

See it, share it



This month's winner is key influencer Rishi Khera on the A14 project who spotted lifebuoys had fallen over following high winds. After reporting this, the lifebuoys were lifted back up and weighted down at the feet the same day.



Please make sure you share observations and close calls:

Text [07876 448 119](tel:07876448119)

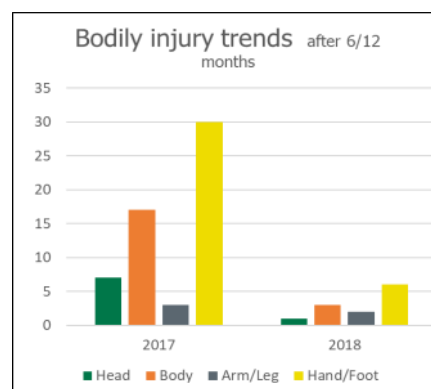
Email besafe@vgcgroup.co.uk

Injury trends

Most of our injuries this year have been to arms and legs. These are because of slips and trips. Please take care, especially when surfaces are wet. If you see a trip hazard, please report it immediately.

- We have had fewer injuries this year compared to last year.
- We have also had more observations.

The more people spot and report issues, the more they can be solved - and the fewer accidents we have!



Stress

Being able to manage our stress levels is paramount to our wellbeing. Ensuring we get enough sleep will help when dealing with budget concerns, workload and client demands.

Remember that our mental health is just as important as our physical health.

Results suggest that worries at work can have a negative impact on life outside work, leading to actions that could affect work performance.

Pledge less plastic

Congratulations to the VGC staff who won some of the categories in the Crossrail Anglia #PledgeLessPlastic photo competition.

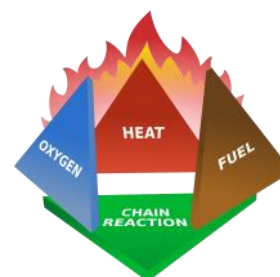
Should you wish to purchase VGC branded reusable thermal flash please contact marketing. Donations to Samaritans.

Waste and fire precaution

Ensure your sites are kept tidy with waste not left out. Fires, especially in hot dry weather, can start and spread easily when the following are not adhered too.

- segregate waste into the correct bins
- store flammables safely and securely

Three items need to be present for a fire to start and spread. Oxygen, heat and fuel. (known as the fire triangle)



For your safety

- ensure there is a fire procedure and that all operatives are aware
- ensure emergency lighting is tested
- ensure fire safety signage is displayed
- do not block fire exits, stairways or corridors
- identify people who are at risk

If you notice that these procedures are not being followed raise your concerns to your labour manager and register a close call.

Recording of Hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS)

Balfour Beatty have recently been fined £500,000 after the Crown Court agreed with the HSE who stated the company failed in its legal duty to adequately protect workers who were exposed to levels of vibration higher than necessary over a nine year period.

HAVS is a permanent condition affecting the nerves and blood vessels of the hand or arm.

The court found Balfour Beatty Utility Solutions Ltd. failed to assess the risk to workers' health, failed to put in place and monitor suitable risk control measures and failed to put in place a suitable system of health surveillance. The company also failed to report to the enforcing authorities a significant number of cases of employees diagnosed with HAVS as was legally required.

Balfour Beatty USL pleaded guilty to this offence however stated these issues have been addressed prior to the start of the HSE investigation.

Always ensure copies of the recording of the trigger times you are using vibrating tools is forwarded to your line manager. Ensure you do not use any vibrating tools unless absolutely necessary and you have been briefed on the RA and control measures out in place for this task. Record all times you are spending using the tool (commonly known as trigger time) and this information is forwarded to your line manager. Your line manager will provide you with a means for recording this.

If you feel you may be starting to suffer from HAVS or you believe you may have it as an existing condition please let your line manager or the HSQE department know so this condition can be managed.

Key influencer engagement

Congratulations to labour managers James Burke, winner of the most key influencer reports received for June.

Thank you.



Annual leave

Your entitlement to take annual leave is contained within your contract with VGC and you are required to take all leave within the leave year (Jan – Dec).

