



News from



Award Health & Safety Ltd

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Merry Christmas Merry Christmas



*This is the last newsletter of 2009 from Award Health & Safety. We would like to wish to all our clients and friends a Merry Christmas and a very Happy, SAFE, & Prosperous New Year as they say in Polish *Wesolych Swiat & Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku 2010.**

We hope you will be able to rest and relax over the festive season and that you will return to work in the new year with recharged batteries ready to face the challenges to come. Once again Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from us at Award Health & Safety



The News Business Excellence Award's 2009

'Award Health & Safety Ltd has been shortlisted in the "Small Business of the Year" category and some chap called Chris Ward has been shortlisted in the "Business Achiever of the Year" category'

Since the first event in 2003 The News Business Excellence Awards night has grown into the biggest celebration of its kind on the South Coast. In January 2009 over 450 local business people gathered at Portsmouth Guildhall, generating an electric atmosphere as dozens of trophies were awarded.

The 2010 event takes place at The Guildhall on 28th of January and the short lists for all categories have been announced and Award Health & Safety Ltd has been nominated in the prestigious "Small Business of the Year" category. The night will give local companies the opportunity to promote their corporate services to new and existing clients, in relaxed and enjoyable surroundings in a venue packed with figures from the business community, dignitaries, reporters and photographers.

Would you use a ladder like this?

Missing rungs and bent sides - these are just a small selection of the 'dodgy' ladders that have been surrendered so far under this year's 'ladder exchange'.

The exchange, led by the Health and Safety Executive, closes its doors on 31 December, so time is running out for businesses to trade in their old, damaged or broken ladders for some new ones

Run in conjunction with retailers, manufacturers and trade associations, the scheme offers businesses the chance to get their ladders checked and, where necessary, exchange them for new ones at a heavily discounted price.

In 2008/09 a total of 35 workers died and over 4500 employees suffered major injury as a result of a fall from height in the workplace. Many of these incidents could be avoided by using the right equipment and taking simple precautions. HSE is working in close partnership with industry to ensure that anyone involved in working at height uses the right equipment for the job and uses it safely. **Peter Brown, HSE said:**"We've had more than 900 ladders exchanged so far and we're keen for more businesses to make the most of the offer before the end of the month. If you take a chance with 'dodgy' ladders you are risking your life. So many of these accidents are avoidable and having safe equipment makes a huge difference For more information please visit HSE website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/ladderexchange.htm>



Record £400,000 fine for retailer's fire safety breaches

High street retailer **New Look** has been fined **£400,000** and ordered to pay **£136,052** in costs after pleading guilty to two breaches of fire safety legislation, following a serious fire at its Oxford Street store in London.

Thirty-five fire engines and around **150 fire-fighters** attended the fire on 26 April 2007, when around **450 people** from the store and surrounding premises were evacuated. The first call to the fire service did not come until an office worker in an adjacent building took action, and the delay meant that the fire had already broken through the second floor windows when fire-fighters arrived. Despite the building's fire alarm sounding, the alarm was reset on at least one occasion, said London Fire Brigade.

Crews remained on the scene for the next three days and a section of Oxford Street was closed to traffic and the public for two days. The cause of the fire was never established and the store was subsequently demolished. One charge to which New Look pleaded guilty was for an inadequate fire risk assessment which was found to have a number of flaws, including no record of the appropriate procedures to be taken during a fire alarm. Another breach was **insufficient staff training**, which led to a delayed evacuation of the premises. This lack of training, said LFB, also led to staff evacuating around 150 people through the main entrance which was directly underneath the fire on the second floor.

Other alleged breaches taken into account included the absence of an interface between the swipe card system and the fire alarm panel which would have deactivated the doors. In addition, green emergency door release units were fitted on the wrong side of the basement doors. The fine is the largest to have been handed down for a breach to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Chairman of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, Councillor Brian Coleman, said: "Good business management includes taking responsibility for fire safety, knowing the law and acting on it. This conviction shows that large companies are not exempt from prosecution and that London Fire Brigade will take action when businesses do not take their fire safety responsibilities seriously. Failure to comply with the law can, as this case has shown, result in a substantial fine."

Swine Flu update

Swine flu is still a major problem in the UK, with schools regularly having to close and business disrupted. The latest advice can be found online including the following:

- ◆ Advise your staff to stay at home if they are sick flu-like symptoms and have good reason to believe they may have been exposed to Swine Flu
- ◆ Practise good personal hygiene, wash hands regularly.
- ◆ Use tissues and cover the mouth if sneezing or coughing. Dispose of used tissues appropriately
- ◆ Keep surfaces and door handles clean. More advice can be found at www.hse.gov.uk



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Developer put workers at risk from asbestos

The HSE has prosecuted a development company for failing to remove asbestos safely during building work at a Cornish hotel.

Plymouth-based Stonehouse Design and Build, which purchased the Shark Fin Hotel in Mevagissey to convert into apartments, put its employees and others at risk from exposure to asbestos fibres between December 2005 and July 2006. Workmen disturbed the asbestos during the renovation work, and the HSE received a **tip-off** that the firm was not removing the hazardous material with the necessary safeguards in place. HSE inspectors later halted work at the site to allow specialists to remove the asbestos under licensed conditions and decontaminate the area. Stonehouse admitted breaching Regulations 15 and 16(1)(a) of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations in that it failed to prevent or reduce the spread of asbestos and to keep the site clean.

On 8 December, Bodmin magistrates ordered it to pay **£2750** for each offence plus full costs of just over **£8000**.

Myth of the month

Myth: You can't throw out sweets at Pantos.....

The reality

Health and safety rules were blamed when a panto stopped throwing out sweets to the audience. In fact they were worried about the cost of compensation if anyone got hurt. If you're unsure about an event you're organising, you might want to talk to your insurer to



check that you've got the right cover and you've managed any risks effectively. It can help to make sure that trivial risks don't cause too much concern. Realistically, if a panto throws out sweets the chances of someone being seriously hurt is incredibly low. It's certainly not something HSE worries about - as far as we're concerned, this is a case of 'Oh yes you can!'