

# Newsletter November 2017



The Association has a web site: - [www.hgsafety.co.uk](http://www.hgsafety.co.uk)

HSE Web Link <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

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**Please note that the office will be unmanned (Louise) from the 21<sup>st</sup> November and all telephone calls will be on divert to a Safety Advisors mobile, all emails will be picked up and dealt with remotely for the next few weeks.**

## Topics

- Permit to Dig
- You and your RPE
- Risk Assessments & Method Statements : Less is more
- EN131 Ladder standards are being revised
- Worker fell after rail removed for access
- Heroes and Villains of the Month

# Permit to Dig

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Following site inspection we have found many sites where excavations were evident, some minor such as foundations for houses and some deep excavations for drainage.

In all instances the requirement for permits to control the complexity of the dig is essential.

Permit to Dig is simply a paperwork tool which should be raised prior to breaking ground to establish basic hazards that may be encountered.

Permits can be raised by either the Principal Contractor or the Contractor however the whole emphasis is to ensure that the actual workforce is made aware of what is and when.

We attach a simple Permit to Dig which can be used on any site. If you require any explanation of its content please contact your area Safety Advisor.

# Permit to Dig

Work must not start until Section A & B of this permit have been completed and signed by authorised persons  
Section C/D must be completed on completion of works.

Company Name		Project Title	
Location		Contract No	
<b>Section A Project details (To be completed by project or package manager)</b>			
Contractor			
Date & Time issued		Completion date	
Supervisor in charge of works (Print Name)		Operatives (Print Name)	
Brief description of works			
<b>Section B Precautions to be taken before work is carried out (To be completed by supervisor in charge of the works)</b>			
Essential procedures	Yes	No	Comments
1. Contract drawings and details issued by the client or otherwise obtained			
2. Drawings show the location, type and status of buried services			
3. Live services made dead as far as it is possible or necessary to do so			
4. Work area surveyed by a competent person, using appropriate detection equipment to confirm the exact location of buried services			
5. Location of services marked on the ground			
6. Valid method statement and risk assessment in place			
7. Method statement and risk assessment explained to the operatives carrying out the work			
8. Person in charge of the excavation is fully conversant with the principles of safe digging and/or avoidance of buried services			
9. All operative familiar with safe excavation practices			
10. If plant is being used, operator is competent and familiar with safe digging practices			
11. State type, serial number and calibration test date of cable avoidance equipment used			
<b>Confirmation by contractor's supervisor: I confirm that the precautions specified above will be complied with and I will ensure that the persons carrying out the work, described above, are fully briefed on the safe method of work.</b>			
Name		Position	
Signature		Date	
<b>Confirmation by operator(s): I understand the precautions to be taken in carrying out the work</b>			
Name		Position	
Signature		Date	

**Section C Completion of Work  
(To be completed by supervisor in charge of the works)**

I am satisfied that:

- the excavation has been backfilled and the surface reinstated\*
- the work is completed and the area has been left in a safe condition\*
- the work area is clear of operatives and all equipment\*
- utility company(ies) have been informed that services made dead may now be reactivated\*

I am **not** satisfied that the work has been completed satisfactorily and the additional work described below must be completed before this permit may be cancelled\*

*\*Delete as appropriate*

Name		Position		Signature		Date	
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**Additional work that is necessary to enable this permit to be cancelled**

**Section D Cancellation of permit  
(To be completed by supervisor in charge of the works)**

I am satisfied that all work has been completed and this permit is now cancelled

Name		Position		Signature		Date	
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# You and your RPE

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As we travel around from site to site there is a noticeable increase on site by trades regarding their awareness towards dust and fumes and the increased wearing of RPE ( Respiratory Protective Equipment) whilst carrying tasks such as cutting and grinding etc.

However we have also noticed an increase in persons on site with considerable facial hair. Many of those people sporting the current trendy beards are often required to wear RPE whilst carrying out their job and have previously been face fit tested prior to sporting said beard! This leads to the question does the wearer have the right type of RPE to protect them from construction dust ?

RPE should be used to protect against the risk from dust but should not be used as a replacement to dust suppression and dust extraction equipment and methods. Given the nature of some works it is not always possible to completely control or eliminate dust and fumes and it is these instances where RPE should be used along with suppression and/or extraction.

## **When Choosing RPE it is important it is the right type for the wearer**

If you are considering RPE with a tight-fitting facepiece, you should make sure that each wearer undergoes a fit test. Remember, people come in different shapes and sizes, so facial differences will mean that one kind of RPE is unlikely to fit all. The differences are even more significant between men and women. If the RPE does not fit, it will not protect the wearer. Facepiece fit testing is a method of checking that a tight-fitting facepiece matches the wearer's facial features and seals adequately to their face. It will also help to identify unsuitable facepieces that should not be used.

Remember that tight-fitting RPE will only provide effective protection if the wearer is clean shaven, so they should also be clean shaven when fit tested.

Further information and guidance can be obtained from HSG 53 – Respiratory Equipment at Work <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/hsg53.pdf>

# Risk assessments and method statements: less is more!

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The principle of risk assessment is a fundamental cornerstone of the management of health and safety in the workplace. Legislation places a legal duty on employers to assess the risks, to the health and safety of their employees and others, that arise out of their work. The amount of effort that needs to be put into carrying out risk assessments and method statements should be suitable and proportionate to the risks, specific to the site and task, and fully understood and appreciated by the workforce.

Assessing risk is not a difficult process, but unfortunately all too often many companies rely on hefty folders full of generic risk assessments and method statements that bear little resemblance to how their operatives will actually carry out the works.