To book annual leave please fill in the online form at

www.vgcgroup.co.uk/holiday

Please give at least 2 weeks' notice of your intention to take leave.

You may take a maximum of 2 weeks leave at one time.

Do not book or pay for any holidays until your request has been approved by your VGC manager.

VGC will endeavor to approve your request for annual leave however we will have to take account of client operating requirements and the number of leave requests already approved.

At the end of the leave year any untaken leave will be lost – you will not be able to carry leave over into the following leave year and we will not pay holiday pay in lieu of untaken leave.

If you have any queries in relation to this please speak to your VGC labour manager or recruitment consultant.

Safety boots

Brand new boots will need a period for your feet to become accustomed to longer periods of time.

Avoid bunions and other foot conditions by ensuring you wear the correct sized boots and maintain good personal hygiene. Most sites will only allow certain types of safety boots. Always ensure they are correctly laced up for ankle support

If you get a blister ensure it is kept clean and if it persists visit your local pharmacy.



Look after your feet!!

Invasive plant species

An invasive plant species is a species of plant that is not native to a specific location, an introduced species that has a tendency to spread to a degree believed to cause damage to the environment, human economy or human health.

Damage to the environment is usually caused by the invasive plant getting established where it will dominate and eventually kill off any other plant species in the immediate area.

Damage to the human economy is caused by the cost of controlling and clearing an area from the plant. Property may become devalued as a result of the plant. Other restrictions on what the area can be used for may apply and the cost of transporting the waste to a suitable disposal outlet can cost many thousands of Pounds. Human health can be affected as many invasive species have a poisonous or irritable sap that can cause an allergic reaction. Even the airborne seeds, pollen or dust can cause health issues.



Invasive plant species will happily thrive in areas such as road verges, railway embankments and areas where there is not much cultivation such as waste land. Once established in an area, it is almost impossible to clear an area of the plant. Often, if the area needs to be cleared or tidied, only the top of the plant is removed allowing it to regrow. In addition, the part of the plant removed is able to spread by dropping seeds or rooting from a cutting meaning without correct storage and transportation, it may contaminate a much larger area. When undertaking clearance works or travelling through areas where these plants may exist, ensure the plants have been identified and suitable control measures for both removing the waste and cleaning of tools and clothing have been addressed. If you come across a plant you think is an invasive species, stop and notify your manager.

Sun protection and high temperatures

We are expecting the high temperatures to continue for the next few weeks. Here we show how heat can affect you and the best ways to keep as cool as possible.



Physical works including tasks such as manual handling become more difficult as you generate more heat which leads to excessive sweating; Site plant and office equipment such as DSE equipment can produce hot air in the immediate area which could cause you to feel tired or drowsy.

Heat stress is created by a combination of the body heat generated whilst working, the surrounding environment (air temperature, hot surfaces) and your clothing. Collectively, these three issues could potentially overwhelm the body's ability to deal with heat.

Other ways heat can affect you are:

- Increased irritability
- Loss of concentration
- Loss of efficiency in mental tasks
- Fatigue and threat of exhaustion

Follow the advice below to reduce your risk of heat related illness:

- Keep hydrated – Drink a lot of cool water. Early signs of dehydration are thirst and dark-coloured urine.
- Take breaks – When taking breaks, take them in the shade. Try to keep out of the sun between 11am to 3pm.
- Clothing – Select the right range of PPE clothing in line with the conditions you are working in. Ensure your neck is protected from the rays of the sun when working on site
- Sunscreen – Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 30+ UVA and UVB protection and top up every 2 to 3 hours.
- Eye protection – Wear sunglasses with UV protection, preferably wrap around.
- Support – Watch out for colleagues who may be affected by heat.

Mental health first aid

If you are feeling issues are starting to get on top of you or you just wish there was someone to talk to, speak with either your line manager, HR department or HSQE department. They can put you in touch with our own trained mental health first aiders. If you see a colleague who may not be their normal self, encourage them to contact any of the above. These conversations are done in confidence.