



The Institution of Occupational
Safety and Health

East Anglia Branch



Newsletter

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Welcome

At the AGM the following were elected as your committee for the coming year:

Chair	Malcolm Fryer	Vice Chair	Andy Bagworth
Secretary	Barbara Back	Treasurer	Joyce Lewis
Membership Secretary	Colin Anglin	Procedures coordinator	Denis Hands
Website and Newsletter	Jane Blunt	Venues coordinator	Teresa Harrold
Seminar Sub-committee	Denis Hands	Workshops sub-committee	Nigel Davy
	Robert Higgins		Neil Catton
	Ray Hurst		
Committee members	Margaret Glendenning	Branch Education	Andy Bagworth
	Tudor Smith	Development advice	Gordon Eagle
	Paul Stolworthy		
	Malcolm Earl		
	David McCulloch		

There have been some changes of role – some of the committee positions carry with them a big time commitment. Our thanks go to those who have recently handed over the key roles of secretary, treasurer and seminar sub-committee chair to new hands.

With this newsletter you should receive a 2009-2010 calendar of events. Please keep an eye on our website for the most up-to-date news. If things go to plan we should be able to add some events to your calendar.

Branch AGM, May 8th

Reported by Jane Blunt

Geoff Keerie and his assistant **Trevor** gave us a controversial look at ergonomics, punctuated by stunning martial arts demonstrations.

The human body is designed to operate in certain ways and at certain speeds. He demonstrated with a willing volunteer how reaction time can limit our ability to prevent injury.

The body is capable of creating immense focused power. He demonstrated this using a sword and a cucumber placed on his assistant's torso, and breaking wood, blocks and concrete tiles.

At the same time the body can be broken by the application of quite small forces in the right places. He demonstrated this by pointing out the critical weakness in some of our joints.

All this was leading to a discussion of appropriate appointment of staff. Do we spend long enough exploring a candidate's capability against the demands of the job? Are we setting people up to fail?

His presentation aimed to be controversial, make mischief and make us laugh – he succeeded.

Branch AGM, continued

Joe Balmi followed this up by talking about ergonomics and force. Most of our energy is used in defying gravity. When we are working hard we give off a lot of heat – but we often have to wear heavy clothing which makes the shedding of this heat difficult. Sometimes we exceed the natural laws that govern our bodies,

and are expected to work like machines. At the same time we don't always use our full capabilities.

We need to understand how our bodies work and use efficient techniques.

Seminar, 18th June 2009 – Management of Occupational Road Risk

This is the first time the Branch has held its seminar in June (previously they were usually in March), and with the current recession it was a nail-biting time for the organisers. However, a very good number (around 100) booked into the event.

The day began with a presentation by **Mike Welham** on 'The reality and myths of corporate manslaughter'. Mike is an ex-principal inspector who was in the group that developed the legislation. It is a very important piece of legislation, and there has been a lot of panic. The focus will now be on how an organisation's activities are managed or organised by senior managers. The Police will start in the boardroom asking about what people know and what they should know.

The first prosecutions under this legislation have already begun. However, no large organisation is currently under the spotlight.

Drivers at work must be competent, the vehicles safe, the loads secure and there must be a realistic work plan. Ensure you have a driving policy and procedures, the drivers have a handbook and they know what is in it. Monitor and check what they are doing.

The definition of who is responsible includes those who play a significant role in making decisions about how the whole or a substantial part of the activities are managed or organised.

After an accident the Police will identify if the driver was at work. The company could be 'in the dock'. Individuals can also be charged with gross negligence manslaughter. A defence is to be able to demonstrate effective management of H&S at work. See the HSE website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/leadership/index.htm> for what is required.

In the Hatfield case the CEO and others were interviewed, but charges were not progressed against senior managers. From the lower level management, eight people faced charges. Political interference led to dismissal of the case.

Malcolm Thorne of IAM spoke on the topic 'Drive and Survive'. Work-related crashes account for one third of all accidents on the road. The benefits of managing this area include more skilled driving, reduced accident costs, reduced insurance premiums, improved running costs, less downtime, less wear & tear, an improved company image and added protection from litigation.

[forwork.htm](#) . You need a clear policy, with defined responsibilities. You can get template documents readily from sources such as ACPO. You need to include licence, mobile phones, medical fitness, eyesight, drugs & alcohol, vehicle specifications, maintenance and servicing, insurance and smoking in vehicles.

Look at the HSE webpages:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/driving>

Are your vehicles suitable for the job? Do they have the right equipment on board? Is the route realistic, and the time allowed realistic?

Steve Merrett, Road Safety Officer for Cambridgeshire County Council spoke on 'Driving your business risk down'.

Work-related road crashes are the biggest cause of work-related accidental death. If we manage this risk better what will it achieve?

About 11% of drivers killed on the county's roads in 2008 were driving for work.

Fewer crashes, fewer casualties, and reduced pollution could result. The company could gain by reduced insurance costs, better public image, improved employee safety, reduced costs, reduced litigation, and better staff morale.

A nominated person needs to be responsible for controlling the risks. In the absence of any clear cut law the Highway Code is used in evidence in court to prove a point.

