

## Myth: Health and Safety bans celebration of the Royal Wedding!

### The reality: -

There's nothing in health and safety law to prevent anyone from celebrating the Royal Wedding - in fact, the HSE encourages everyone who wants to throw a party to go right ahead.

If someone tells you that you can't have a get together to mark the nuptials of Prince William and Kate, then challenge them. Health and safety is about looking out for any legitimate things that might spoil people's fun on the day, not to stop people doing anything at all.

If you want to close a road or are running a party on a commercial basis with alcohol on sale, it's probably a good idea to check with your local council. But in most cases, things like street parties run by volunteers don't have any obligations under health and safety law at all.

Here's to William and Kate!



### Tesco fined for RIDDOR failures

Supermarket giant Tesco has been prosecuted for not reporting staff accidents properly at two of its Berkshire stores, and for failing to load and unload vehicles safely.

Bracknell Forest Council's environmental health team charged the retailer with four offences, which took place during 2009 and 2010. Council officers discovered Tesco had failed to report two employee accidents at its Warfield store and another at its store at The Meadows in Sandhurst.

The failures were uncovered during an investigation into the retailer's failure to stop an unsafe working practice that involved using a metal plate to unload vehicles at the Warfield store. The company was not training its operational or managerial staff properly to load and unload vehicles, and it had no safe system of work in place. The Bracknell magistrates fined Tesco £14,000 after it admitted failing to ensure employees' safety, in breach of Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act. Tesco was fined a further £34,000 after pleading guilty to three breaches of Regulation 3 of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Two of these charges involved Tesco not reporting accidents by the "quickest practicable means" and the third was a failure to send a report to the enforcing authority within 10 days. Tesco, which operates 2500 UK stores employing more than 287,000 staff, must also pay £25,000 in prosecution costs.

### Why is asbestos dangerous?

Asbestos fibres are present in the environment in Great Britain so people are exposed to very low levels of fibres. However, a key factor in the risk of developing an asbestos-related disease is the total number of fibres breathed in. Working on or near damaged asbestos-containing materials or breathing in high levels of asbestos fibres, which may be many hundreds of times that of environmental levels could increase your chances of getting an asbestos-related disease.

When these fibres are inhaled they can cause serious diseases which are responsible for around **4000 deaths a year**. There are four main diseases caused by Asbestos: Mesothelioma (which is always fatal), Lung Cancer (almost always fatal), Asbestosis (not always fatal, but it can be very debilitating) and Diffuse Pleural Thickening (not fatal).

Remember, these diseases will not affect you immediately but later on in life, so there is a need for you to protect yourself now to prevent you contracting an asbestos-related disease in the future. It is also important to remember that people who smoke and are also exposed to asbestos fibres are at a much greater risk of developing lung cancer.

More information can be found on the HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/dangerous.htm?ebul=hsegen&cr=11/04-apr-11>

## Lincoln firm fined unsafe roof work

Two roofers were caught on CCTV working on top of a Balderton shopping centre without any safety equipment, a court heard.

Newark Magistrates' Court today fined contractors Graham Nicholson Roofing Ltd after the men were seen risking their lives on the roof of Cooperative Travel at the Lakeside Centre, Balderton, on 16 June 2010.

CCTV operatives reported the workers to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after spotting them undertaking repairs to the roof immediately above the public entrance to the store using no safety equipment, edge protection or harnesses to prevent falls. This unsafe system of work risked injury to the roofers themselves and shoppers at the Lakeside Centre. Graham Nicholson Roofing Ltd, of Nettleham Road, Lincoln, pleaded guilty to breaching section 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. It was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,500. After the hearing, HSE inspector Stephen Farthing said:

"Fortunately no one was injured on this occasion, but both employees and members of the public were at risk. This was a blatant disregard for health and safety which put both workers and members of the public in danger.

"Roofing work requires careful planning and assessment of the risks involved. In this case employees were working without the correct equipment to protect them from falls or to protect passers by from falling material." Falls from height are the biggest cause of workplace deaths and it's crucial that employers make sure work is properly planned, appropriately supervised and that sufficient measures are put in place to protect staff and members of the public from the risks."

## Landlord pays £158,000 for breaches after tenants flee from blaze

A residential landlord has been found guilty of fire safety breaches, following a fire where his tenants were forced to flee for their lives.

Joseph Ernest Draper, then owner of 9 Hillsborough Terrace, in Ilfracombe, Devon, pleaded guilty to four offences under the Fire Safety Order 2005.

Appearing at Exeter Crown Court on 29 March, Mr Draper was ordered to pay a total of £135,000 in fines and £23,000 in costs.

It follows a fire at the four-storey building on 14 February 2008. The building had been subdivided into flats. The fire, which started on the ground floor, spread throughout the property and forced some of the 13 tenants to make their escape by clambering over the roof. After the fire Devon and Somerset fire investigators carried out a safety audit of the. They found that the door giving entrance to the ground floor flat was inappropriately constructed to resist fire, which would enable a fire in the flat to spread into the escape route. The offence carried a fine of £75,000. The three other offences cost £20,000 each, for three doors that had no self closing device fitted. This would also have impacted on fire spread to the means of escape. Devon and Somerset area manager Nick Manning, said: "Landlords and owners of properties used as flats should take notice of the outcome of this case - it has sent a clear message with the level of the fine awarded."



## Construction companies fined after workers exposed to asbestos

A plant hire company and a construction services firm have been fined for exposing employees and members of the public to asbestos. An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Mansell Construction Services Ltd of Croydon and sub-contractor Woodlands Plant Hire Ltd of Ickleton, South Cambridgeshire, put workers and the public at risk by failing to properly manage the presence of asbestos during the refurbishment of a residential block of flats, between 24 November and 8 December 2009. During the work in an occupied London Borough of Hackney block of flats, asbestos insulation board was disturbed and removed by unlicensed contractor, Woodlands Plant Hire Ltd, potentially releasing the deadly substance into the air. A previous survey, identifying the presence of asbestos insulation board in a number of the properties, had been provided to Mansell, but had not been acted upon or passed to their sub-contractors. Mansell Construction Services Ltd pleaded guilty and was fined £50,000 at the Old Bailey for breaching Regulation 22(1)(a) Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007. Woodlands Plant Hire Ltd pleaded guilty of breaching regulations 5, 8(1) and 11(a) of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006, and was fined £50,000. The companies were ordered to pay joint costs of £20,690.

**HSE Inspector Dominic Ellis said:** "Despite recent high profile campaigns on the dangers of working with asbestos, this case sadly illustrates some companies are still failing to manage the risks robustly"

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