

LES news

Lorien awarded 3rd Order of Distinction from RoSPA

Lorien Engineering Solutions have been awarded a third "Order Of Distinction" from RoSPA

Awarded for performance in Occupational Health & Safety in Construction, the 'Order Of Distinction' is presented to Companies with at least 15 years of Gold Medal performance standard. 2009 sees Lorien claim its 3rd such award, following another year of outstanding health and safety performance, and further development of its' core safety system.

LES Director Bill Treddenick comments, "The Company is very proud of gaining this award as it demonstrates our performance and our growth in this area. The award is intended to recognise a company's accident record, but also how the business is developing its' systems and people. In 2008/9 we have had a further four staff complete NEBOSH courses, with another six colleagues undertaking the ECITB site safety management course (providing them IOSH Managing Safely certificates).

We're also very fortunate to be able to work with clients who take safety seriously. They understand the need for competence, and present us with interesting and challenging projects. More than ever this year we are seeing our clients request Lorien to take on the CDM coordinator and principal contractor roles on projects."

The award was made at the Hilton Metropole hotel in Birmingham on 14th May.

Court Case

Machinery removal death leads to £100,000 in fines ¹

The boss of a Carlisle firm has been fined £100,000 after one of his workers was crushed to death by a piece of heavy machinery.

The accident occurred as two employees of Auto Recoveries were moving a five-tonne press brake - designed to bend metal - using a jack and rollers.

As the machine was jacked up and the rollers were being removed, it rocked and tipped over, trapping the employee underneath. Paramedics were called but the man had died by the time they arrived.

George Robertson Graham, the senior partner at Auto Recoveries, of Willowholme industrial estate, was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay £20,000 costs at Carlisle Crown Court after admitting failing to carry out an adequate risk assessment or having a safe system of work in place.

An inspection of the site found that the press was significantly "top heavy" and that the system of work for moving the press was not safe.

Health and Safety Executive inspector Steve Smith said: "A man has tragically lost his life here and what's particularly sad about this is that the incident could have been prevented if the employer had ensured a safe system of work had been in place."

¹ © The Press Association / IOSH 29th April 2009

Following the spread of swine flu, and the WHO raising the threat level to stage 4, the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), the world’s largest body for health and safety professionals, is calling on employers to step up their preparations for a possible pandemic flu outbreak.

Nattasha Freeman, the President of IOSH, said that a possible pandemic was something businesses needed to prepare for now, not once it is happening closer to home.

Employers with workers at particular risk of exposure (e.g. healthcare workers) are advised to follow specific HSE guidance. However, there are some steps all organisations can take that will help to protect them and their staff if a pandemic strikes. IOSH is advising companies to consider the following 10 points:

1. Have a plan – you will probably only get two weeks notice of the start of a pandemic - but this only gives you time to communicate your policy, not to start thinking about it.
2. Identify what tasks are essential to your core business and key staff – think about how you can cover these jobs safely during the pandemic. Training for some staff may be necessary. You should also identify employees with existing chronic medical conditions like asthma, who are more likely to be severely affected.
3. Review personnel policies and reduce bureaucracy – employees who are ill or think they are ill need to be encouraged to stay at home and to seek medical advice.
4. Encourage flexible working practices – this might mean encouraging people to work from home or flexible hours to enable employees to look after ill dependents, look after children if schools are closed and to reduce the time spent on public transport, where there is more chance of being infected.
5. Consider suppliers and sub contractors – ensure they have continuity measures in place and are aware of your plan.
6. Review your cleaning contract – maintaining a high level of hygiene in the workplace is important. Consider disinfecting door handles and telephones and providing anti-bacterial hand gel for staff and visitors to use.
7. Encourage employees to take personal responsibility to protect themselves – encourage hand washing, wearing gloves on public transport, disposing of tissues so that cleaners don’t come into contact with them and covering nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
8. Consider cancelling conferences or meetings - why not hold video conferences or online meetings instead?
9. If you decide to go ahead with an event, use a risk assessment to identify the precautions that can be taken to minimise the spread of infection – this might include cleaning the room and ensuring it is well ventilated, providing good hand washing facilities and trying to avoid people queuing at entrances or in catering areas.
10. Keep in touch with government advice.

<http://www.iosh.co.uk/index.cfm?go=news.release&id=626>

² IOSH Connect, 4th May 2009

13.5 million working days are lost each year in the UK, costing £530 million.

Not all stress is bad for you, as without a certain degree of stress we would find ourselves a lot less motivated and less likely to achieve our goals or get much work done at all. Sometimes it feels good to have an adrenalin surge and feel our hearts beat a little faster when we are busy, challenged or have problems to solve and for most of us this is healthy. But when stress levels rise too much, this can have the opposite effect on our ability to function.

Launching the HSE's revised Stress Management Standards recently, Peter Brown, head of the HSE's health and work division, said: "Pressure is part and parcel of all work and helps to keep us motivated, but excessive pressure can lead to stress which undermines performance, is costly to employers and can make people ill".

A new website has been launched to help businesses prevent work related stress. The site breaks down the management standards into individual roles and highlights the responsibilities associated with each role. www.hse.gov.uk/stress

The Stress Management Standards cover six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. The six areas are:

- **Demands** – such as workload, work patterns and the work environment
- **Control** – such as how much say an employee has in the way they do their work
- **Support** – such as encouragement sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- **Role** – such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
- **Change** – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation
- **Relationships** – including promoting positive working to avoid conflicts

Many people manage stressful episodes very productively and safely, however, if the stress level is high and continuous, stress can have a serious effect on a person's physical health and in some cases can contribute to serious illness. A huge amount of research in this area has been undertaken and it is now known that high stress levels can contribute to work-related injuries, back pain, sexual dysfunction, illness related to your immune system, long-term psychological disorders, and heart disease.

Identifying what is causing your stress is vital in making the first steps towards combating it. If your work is making you stressed try and pinpoint exactly what aspect of it is causing the problem and speak to your line manager, human resources department or union rep. Try and work together to resolve the problem, undertaking additional training if needed. Take some time out if necessary or look at altering your duties and responsibilities to take away some of the pressure.

³ The RoSPA Occupational Safety & Health Journal May 2009