There was a fatal accident on the A10 between Cambridge and Ely between a lorry and a van. The lorry, load and van were all seized. Investigation of the timesheet of the van driver revealed he worked excessively long hours (more than 20 hours a day on occasions). It appears he fell asleep on the way home. The prosecution led to a £30k fine on the company and £24k costs – which led to the company verging on bankruptcy.

An accident on the A1101 at Wisbech was traced to driver behaviour and, on that occasion, the driver was sent to prison.

Four major contributors to injuries in accidents are speed, mobile phones, lack of seat belts and drink driving. Note that the speed limits for vans etc are different from cars.

If you are using a mobile phone, your reaction times are 50% slower than normal, the risk of crashing is 4x higher. The worst offenders are company car drivers. Note that hands-free still requires the same intellectual input and the risk is similar to those under the influence of drink.

Establish your policy and risk assessments. Use a combination of carrot and stick. Detail the consequences of non-compliance in the policy.

Every member of staff needs a copy. You need to keep records of accidents, breakdowns and near misses in as much detail as possible, as it helps to show any developing patterns. Get Union buy-in.

The Seminar then broke up into four sessions on different topics, which were covered in rotation either side of lunch.

Ryan Brittain of IAM Group Ltd gave us an overview of their software systems.

Rob Harbord, Marshall Motorgroup, Vehicle Bodyshop Projects Coordinator, discussed the importance of repair integrity and how the PAS 125:2007 Vehicle Body Repair Specification and the associated kitemark provides confidence to those managing fleets. Vehicles are now made of a variety of materials, each of which require specialist equipment, materials and competent technicians in



Rob Harbord giving his presentation on PAS



Ryan Brittain giving his presentation on software

order to match manufacturer standards every time a vehicle is repaired. Maintaining the kitemark requires a great deal of effort from the service supplier, as they have to be able to demonstrate that their staff have a range of competencies and qualifications at all times.

Nina Day, Health & Safety Laboratory discussed vehicle loading and the security of loads on the vehicle.

Theresa Taylor, STR Driver Training showed us some of the opportunities for training in skid control.

We then all reassembled in the main hall for the final two presentations.

Alix Weekes, Research Engineer, The Motor Insurance Repair Research Centre, Thatcham. – **‘Safe vehicles – Using safety ratings to influence staff choice’**

Why is their research important? A valid MOT and licence is not enough; the vehicle must be safe by design. All new cars have to pass certain safety tests before they are sold. How do you choose a safe car?

Euro NCAP, <http://www.euroncap.com/home.aspx> give crash ratings for impacts in specified directions. They

also now look at pedestrian safety and whiplash. The system generates a star rating which correlates with injury reduction.

New categories will look at ESC (electronic stability control, which prevents skids and spins), seat belt reminders and speed limitation devices.

Whiplash commonly occurs when people are hit from behind. It accounts for 80% of insurance claims (432000 in 2007). Seat design can reduce the risk. 72% of head restraint is poorly adjusted – women are twice as likely to get whiplash.

Kathryn Gilbertson, Solicitor, Greenwoods Solicitors, Peterborough – **‘Criminal Defence Policy – Don’t wait until the worst happens’**

25-30% of accidents on the road involve people who are at work. Road traffic accidents are not reported under RIDDOR, except in four particular circumstances – exposure to substances, loading and unloading, vehicle + train and demolition near a roadway.

The Association of Chief Police Officer guidance advises them to speak to the HSE but only on the matter of a significant safety management issue out of the control of the driver. There are

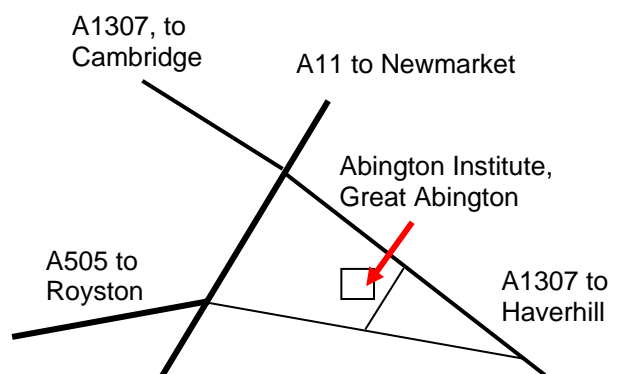
many instances of prosecutions of drivers for their behaviour, but it is unusual to find a company in the frame.

Corporate manslaughter requires senior management activity to initiate a sequence of events that allowed the fatality to happen. It is anticipated that in road risk, this will be hard to do.

CPS make the decision on whether a case will come to court – they must have the evidence and it must be in the public interest. You have to be able to show that the company’s activities caused the death.

The next Branch Meeting will be on Friday September 25th at Abington Institute, High Street, Great Abington, CB21 6AB. Note that this is the venue that has very little parking, but that there is **plenty** of space in the roads close by. The buffet will be at 12.30pm, with the meeting starting at 13.30 hours. The contact for this meeting is Robert Higgins, 07710998730.

The topic will be Local Exhaust Ventilation, COSHH and associated controls. The speaker will be Alvin Great Abington Woolley, who is an independent occupational hygiene consultant, with a breadth of experience ranging from industrial to university applications.



Watch out for WORKSHOPS, which will be advertised on the website as they are organised. It is expected that there will be one in September.

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