

Caring for slips and trips at Winchester and Eastleigh NHS Trust

Slips, trips and falls can all have serious consequences.....

After monitoring health and safety records, bosses for Winchester and Eastleigh NHS Trust recognised they had problems with slips and trips on wet hospital floors.

Between 2002-2004 the Trust had to tackle in the region of **100 slips and trips** from staff, all of which could be blamed on floors left wet after cleaning.

The Trust's safety adviser had attended an HSE slips, trips and falls workshop in 2004 which reinforced the belief that more could and should be done. This prompted the Trust to look again at the areas where falls were occurring to identify trends. Around the same time the Trust was unfortunate enough to have a member of staff fall in a ward area after the floor had been mopped. An inspector from the Health and Safety Executive recommended that changing the way mopping was done could reduce the risk of slips and trips. He suggested using a dry mopping system using micro fibre, would limit the amount of fluid on the floor. Micro fibre mops are designed to pick up dirt and cling to it. Rather than saturating the mops, the mops are placed into a bucket and left to soak up the water and cleaning fluid. This reduces the amount of residue that is left on the floor during and after mopping.

The staff were also advised to mop and dry the floor in sections before moving onto the next part of the ward, to provide safe access around the area. Dean Bailey, Trust safety advisor for Winchester and Eastleigh NHS Trust, said: "At first the house-keeping staff were reluctant to change to a system that they believed would take much longer. However, once we started to see a decrease in the number of people slipping and how easy it was to implement, they were more than happy with the new way of working."

The Trust purchased 11 systems and trialled them for four weeks. The results were so dramatic they bought another six so they could roll the method out across all wards. Since the Trust implemented the system in April 2005 it has received one report of a slip/trip to date as a result of wet floors which was reportable under RIDDOR, and an 85% reduction in falls from the 100 reported in the previous two years.

Dean Bailey said: "Using HSE's online risk assessment tools and having HSE on board was fundamental in reducing the slips and trips within our organisation. Without these tools and HSE support we wouldn't have seen such dramatic results and made our wards safer for our members of staff and patients whilst maintaining our clean environments."



Ladder Exchange kicks off again

The 2010 Ladder Exchange campaign kicked off for the fourth year earlier this month, with campaign partners the HSE and Ladderstore warning users of the equipment: **don't let 'dodgy' ladders shatter lives.** Last year, 1400 'dodgy' ladders were taken out of service, with a total of 7000 withdrawn since the campaign began in 2007.

Ladder-owners and users are given the opportunity to get rid of bent, broken or battered ladders in exchange for new ones at discounted prices. Ladderstore has seen its fair share of surrendered ladders and emphasises education for users through training and correct ongoing ladder inspection. This year, in addition to taking in old and damaged ladders, the company is also offering a ladder safety checklist plus discounts on its ladder training courses. For more information, visit www.hse.gov.uk/falls/ladderexchange.htm or www.ladderstore.com/hse.



Landlord pays £16,000 for fire safety breaches

A landlord has been ordered to pay over **£16,000** in fines and costs after pleading guilty to breaches of fire safety legislation following a prosecution brought by the London Fire Brigade.

Jagjit Singh Rai pleaded guilty to seven contraventions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. These included no suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment, no appropriate firefighting equipment, and five counts of having no suitable maintenance arrangements of facilities, equipment and devices. London Fire Brigade said Mr Rai managed a house of multiple occupation (HMO) above a Costcutters store in Hayes, Middlesex. On 16 May 2009 firefighters were called to a fire at the store. Crews noticed that no smoke alarm had sounded in the HMO despite the presence of smoke. Fire safety inspectors subsequently visited the address and found a number of breaches of the Order, which included no suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment of the premises.

Sentencing took place at Uxbridge magistrates' court on 13 September 2010 when Mr Rai was fined a total of £8,000 and ordered to pay costs of £8,505.



Atherton roofer fined after putting lives at risk

An Atherton roofer has appeared in court after being spotted working on roofs with no safety equipment to prevent him and his staff falling off.



Mark McKernan, from Hesketh Street, was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after he and three employees were seen working on two residential properties with nothing to stop them plunging to the ground below if they slipped. Roofers carrying out work with no safety equipment

An HSE inspector also watched workers throwing slates from the roofs of the houses in Yew Tree Avenue into a skip below, just a few feet away from a busy pavement on 16 December last year. Trafford Magistrates' Court heard that the company should have erected a guardrail around the roof or used scaffolding to prevent potential falls or serious injuries. A rubbish chute or other suitable equipment should have been used to transport waste safely to the ground. Mark McKernan pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 6(3) and 10(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 by failing to take suitable measures to prevent a fall from the roofs, and for failing to provide suitable equipment to remove waste material from the roof. He was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay £2,000 costs.

HSE Inspector Robert Hodgkinson said:

"Around 11 roofers are killed each year in the UK as a result of falls from height, and the majority of these deaths could have been prevented if those carrying out the work had planned the job properly and taken adequate precautions." "There was absolutely nothing in place at this site to stop Mr McKernan or his employees falling to the ground below and sustaining serious injuries or even being killed." "Roof slates and other waste materials were also being thrown from the roof into a skip next to a busy public pavement, which put passersby at serious risk of being struck by flying debris."

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415-volt cable blew up in joiner's face

A localised electrical explosion that set fire to a joiner's boilersuit has cost a building firm £13,000 in fines and compensation.

George Forbes was working for Graeme W Cheyne (Builders) on a flat refurbishment project in Aberdeen when a 415-volt cable exploded in his face.

He had been trying to move a redundant electricity power supply, known as a fuse cutout, to fit new plasterboard behind it. But he did not know that the cutout was still live and connected to the cable. When the HSE investigated the incident in November 2008, it found the cable was twisted, which caused a short circuit that created enough energy to melt the cable and create a small explosion. Forbes suffered burns to his face and his left hand.

Graeme W Cheyne (Builders) pleaded guilty to failing to provide and maintain a safe system of work for employees working on or near an electrical system, in breach of Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act. At Aberdeen Sheriff Court, the firm was fined £9000 and ordered to pay Forbes £4000 in compensation. After the hearing, HSE inspector Liz Standen said a competent person should have checked that all the redundant electrical services on the property were dead before anyone worked on or near them. "It is extremely dangerous to make assumptions that electrical equipment is safe to work with," she added.

Myth of the month

Myth: HSE bans traditional school ties

The reality

As we said at the start of the last school year, few parents would see wearing ties at school as a safety issue. Millions of children have been wearing ties as part of their uniform for years without any problems. Simple precautions such as removing the tie during laboratory work or around machinery make sense. But if the concern is really about children fighting, while clip-on ties may help, the real issue is discipline. So HSE doesn't ban school ties - it's up to schools to make their own decisions about uniforms.