It is essential that all high risk activities are assessed and controlled first, before looking at the medium risk activities. You should only look at the low risks once all the high and medium risks have been either eliminated or adequately controlled. It has to be said that simple activities with few hazards, which present a low risk should only need simple assessments.

## **Risk assessment in practice**

If the task to be assessed is substantial, difficult or complex, then in all probability, it will not be practical or effective to carry out a single risks assessment to cover the whole of the work. The job will need to be broken down into separate elements or work, each of which will have to be assessed separately.

Alternatively, it should be possible to cover the whole of a relatively straightforward job (such as retiling a house) with a single risk assessment.

## **What do you do after your risk assessment as an employer?**

Communicate the findings of your risk assessments, particularly details of the hazards identified and what control measures are in place to anyone who needs to know (for example, the main contractor, your employees and sub-contractors)

It is most important that the findings of risk assessments are communicated to anyone whose health and safety is likely to be affected by the job. Do not just store them away in file Z!!

## **What should a supervisor do after they receive a risk assessment?**

Supervisors should explain the risk assessments and method statements to their work team, ensure understanding ( by asking questions) and record the names of those briefed (and when).

Simply asking operatives to read pages and pages of text and to obtain a signature to say that they have read and understood the content before they start work is not helpful in achieving a safe system of working particularly where operatives may have difficulty or no understanding reading written instructions.

It may therefore be useful to convert the findings of a risk assessment into a simpler document, both in terms of terminology and layout, which relates to what the workforce must do. Consideration should be given to the use of images or sketches of what is needed (such as a slinging arrangements or pictures of respiratory protective equipment (RPE) being used correctly).

## **Further information on RAMs software that will enable users to produce task specific RAMs as required**

<https://shop.citb.co.uk/RACD0015.aspx>

<https://www.safetyservicesdirect.com/risk-assessment--method-statements-15-c.asp>

# EN131 LADDER STANDARDS ARE BEING REVISED

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A revised set of new EN131 ladder standards are due to be introduced to the European market from the 1st January 2018. These changes are designed primarily to address ladder stability and durability and introduce a classification of "use" to the new standard. Within the new standard ladders will be classified as "EN131 Professional", (intended for use in a workplace), and "EN131 Non-Professional" (intended for use by domestic users).

Product standards do not apply retrospectively so your existing BS2037, BS1129 and EN131 ladders are perfectly legal and fit for use as long as they are in good condition and fit for purpose. There is no immediate requirement to change your existing ladders because the product standards are being revised or withdrawn.

A transition period will be in place after the introduction of the new standard to allow manufacturers time to adapt to any relevant changes within the standards and gradually over time existing ladder stocks will be replaced with ladders certified to the new standards.

As long as your ladders and steps are regularly inspected and maintained in good condition there is no need to replace or exchange your existing ladders. Current BS2037, BS1129 and EN131 certified ladders are perfectly safe and fit for use.

# Workman fell after rail removed for access

## ***Small builder failed to allow for missing guard-rail***

A sole trader builder has been fined after a workman suffered serious injuries when he fell from a scaffold platform in April 2017 on a construction site in Heanor, Derbyshire.

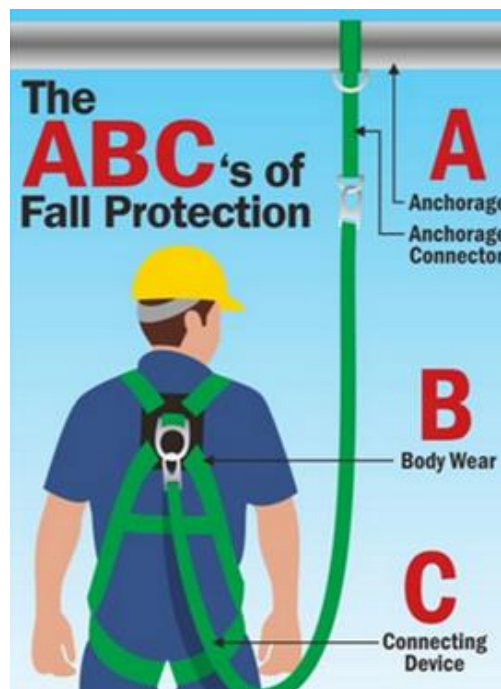
Derby Magistrates heard that the workman fell 5m from the scaffolding and incurred deep lacerations to his face which required 40 stitches along with a fractured eye socket and wrist.

HSE investigators found that the injured man was working under the control and direction of the builder using an electric hoist and wheelbarrow to lift roof tiles up to the scaffold platform.

## ***Other means of falls protection required***

The scaffold guard rails were removed from a 1.6 m wide section to facilitate the lifting operation and the workman fell from the scaffold while attempting to tighten the fittings securing the hoist.

- **Nicholas Lawrence Birkin** – of Beach Road, Nottingham pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) and Regulation 8(a) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. He has been fined £2400 and ordered to pay costs of £840.



Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Andrew Bowker said:

“Those in control of work at height have a responsibility to ensure that safe methods of work are used.

This incident could have been fatal, Mr Birkin failed to provide other means of falls protection once the scaffold guard rails had been removed.

Following the accident, the defendant hired in a conveyor type tile hoist which has enabled the job of lifting roof tiles to be done with the scaffold guard rails still in place.

This has delivered both a safer and more productive site at relatively little cost.”



# Heroes & Villains of the Month

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**A good choice of work at height equipment for short duration working**



**Not such a good point of access or choice equipment**



**Just hang on a minute !!**



**No dancing on this top table?**