

Safetyline 91

H & S UPDATE JULY 2008

A report in the Daily Mail on 27th May states that the **Asian Tiger Mosquito** has been detected across many European countries including Germany, France and the Netherlands, and Britain could be next. It's larger than most mosquitoes at around 10mm in length and it can lay eggs in very small volumes of stagnant water. In other countries its presence has been linked to a host of potentially nasty diseases including Chikungunya. In other countries it has also been known to transmit West Nile virus and Dengue fever, both of which can prove fatal.

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*A recent court case has highlighted the **importance of training people to use ladders and stepladders safely**. A 73 year old school caretaker is currently suing his employer for failing to train him how to use a stepladder safely despite acknowledging he has been using stepladders for 30 years in previous jobs. He fell off the ladder while removing cards and staples from a wall, fracturing his skull, breaking a cheekbone and damaging a kidney. He says he was never told it was unsafe to place ladders side-on to a wall he was working on, the position it was in when he fell. When he started at the school in October 2002 he received induction training from the Caretaker Support Officer and admitted that he had been told about ladder safety. He is claiming damages of at least £15,000 and up to £50,000.*

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People who injure themselves during **hazardous sporting activities** can blame no one but themselves, the Appeal Court has ruled. The judgment, which could help protect the leisure industry from future litigation, came in a case in which a young man "with everything to live for" was left paralysed after falling from a climbing wall. Lord Justice May sitting with Lord Justice Richards and Sir Paul Kennedy, said: "Adults who choose to engage in physical activities which obviously give rise to a degree of unavoidable risk may find that they have no means of recompense if the risk materialises so that they are injured. These individuals who freely use artificial ski slopes, climbing areas, riding schools and adventure playgrounds are responsible for their own safety cannot expect those who simply provided the facility to supervise and guard them against the consequences of their own stupidity. To do otherwise would be 'nanny state.'"

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*Eat **breakfast** like a King, lunch like a Queen and dinner like a Pauper; the old saying goes, but it's not always possible to live like this. For many breakfast is often grabbing a piece of toast whilst flying out the door. In what way does skipping the most important meal of the day affect us? See <http://obesity.battlingforhealth.com/2007/06/stop-skipping-breakfast-if-you-dont-want-to-be-fat/>*

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The new **REACH Regulations** came into force in April, requiring suppliers of substances to provide information to their customers on the foreseeable uses of the substances provided and to indicate to their customers how to minimise the risks of exposure to harmful effects in addition to the traditional MSDS data.. As "end-users" our responsibility is to check that the ways we use the substances supplied are covered by the scenarios provided by the supplier, and if so we should adopt the proposed control measures or equivalent measures. If our usage differs significantly from the scenarios identified by the supplier, then we are required to inform the supplier of our specific usage and ask that they develop a scenario that covers our usage. There's no obligation on suppliers to develop scenarios to suit their customers, so they could refuse to do so and stop supplying us with the substance. Should this occur, the next step is to contact other suppliers and ask whether their scenarios cover our use, and if they do we would be able to purchase the substance from the alternative supplier. Relevant extracts for "end-users" have been taken from the "Downstream User Guide" produced by the HSE, and can be found at <http://safety.dept.shef.ac.uk/guidance/REACH.pdf>. In addition, the HSE have a REACH website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/reach/> which gives more information. If, you produce substances to supply to others, you will need to read the full "Downstream User Guide" to ensure you meet your legal requirements and you may need to register your substance with the appropriate body.