

May 2024

Health & Safety Newsletter

HSE Kicks off Workplace Noise Intervention

The Health and Safety Executive has started a new workplace noise intervention, inspectors from the UK's regulator for health and safety will be targeting high-noise industries and assessing the duty holders' compliance with the noise at work regulations. This campaign will run for an extended period, with inspectors visiting workplaces across the country. This is a timely reminder of the importance of ensuring you have the correct hearing protection and that it is worn in designated areas as identified by signage and your risk assessment.

Failure to wear hearing protection when required can result in Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) which is an entirely preventable permanent, progressive condition with a profound impact on quality of life. NIHL and associated tinnitus can cause sleep loss, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, social isolation and loneliness, strain in relationships, long-term stress, and emotional exhaustion.

NIHL can be prevented by ensuring the correct hearing protection is worn correctly when working in areas of high noise, if you are working in areas that require hearing protection this should be made clear to you during your site orientation, risk assessment and method statement briefing and by site signage, if you are unsure stop and ask!

There is a simple acronym **CUFF** which helps to ensure that your employer and you can use to ensure you have the correct hearing protection.

C = Condition – is the hearing protection in good order and well maintained?

U = Use – Are the employees using the hearing protection when needed?

F = Fit the ear – Have the employees fitted the hearing protection properly?

F – Fit for purpose – is the hearing protection relevant to the risk and does it provide adequate protection to the employees?



Disturbing impact of climate change on workers' health and safety

In last month's newsletter, we talked about World Health and Safety Day and how the focus of this year was climate change.

As part of this, the International Labour Organisation has released a report that highlights some concerning facts about the impact of climate change on workers' health and safety.

The report (which can be found at Ensuring Safety and Health at Work in a Changing Climate: a global report) highlights 6 key areas where climate change affects workers health and safety:

1. Excessive heat – exposure to excessive heat can cause several health issues including heatstroke, heat stress and cardiovascular disease.
2. UV Radiation – repeated exposure to UV radiation can result in sunburn, blistering and even skin cancers.
3. Extreme weather events – extreme storms, extreme heat and extreme cold events can all present major health and safety risks to workers.
4. Workplace air pollution – poor air quality/exposure to pollution can create a range of health issues including respiratory diseases, cancer, and cardiovascular disease.
5. Vector Borne diseases – such as Lyme disease are an increasing concern to outdoor workers.
6. Agrochemicals – exposure to which can result in poisoning, cancers, reproductive issues and COPD to name a few.

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