Welcome to the October Edition of BSG Training News

As a delegate at one of our courses in the past, or someone who organises the training for your company, our training newsletter keeps you up to date with our future training course schedule and special offers as well as the new courses we are now able to offer.

This month our focus is on our Asbestos Awareness course. What it is, whose it’s for and how to put it into practice effectively.

Find further information on page 4.

About BSG
The Building Safety Group (BSG) offer a wide range of high quality, low cost, accredited health and safety training courses covering a range of subject areas. We run regular courses at our training centre in Bristol, as well as Exeter, Stoke on Trent and Leicester.

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Download our 2014 training schedules for Bristol, Exeter and Stoke on Trent and Leicester courses
www.bsgltd.co.uk/training-courses.html

Spotlight on our asbestos Awareness course—find out more on page 4.

Need a course in a location closer to you?
If you have a group of 6 or more employees requiring training, we offer all of our courses on a private basis. Held at a venue of your choice on a date that suits you, we can tailor the course to meet your needs and requirements. Contact us and find out more.

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Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: The facts

One of the biggest health risks amongst construction workers is respiratory problems: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a major cause of disability and death.

The term COPD describes a number of breathing problems where there is damage to the breathing tubes and air sacs within the lung. The HSE estimates that roughly 600-1,000 people die from work-related respirable silica (RCS exposure every year.

15% of COPD is likely to be work related

There are two ways you can look at what causes COPD in the workplace, occupations where COPD is most common and substances that can cause COPD.

Breathing in certain dusts, fumes, chemicals or gases in the workplace can cause serious long term lung damage.

Silicosis is a major disease risk from RCS dust. It causes small hard nodules of scar tissue to develop in the lungs that are seen on a chest x-ray. Silicosis usually takes some years to develop. There is also an acute form of silicosis that occurs at very high exposures. This can start within a short time and can kill within a few months of first exposure. The main symptoms are cough and difficulty in breathing. Workers with silicosis are at increased risk of tuberculosis and lung cancer and may also develop kidney disease and arthritis and related diseases. Those who work with silica may be at increased risk of some of those diseases even if they do not develop silicosis.

Occupational asthma is an allergic reaction that occurs in some people when they are exposed to substances in the workplace, eg wood dust. These substances are called “respiratory sensitisers” or asthmagens. They can cause a change in people’s airways, known as the “hypersensitive state”. Not everyone who becomes sensitised goes on to develop asthma, but once the lungs become hypersensitive, further exposure to substance, even at quite low levels, may trigger an attack.

Work-related asthma can be triggered by exposure to substances in the workplace. Individuals with asthma are more likely to be sensitive to these respiratory sensitisers.

There is a clear requirement for employees under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) for employers to assess and control the risks from exposure to any substance including stone dust. Under the COSHH Regulations various standards for airborne dust are implemented. They are listed in terms of milligrams of dust per cubic metre of air (mg/m3).

There is a system of occupational exposure limits (MELs) in the UK.

Four steps for successful dust control are recommended by the HSE which ask the following questions:

Step 1: Is overexposure likely? If so, by how much and what's causing it?
Step 2: What are the control options available and how effective are they?
Step 3: What blend of control options will be adequate and sustainable?
Step 4: What monitoring, checking and maintenance are needed to make sure that the control measures continue to work.

There are three main factors that need to be considered when carrying out what is in effect a risk assessment

Who: What occupations are at risk from exposure to dusts?
Where: What environments are they working in?
What: What dusts are being created?

Occupations: all construction site workers are at risk as everyone working on a construction site may be exposed to dusts, fumes, chemicals or gases being used or created by others.

Substances: there is a huge amount of substances being used and created in the construction process and it is the duty of everyone working on a site to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that exposure to any of these substances is kept to an absolute minimum.

Breathing in certain dusts, fumes, chemical or gases in the workplace can cause serious long term lung damage Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS).

Construction work involving cutting or breaking stone, concrete or brick, abrasive blasting and tunnelling create large amounts of RCS dust. Although it arises in obviously dusty
environments, RCS dust is invisibly fine. Exposure must be kept below the airborne Workplace Exposure Limit (WEI) for respirable crystalline silica of 0.1 mg/m³ over an 8-hour Time Weighted Average (TWA). It is breathed in through the nose and mouth and can stay in the lungs for many years. It can cause irreversible lung damage before any symptoms develop. The illness it causes may continue to worsen even after exposure stops.

