

Accident frequency rate (AFR) period 04 - target audience: all staff

We have had four accidents and three incidents throughout March. The 12 month rolling stands at 0.15. The AFR is common industry measure of how many RIDDOR reportable accidents and incidents have occurred per 100,000 hours worked (the expected number of hours worked by a construction worker in his or her lifetime.)

Event learning – target audience: all staff

Accident reportable under RIDDOR – Labour Solutions – North Lincs re-signalling scheme – IP was pushing a wheelbarrow that contained a water butt. He fell into an area being excavated by others approx. 300mm, suffering a fracture to his lower right leg.

Action: Excavations should not be left open without protection in place to avoid falling in, no matter how shallow. As a minimum, excavations should be demarcated with warning tape and a sign, although a rigid barrier may be a preferred option. When planning the work you need to think about access around excavations and tools to be used in areas with limited space.

Accident – Labour Solutions – North Lincs re-signalling scheme – IP was emptying concrete from a mixer when he lost his footing, and jarred his back. IP went to his GP the next day who prescribed anti-inflammatories.

Action: During the investigation, it became known that the IP previously suffered from back pain. Had this been declared when the IP commenced work on the project, the task could have been planned so that this individual would not have had to undertake any lifting duties. VGC requires you to complete the medical self-declaration honestly.

Accident – Labour Solutions – LU Track Partnership – IP was loading trolleys with another operative when a fence with sound barriers attached blew over and onto the IP whilst it was being erected. The IP suffered a bruised shoulder as a result.

Action: When putting up fencing in high winds consider how any loose panels are temporarily secured. Consider those conducting tasks locally or members of the public passing by. You may need to consider putting off this activity until a time when the fence can be erected safely there is less chance of it blowing over.

Health – World Asthma Day - target audience: all staff

World Asthma Day took place on 5 May 2015. It is run by the Global Initiative for Asthma and aims to improve the lives of people with asthma across the world.

GINA works with groups around the world to raise awareness about asthma, the prevention of asthma attacks, and what to do in an event of an asthma attack.

Asthma is a common long-term condition that can cause coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and breathlessness. Asthma can be controlled by medication and by making smart life style changes:

-  Avoid smoking and smoking areas
-  Avoid exposure to cleaning products
-  Avoid stressful situations
-  Exercise indoors during cold weather.

If you have any concerns or questions about asthma or would like to find out information on what to do during an asthma attack, contact your medical practitioner or seek further advice from the Asthma UK website www.asthma.org.uk.

Please contact your VGC contract supervisor or HR department regarding any occupational health related questions - 01895 671 800.

Outperformance – target audience: all staff

Jaskaran Singh – Healthrow Bravo Taxiways – VGC has recently been made aware of your award on the project. Ferrovia said, "Your work in overseeing H&S within your working environment, this ranged from briefing the site team and site visitors. You ensured that your working gang completed their tasks the first time". Well done Jas.

Paddy Collins – East Kent II – Paddy has recently been awarded the individual award by the EKII Alliance for the continual high standards of H&S maintained in the Gas House Road Yard. Well done Paddy.

Adam Hards and team – Rail Delivery Fleet – NR Works Delivery Supervisor Wessex recently commented, "Last night we delivered our planned work 20 x 216m in record time there were few Monday blues but Adam and team were brilliant again as ever; great work ethics and came over pretty sharp professionally to resolve the problem." Well done guys.

All of the above were recently awarded vouchers in recognition of their outperformance. If you have been commended by the client, tell us about it at besafe@vgcgroup.co.uk

Plant people interface – target audience: all staff

An operative working on one of our client's sites (non VGC) sustained thigh and calf bruising during an uncoupling operation. After uncoupling the water bowser from an attendant dumper, he then informed and signalled to the driver to drive forward. The dumper driver put the dumper into reverse in error and drove backwards causing damage to the rear of the dumper and tremmie rack injuring the operative by catching him with the rear wheel. Fortunately the operative only sustained bruising to his leg; however the outcome could have been much worse.

Learning:

- ✳ All mobile plant and vehicle entering the work area are to do so under the control of a trained banksman/plant vehicle marshal from a position of safety out of the exclusion zone and not in the potential path of any plant movement.
- ✳ When uncoupling the hitch, ensure the dumper is in neutral, switched off/isolated, the park brake is applied and the operator has dismounted before any other personnel enter the exclusion zone.
- ✳ On completion of the coupling/uncoupling and before the operator accesses the dumper, all personnel are to be in a position of safety.

Asbestos find – target audience: all staff

During the process of excavating for the formation level of a concrete flood wall at Aberthaw substation the banksman noticed suspicious material being unearthed. The banksman immediately halted the work and sought advice from the CIE. The work area was barred off and quarantined.



A sample was taken, double bagged and sealed before being taken to be analysed. The result of the sample was received within 24 hours. The sample has been confirmed as chrysotile asbestos. The principal contractor is arranging for a licensed contractor to remove all of the material and to dispose of it as hazardous waste. When excavation in an environment which has been industrialised for many years always be aware that asbestos, in some form or other, may have been buried indiscriminately.

