



Newsletter

'Your safety,
our concern'

June 2010 Issue

Working at height is a hazardous occupation, and even the occasional use of a step ladder in the workplace can be risky, so take note of our pointers below to ensure the safety of your employees.

Discrimination can be unintentional, and the **World Cup**, demonstrates just how easy it is for a well meaning employer to find themselves facing claims of discrimination. Follow our advice in the article overleaf, and likewise, when you're **recruiting**, we recommend you follow the process we outline this month, to ensure that you not only get the right person for the job, but are fair too. Any queries - just call us on **0800 458 9421**.

Contents

- HSE campaign
- World Cup - which matches will you be watching?
- Recruitment, more than just getting the right person

HSE campaign

Nearly one in four construction sites inspected during a month-long 'blitz' by the HSE failed safety checks.

Inspectors from HSE carried out checks at 2,014 construction sites across Great Britain in March as part of a campaign aimed at reducing death and injury caused by unsafe work at heights and poor housekeeping during refurbishment and roofing work.

A total of 691 enforcement notices were issued at 470 sites, with inspectors giving orders for work to be stopped immediately in 359 instances for either unsafe work being carried out at height or where sites lacked "good order". **The majority of all notices issued related to unsafe work being carried out at height.**

Although working at height relates mostly to construction sites, the use of ladders is appropriate to the majority of workplaces, even if it's just using a step ladder to occasionally access the archives files. So, let's take a closer look at the health and safety **guidance for using ladders.**

Ladders are inherently hazardous, so first consider if there is a better alternative, such as scaffolding, and whether you really need to work at or access heights. If a ladder is the only option, give regard to the three points below to reduce the risk:

Use

People using ladders or step ladders need to be competent to do so. Overloading or over-reaching should be avoided as should using the top two steps of a stepladder or top three rungs of a ladder. Ladder users should keep three points of contact with the ladder at all times, stay centrally within the stiles of the ladder, and leave both hands free, so it will be necessary to get some assistance, if for example, trying to move objects from height.

Condition

Ladders in the workplace should be of the correct type – the HSE recommend class 1 industrial or EN131 ladders, and should be regularly inspected. The ladder should always be visually inspected before each use, to check that the feet are firmly attached, the rungs are clean, the stiles are undamaged, and that when extended, the fastenings are secure.

Positioning

When positioning, make sure ladders are placed on firm level ground, properly secured and set at the correct length and angle for the job (remember the 4 in 1 rule - for every 4 units up, the ladder base should be 1 unit out).



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World Cup - which matches will you be watching?

With the World Cup starting shortly, it's likely that at least a few of your employees already know when they'll be watching England play, and hopefully, rather than pulling a sickie to stay at home and watch the game, they may have requested some sort of **flexible working** to accommodate both work and watching the game. April's Newsletter's highlighted how Asda were helping staff to enjoy the matches without having to miss work, through the introduction of a 'shift swap' scheme.

However, if you have agreed to requests for flexible working, make sure that you've given or are prepared to give equal consideration to *all* requests to avoid **claims of discrimination**; some of your employees will want to watch non England games, so bear that in mind if you're changing working arrangements over the next month.

And finally, agreeing to requests for flexible working shouldn't only favour football matches - employers should aim to offer the same freedom around other sporting events, eg Wimbledon.



Recruitment, more than just getting the right person

Successful recruitment will get the right person in the right job at the right time, and just as importantly, will be fair and non discriminatory so that all applicants have a positive experience with your business.

The list below outlines the steps that we recommend your **recruitment and selection process** includes.

- Prepare the Job Description
- Source and decide on media for advertising
- Place advertisement
- Put together application pack – Job Description, Application Form, Covering Letter, Equal Opportunities Policy/Monitoring Form
- Respond to enquiries from applicants
- Receive completed applications
- Draw up short listing criteria
- Short list applicants to progress candidates for interview
- Invite applicants to interview
- Prepare questions for interview and consider tasks/presentations for the candidates to demonstrate their skills
- Prepare the interview rating form
- Carry out interviews, preferably with at least two interviewers
- Review applicants and make decision
- Make verbal offer and follow up with written offer letter
- Confirm acceptance of selected candidate and anticipated start date
- Take up at least two references
- Inform unsuccessful candidates
- Retain records of recruitment for 6 months



qsuk can manage your recruitment in full or in part - so if you're considering recruiting, do call us and let's talk about your requirements - 0800 458 9421.