Employers should consider undertaking health surveillance if workers are exposed to RCS dust. Health surveillance is collecting and using information about workers’ health, related to their work. The early detection of breathing problems or lung damage could signify a need to protect workers’ health by reducing exposure to dust. Assessing a workers’ respiratory health before they start a relevant job, using a questionnaire to provide a baseline is a useful starting point for occupational health surveillance. If the risk is exposure is low, further health surveillance (involving an x-ray and symptom enquiry) may be unnecessary but where there is a reasonable likelihood of silicosis developing health surveillance is necessary. Employers need to consider, in discussion with a health professional, the risk of silicosis or tuberculosis developing due to RCS and decide what health surveillance is appropriate. Health surveillance is never an alternative to the proper control of exposure.

Water suppression is the first line of defence. All modern cut-off saws have an attachment for a water hose. The water can be supplied from a mains feed (the best option) or a pressurised water bottle. A minimum flow rate of 0.5 litres per minute is recommended to damp down dust effectively.

The method of Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) is suitable for all handheld cut off saws including electric ones. It uses the saw’s guard to act as a dust-collecting hood. The guard is connected to an industrial vacuum cleaner which provides sufficient exhaust ventilation to capture the majority of dust emitted during the cutting operation. Guards with adjustable inner sleeves are preferable. These maximise enclosure of the blade and can be adjusted to accommodate different depths of cut. This system does not produce the wet slurry associated with wet dust suppression. To prevent the recirculation of harmful dust, vacuums should be fitted with an H Class 13 HEPA filter to EN60335-1. Even with water suppression, or LEV working effectively if it is necessary to wear suitable Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE). Nuisance-grade dust masks do not protect lungs. Only masks with an assigned protection factor of 20 are suitable, either FFP3 filtering facepieces or orinasal respirators with P3 filters are considered adequate to meet the requirements of COSHH when carrying out tasks that create RCS. All operatives involved in the operation creating RCS must have a face-fit test for a tight-fitting respirator and to ensure it fits properly, operatives need to be clean shaven for this tight fit type of respirator to work effectively.

Although the control of RCS has been the main HSE focus it should be also remembered that wood dust can cause serious health problems. It can cause asthma, which carpenters and joiners are four times more likely to get compared with other UK workers. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 has the same requirement to protect workers from the hazards of wood dust. Hardwood dust can cause cancer, particularly of the nose. Settled dust contains the fine particles that are most likely to damage the lungs.

Both hardwood and softwood dusts have a Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) of 5mg/m³ which must not be exceeded. These are limits placed on the amount of dust in the air, averaged over an eight-hour working day. However, the requirement to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that exposure is kept to an absolute minimum still applies. Because wood dust causes asthma any health effects must be picked up early.

This can be done using health surveillance, for most woods, low
level health surveillance will do. When someone first starts in a job where they are exposed to wood dust they should fill in a questionnaire. After six weeks they should then complete a follow-up questionnaire and this should be repeated every year. These questionnaires can effectively monitor any changes in symptoms. A higher level of health surveillance, including lung function testing, is needed for exposures to woods such as western red cedar which is a known asthmagen.

Where RPE is needed all operatives must have a face-fit test for tight-fitting respirator and to ensure it fits properly operatives need to be clean shaven for this tight fit type of respirator to work effectively.

This article was written and contributed by Chris Chapman, Technical Support Manager for The Building Safety Group.

Asbestos Awareness Course

About this course
The Asbestos Awareness course is aimed at operatives whose work could foreseeably expose them to asbestos, such as those who work in the maintenance and demolition industries, refurbishment and allied trades where their work might foreseeably disturb the fabric of the building, thus exposing Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs). The Asbestos Awareness course enables employers to meet their legal requirements under Regulation 10, of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

What will you learn?
The course is aimed at making the candidates aware of the dangers associated with unknowingly coming into contact with asbestos. It does NOT train you to work with asbestos containing materials.

The course will cover:
- The properties and types of asbestos and their effects on health and safety, including the increased risk of lung cancer for those that smoke.
- The uses and likely occurrence of asbestos and ACM’s in building and plant.
- The general procedures to be followed to deal with an emergency such as the uncontrolled release of asbestos dust into the workplace.
- How to avoid risks from asbestos.

How to book
Book your place by calling our training services team on 01454 41 4877 or email training@bsgttd.co.uk with your enquiry.

Course Rates
- BSG Members: £80+VAT per delegate
- Non-Members: £100+VAT per delegate

Course fees include course materials and certification.

Group bookings
If you have a group of 6 or more employees requiring training, we can run an Asbestos Awareness course on a private basis, at a venue of your choice on a date that suits you. We can tailor the course to meet your needs and requirements.

