

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE – 12TH AUGUST 2009

SUBJECT: RECENT HSE UPDATES

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of recent updates in Health and Safety information, advice and guidance.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has launched its new strategy designed to reduce the number of workplace accidents and to take a common sense approach to ensuring that risk management is an enabler for business rather than a burden. The HSE is also asking organisations and individuals to sign a pledge to support the strategy by:

- Agreeing to play their part in reducing the numbers of work-related deaths, injuries and ill-health in Great Britain.
- Putting health and safety at the heart of what they do and to take a common-sense approach to health and safety.
- Committing to debunking myths around health and safety that trivialise the impact of injuries, ill health and deaths on individuals and their families.
- Recognising the importance of health and safety in difficult economic times and the dangers of complacency.
- Pledging to work with the Health and Safety Executive and its partners to “Be Part of the Solution.”

The strategy, and link to sign the pledge may be found on the HSE’s website:
www.hse.gov.uk/strategy.

- 2.2 From September 2009 around 250 priced HSE publications, including official Approved Codes of Practice and authoritative health and safety advice and guidance, will be made freely available from HSE’s website in PDF format to view and print. The option to buy professionally produced printed versions from HSE Books will remain. Although the publications will be made freely available online, Crown copyright will still apply, meaning those wishing to reproduce the information will need an appropriate licence from the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI).
- 2.3 The public sector union, Unison is calling for an urgent review of the types of medical procedures that teaching assistants and support staff are expected to carry out, such as administering medicines for conditions including asthma, diabetes, and heart conditions, and changing of colostomy bags and tube feeding children.

A recent survey by the union found that more than 70% of teaching assistants and schools support staff are expected to administer medicines as part of their job, while 85% were expected to provide medical support as part of their job. However, 33% were not familiar with, or confident about, implementing the school's policy and procedure on the administration of medicines and medical procedures. Many staff reported feeling a moral pressure to give medical support, but had only routine first-aid training. Few staff members reported receiving specialist training.

- 2.4 The HSE has launched a new step by step guide to help dutyholders to manage asbestos within non-domestic premises and understand their duties imposed by Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos regulations 2006. The online toolkit supports the Corporate Asbestos Management Pack produced by the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, and includes photographs of areas and equipment where asbestos may be present. It may be found on the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/managing.
- 2.5 The HSE have published their annual report 2008/09 on their work and delivery of their business plan during the past financial year. The document may be found on the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/reports/0809.
- 2.6 A caravan park company in Porthcawl has been fined £150,000, plus required to pay costs of £182,500, after a seven-year-old boy suffered brain injuries in a swimming pool not properly manned by lifeguards.

The child wandered off from his father (who was in the pool) and found his way to the pool's bubble lounger, a Jacuzzi-type area near the deep end. Another holidaymaker found the child underneath the surface.

The court heard a lifeguard should have been on a high chair overlooking the pool and another lifeguard patrolling. Although four lifeguards were on duty at the time, two were patrolling the flume area and none were present on the high chair observing the deeper end of the pool. In addition, a lifeguard saw the child alone and told him to go back to his father, but failed to ensure he went.

This case has implications regarding the provision of lifeguards at all leisure centres with swimming pools, and of their training and instruction regarding the care of young children.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the contents of the report be noted.

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