Highways Agency becomes Highways England – target audience: all highways operatives

You may or may not be aware that the Highways Agency has reformed to become Highways England.



As part of this change there will be a few noticeable differences coming into force over the next few months. The first is that as of 1 June 2015 the high visibility clothing will change from yellow to orange. This is not to be confused with rail orange as the highways orange has to be class 3 top (which relates to the minimum coverage of the reflective strips on the top worn). There will be more signage throughout road works to make the drivers' experience driving through works greater. HE will also be targeting improving working methods across the next year. The four topics for focus are Services, Occupational Health and wellbeing, Plant and road vehicles, and Overhead hazards.

Environment – nesting bird season – target audience: all staff

Bird nesting season is generally from 1 March until 31 July. Vegetation or site clearance should be done outside the nesting season (1 March-31 July inclusive), although the nesting period may start before this and extend beyond it in many cases. This is to avoid impact to nesting birds and infringement of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. If clearance work has to be undertaken during the nesting season, a breeding bird survey needs to be carried out by a suitably qualified person. Failure to comply with this could result into a fine of up to £5,000 fine.

Any active nests identified should be protected until the young have fledged. Where a Schedule 1 (3) species is involved, mitigation for impacts, for example loss of nesting site, should be devised and implemented. Should you encounter a bird's nest during your work – STOP and report this to you supervisor immediately.

Driver safety – target audience: all drivers



A near miss was recorded on a recent project when a bottle rolled from under the seat in a van underneath the brake. Fortunately this did not result in an accident but it is a timely reminder to keep your vehicles clean.

PDSW update – target audience: all NR staff

East Midlands region has gone live with the new permit to works system as of 15 May. The next regions lined up are Scotland, Anglia, LNE (South), LNE (North and Central) and Wales; however no firm dates have been set for when they will move over to the new permit system.

LUCAS being replaced: all LU staff

The new process for anyone that loses/ has their LUCAS card stolen is to contact their manager/ VGC Training department. They will be set up for the online ICI e-learning: when they have completed it, they will need to call the VGC training department so this can be verified. Then they will be booked on an LU-ICI course.

This is the new style course where the competence is now uploaded on to the Sentinel website. If the person already holds a valid Sentinel card, the LU-ICI competence will be uploaded straight on to the Sentinel website and the competence will be valid. For those who do not hold a Sentinel card already, a photo will need to be supplied to Alice Dupree so a Sentinel card can be ordered. It can take up to two weeks for a new card to be received. Be aware that if your LUCAS card is lost or stolen you will not be able to work until you are in possession of a Sentinel card.

Manual handling of troughing products following ORR prohibition and improvement notices - target audience: all rail staff

On 22 April 2015 ORR issued the following notices:

- ✦ Prohibition Notice PN40/22042015 prohibiting "single individual employees or contractors manually lifting or carrying 10 or more units of troughing weighing 40kg or more in a 12 hours period" anywhere on Network Rail infrastructure.
- ✦ Prohibition Notice PN70/22042015 prohibiting "two employees or contractors manually lifting or carrying 10 or more units of troughing weighing 70kg or more in a 12 hours period" anywhere on Network Rail infrastructure.

Both of the prohibition notices apply immediately. Continuing the activity would be a criminal offence.

A further Improvement Notice IN/25/22042015 requires Network Rail to undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk to employees, and

contractors working under their control, from manually handling troughing weighing 25kg and more. That assessment will need to identify the measures necessary to control the risks identified.

This additional work is required by 25 October 2015. Further information will be communicated when the work is complete.

Immediate action required

- ✦ Compliance with the requirements of the Prohibition Notices is required immediately.
- ✦ If you are about to manually handle concrete troughing products then you must have an approved, site-specific risk assessment. If you haven't, then stop, request that a risk assessment is undertaken by a competent individual, and implement any resulting actions before continuing work.

Electronic payslips – target audience: all staff

VGC is now providing an electronic e-mail payslip service for all weekly paid staff. E-payslips will bring a number of benefits:

- **Receipt of pay information sooner** – e mail payslips will be sent as soon as the payroll run has been completed, therefore, you potentially could receive your payslip on a Wednesday.
- **Improved data security** – your personal pay information is safe, securely password protected and no longer circulated in the postal system.
- **Reduced environmental impact** – using e-payslips will significantly reduce the amount of paper and envelopes we use.
- **Saving money** – the cost of producing a payslip will be significantly reduced. We expect to save over £80,000 over the next five years (based on 800 payslips a week)
- **Duplicate payslips** – you will no longer need to request copies of payslips as you will be able to print as many as you like yourself.

Each week you will receive an email upon the completion of the weekly payroll run, with your payslip attached. All payslips are provided by email to a personal email address of your choice and are password protected. Your password will be your national insurance number. The payslip layout is the same as the current paper payslip.

If you would like to register for e-payslips please contact your contract supervisor or download the e-payslip registration form which can be found on our website <http://vqcgroup.co.uk/about/resources/forms/>