Rates (per half day course)
At your premises:
- BSG Members: £400+VAT
- Non-Members: £450+VAT

Plus mileages and overnight accommodation if necessary

At BSG Training Centre:
- BSG Members: £425+VAT
- Non-Members: £475+VAT

*Max. 14 delegates per course.
Latest Court Cases

Scaffolding boss jailed for worker death failings

The Eltham based owner of a Kent scaffolding business has been jailed for 15 months for safety failings after a worker plunged 14 metres to his death at a site in North West London.

The last conviction is the third that Mark Hayes trading as WSS Scaffolding has received for offences arising from the fatality of scaffolder Grant Dunmall at Linden Gardens in Notting Hill in 2012.

He was fined at two separate appearances at Westminster Magistrates’ Court in 2013 for offences relating to the non-disclosure of essential documents to support a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation.

When it was eventually supplied, the missing paperwork enabled HSE to conclude its enquiries, and highlighted that Mr Hayes could and should have done more to prevent the fall.

Southwark Crown Court was told that Mr Hayes from Eltham was responsible for a tower scaffold outside a domestic property. His employer, scaffolder Grant Dunmall was working on the structure when he fell, sustaining fatal injuries. After a three-day trial Mr Hayes was found guilty of a breach of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 for failing to properly plan, supervise and carry out the work at height in a safe manner at the Notting Hill site.

HSE established that edge protection was missing from the scaffold, and that Mr Dunmall wasn’t provided with any other means such as a fall arrest harness, to prevent or mitigate a fall.

Mr Hayes was found guilty after defending the case and sent to prison for 15 months for breaching the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

Last year, combined fines of £12,000 and costs of £5,601 were imposed on Mr Hayes after he admitted breaches of Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Employers’ Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969.

The breaches addressed Mr Hayes’ failure to provide legally-required documents relating to his management of work at height after he had earlier ignored a “notice to produce” served by HSE.

Basingstoke company in court after worker crushed

A Basingstoke engineering firm has been sentenced for safety breaches that led to a man being crushed between a telehandler and a steel post at a workshop in West Drayton.

He suffered life-threatening injuries when he was trapped by a machine against a post as he acted as a lookout for the vehicle. He had to have his spleen and most of his pancreas removed and was in hospital for four months after the incident. He has yet to return to work.

The incident, which was investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which prosecuted RVC Engineering Ltd for safety failings at Westminster Magistrates’ Court.

RVC Engineering Ltd, of Springpark House, Basingstoke, Hants was fined £6,600 and ordered to pay £1,087 in costs after admitting a breach of Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

After the hearing the HSE Inspector commented “Crush injuries are common from reversing vehicles in industry. RVC Engineering should have planned this operation carefully despite it being of a short duration and then ensured the whole thing was adequately supervised.
CDM 2015—The impact for construction companies

The Building Safety Group (BSG) will be running a series of seminars during November and December this year for professionals working in the construction industry who are concerned about the impact of new CDM 2015 regulations. Each seminar will address:

- The impact which new CDM regulations will have on companies operating in the construction industry
- Actions which should be taken to ensure that businesses remain compliant with the new regulations
- How companies should implement these actions to ensure they are prepared for CDM 2015

The seminars will take place on:

- 8.00 – 9.00am Wednesday 19th November 2014 in Bristol (FULL)
- 8.00 – 9.00am Thursday 20th November 2014 in Bristol (FULL)
- 12.30 – 1.30pm Wednesday 26th November 2014 in London
- 12.30 – 1.30pm Wednesday 3rd December in Glasgow

Additional dates and locations will be announced shortly for seminars taking place in other parts of the UK.

If you are concerned about the implications of CDM 2015 and would like to attend one of the seminars above, or would like more information about seminars that will run in other UK regions, please send your enquiry to marketing@bsgltd.co.uk and put BSG Seminar CDM 2015 in the subject heading.

Courses starting soon in Bristol

Need some training and fast? We have a few places remaining on a number of courses starting in October. Book now to secure your place. We also run courses in Exeter, Stoke on Trent and Leicester, please see BSG’s new website for more information.

- Site Supervisors Safety Training Scheme Refresher—15th October
- Site Environmental Awareness Training Scheme—17th October
- Site Managers Safety Training Scheme—20th October
- Site Supervisors Safety Training Scheme—22nd October
- Emergency First Aid—28th October

Book your place
Phone: 01454 414877   Email: training@bsgltd.co.uk