

## Health & Safety in Construction

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is urging those involved in construction projects across Britain to protect the health and safety of their workers as a new phase of targeted inspections begin from October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017. The construction sector is a priority with the HSE as an area where the health and safety challenges are greatest. In 2015/16 43 workers were fatally injured with an estimated ten times that number dying from ill-health relating to construction activities.

The HSE is asking contractors, designers and clients to do everything they can to manage their construction risks, with a particular focus on harmful dusts, work at height, welfare provision and the safe handling of materials. Earlier this year, Inspectors completed over 2000 inspections in the first phase of the initiative, and had to take action during almost half of those visits. It's clear that the construction industry still has work to do on managing its health and safety risks.

Harmful dusts such as silica from concrete, brick and stone or wood or asbestos dusts can be managed effectively with the right equipment, design and training. The health effects may not be immediate, but the long term impact on workers and their families can be devastating.

With fees for intervention currently standing at £129 per hour this could work out costly for those sites falling short of the expected standards! There is an increasing amount of multi-million pound fines being handed down for health and safety offences irrespective of any harm caused, this phase of inspections is significant and duty holders should be prepared for them.

If you're running a site ensure that the key areas mentioned above are well managed and sufficient control measures for dust are in place. Check that the correct extraction method is being used and is effective, ensure that all operatives are aware of site rules and have received relevant training. Ensure that operatives have received qualitative respirator face fit testing and know how to fit a mask correctly.

Don't get caught out! If you require any advice, assistance or training contact us today and speak to one of our consultants to arrange a site inspection on 07803 629630 or 01535 531430.