of gas or cryogen are present, and places workers at risk.*

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You may not have spotted it in the Queen's Speech, but the Government intend to introduce a Road Safety Bill which would introduce extra penalties, such as penalty points, for motorists using **mobile phones** and allow courts to order "bad drivers" to undergo training.

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The total number of people in the University undertaking **fire training** during 2004 fell by around 10% from the numbers achieved in 2003, and reverses what had been a steadily improving trend for the last 7 years. The reduction of around 350 over the year takes into account the fact that around 30% of those doing fire training do the on-line version. Let's see if we can do better in 2005.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL