

**Accident frequency rate (AFR) period 06 - target audience: all staff**

We have had five accidents and three incidents in the past month. The 12 month AFR stands at 0.14.

**Event learning – target audience: all staff**

**Accident – Labour Solutions – Connah Quays**

IP sustained abrasion to left thumb, on protruding screw on exit gate. The following day attended A&E to check it out and returned immediately afterwards.

*Action: IP had attempted to make defective latch safe, Staff encouraged to report any defects and client notified.*

**Accident – Labour Solutions – Track Partnership –**

IP was carrying a bag of broken out concrete, when sharp edge punctured the bag and caused abrasion to forearm. First aid dressed and IP returned to.

*Action: Staff advised to assess loads prior to lifting.*

**Accident – Labour Solutions – Track Partnership –**

IP was unloading catch pit rings, whilst he was lowering the catchpit ring his finger was pinched between the ring and the platform.

*Action: Lifting technique reviewed and staff rebriefed on safe lifting techniques, with a focus around clear communication.*

**Accident – Labour Solutions – Track Partnership –**

IP was loading .5m rail onto trolley when strain to back was experienced.

*Action: TBT issued on safe lifting techniques. Manual handling assessments must be in place prior to lifting activities.*

**Accident – RDF – Kettering –** IP was splashed in the eye with hydraulic oil when hose leaked.

*Action: Eye irrigated Maintenance regime reviewed*

**Environmental Incident – RDF – Cartyne –** 20 litres of hydraulic oil discharged when hose leaked.

*Action: Area cleaned and spill kits replenished. NR notified and advised to review maintenance regime.*

**Incident – Labour Solutions North – BB NW**

**Electrification –** Communication protocol concerns raised following COSS/signaller dialogue.

*Action: COSS stood down and reacquainted with communication protocol. Review scheduled.*

**Environmental incident – RDF- West Drayton –**

10 litres of hydraulic oil discharged when hose leaked.

*Action: Area cleaned and spill kits replenished. NR notified and advised to review maintenance regime.*

**Health – Diabetes Awareness brief - target audience: all staff**

**Sunday 14 June to Saturday 20 June**



Diabetes week raises awareness of this common condition and raises vital funds to treat this condition. For more information visit the official Diabetes Awareness website - [https://www.diabetes.org.uk/get\\_involved/diabetes-week/](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/get_involved/diabetes-week/)

**What are the big three symptoms of diabetes?**

The three major symptoms of diabetes are:

- the need to urinate frequently
- increased thirst and fluid intake
- increased appetite

However, when it comes to type 2 diabetes, symptoms may be far subtler and develop slowly.

**Prevention**

Research studies have found that a moderate weight loss and exercise can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes among adults at high risk of diabetes.

If you recognise these symptoms, it's well worth seeing your doctor or healthcare expert for a diabetes test. If you have any concerns or questions regarding health issues please contact your VGC contract supervisor or HSQE department - 01895 671 800 or seek further advice from the Diabetes Awareness website [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

**Health – Heat stroke, skin and dehydration  
- target audience: all staff**



In the UK, cases of heat exhaustion and heatstroke can occur during periods of hot weather. Please be aware of the following:

**Prevention controls**

**Stay out of the heat**

- ✳ Make sure that you walk in the shade.
- ✳ Apply sunscreen thoroughly to all areas of exposed skin.
- ✳ Wear a hard hat.

**Cool yourself down**

- ✳ Have plenty of cold drinks, but avoid drinks that contain caffeine.
- ✳ Eat cold foods such as salad and fruit, which have a high water content.
- ✳ Spraying water on your skin or placing a damp cloth on the back of your neck will help you cool down.

**Look out for others**

- ✳ Keep an eye on isolated or vulnerable people.
- ✳ Make sure that they're able to keep cool.
- ✳ Be alert if someone is unwell or further help is needed.

**Dehydration**

Dehydration is usually caused by not drinking enough: fluid that is lost is not replaced. The climate, the amount of physical exercise you are doing, and your diet can also contribute to dehydration.

- ✳ Drink plenty of fluids if you're dehydrated. This can be water, semi-skimmed milk, diluted squash or fruit juice.
- ✳ If you're finding it difficult to keep water down, try drinking small amounts more frequently.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding heat stroke please contact your VGC contract supervisor or HSQE department - 01895 671 800.

**Outperformance – target audience: all staff**

**Pastorel Razvan Caplea** – Commended for raising an environmental card It was raising an issue to do with the washing out of concrete lorries on site and is a positive means of highlighting areas for improvement.

**Austen Harrison Snr, Austen Harrison Jnr, Drew Harrison and Michael Oates** – Commended by Gary Smith for the team's continued dedication to the cascading of rail with the LWRT. Well done.

**Alan Axon, Paul Gregory, Shaun Callaghan-MacDonald** – Commended by Paul Francis in reference to their excellent work and professionalism.

**Natalie Wood** - Commended for the high level of performance throughout April.

**Tadhg Bolger** - Commendation received from Muquid as follows: 'The UoS project is progressing well despite a number of challenges that have cropped up, but these things are to be expected on any kind of build project. Shaggy and the rest of the VGC team have been absolutely fantastic and doing a great job. I can't praise them enough and we really do appreciate the effort and his attitude towards the project which is always positive and 'can-do'.

**Matt Dean** – LMC commended Matt for his assistance with regard to Victor Weldridge losing his Sentinel card. Letter and voucher have been sent.

**VGC Labour Solutions** – team at Ruislip commended for ongoing support to track partnership and that of week 9 in particular: the works were well executed on the ground by your efforts and hard work.

**John McGarry** – Commended for the quality of his paperwork and attention to detail.

**Joseph Atherton** – Commended for the excellent housekeeping standards on site.

**Norman Wood** – Balfour Beatty commended Norman for the quality of his work and his positive can do attitude.

**Laura Perry, Alex Dalton, Chantal Austin, Daniel Maciucă** – Commended for the time and effort given to making the VGC Golf day a huge success.

**Laura Perry, Chris Ryan, Julie Norris** – Commended for the contributions made in support of the Infrastructure 21 Training Award.

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](mailto:besafe@vgcgroup.co.uk)

## Plant people interface – target audience: all staff

Following a recent fatal accident which occurred on a non-VGC site, where a load struck an individual beneath, all staff are reminded to:

- ✦ Ensure that exclusion zones are implemented and maintained during all plant movements. Consider both the load and the plant and remember that there are “blind spots” in the operator’s field of vision – If these areas are entered you are at increased risk.



Never enter the agreed exclusion zone, unless directed to by the person in charge.

## Communication – target audience: all staff

During recent discussions with safety representatives and supervisors, concerns were raised regarding radio protocols across the teams. As communication is a key factor in ensuring personal safety, we wish to remind you that there is a certain radio protocol which must be adhered to.

### Correct use of radio

When communicating, it is essential to ensure your communication has been understood correctly.

- ✦ Use job titles as call signs not names (Supervisor, Chute, Manipulator, Clamp)
- ✦ Avoid local dialect or slang terms
- ✦ Keep messages clear and concise
- ✦ Ensure all parties on correct channel (important in areas with more than one machine / train)
- ✦ Press the button prior to speaking, and depress when finished. Avoid keeping your finger on the button
- ✦ Use the phonetic alphabet, to assist and when using numbers communicate individually. Instead of ‘twenty’ use ‘two, zero’.

Ask for your message to be relayed back to confirm it is understood, and when receiving a message repeat it back to the issuer, to ensure all parties are confident that the message was delivered correctly.

## Personal protective equipment – target audience, small tools operatives

Many of our client’s sites operate an eye protection policy. Mandatory light eyewear is often a requirement to enter sites.

While these offer a level of protection for airborne particulates (dust and insects) about a site, other activities, such as cutting, drilling, grinding, scabbling, breaking-out, using a poker and chiselling will require more robust eye protection, commonly known as goggles. Check your risk assessment and make sure that the PPE is fit for purpose.



## Manual handling – target audience, all operatives

Manual handling injuries are a cause of increasing accidents. Always ensure that the task you are undertaking has been assessed in advance; ensure that you are trained and that the load is assessed prior to lift.

Remember:

- ✦ Task
- ✦ Individual
- ✦ Load
- ✦ Environment

Ensure that where team lifts are being undertaken, communication method is agreed in advance.

If in doubt, STOP and escalate to your line manager to ensure that the risks associated with handling can be controlled, and we all remain injury free.

**Use of strimmer – target audience, small tools operatives**

While vegetation clearance is under way, consider the below when using a strimmer:

**Before starting work**

1. You must be trained and conversant in use of strimming equipment to be used.
2. Ensure that machinery is in proper repair and working order before commencing work.
3. Must have PPE ie safety footwear, facemask, head protection, hearing protection, gloves, appropriate outdoor clothing.
4. Must have appropriate tools and equipment in good condition.
5. Consider risks and hazards in proposed work area to self and others, e.g. broken glass/cables etc.
6. Inspect work area before commencing, i.e. Cat scan, check for and remove debris etc.
7. Ensure familiarity with method statement for equipment and proposed work site.

**Hazards to be aware of**

1. Injury to feet and legs from cutting line
2. Ejection of debris from machinery while cutting
3. Handling of sharp items of litter and items with biohazard risks
4. Slips and trips due to uneven or slippery ground
5. Manual handling of equipment
6. Contact with moving parts of machinery
7. Contact with fuel and oils and plant materials
8. Noise from machinery operations
9. Repetitive strain injuries
10. Exposure due to weather conditions

**Protection – target audience, rail staff**

Following a recent incident where an operative ended up working in an area where he and his work group were not protected and potentially could have been struck by a train, it is essential to ensure:

- ✚ You are familiar with the location of work
- ✚ The paperwork is issued and approved
- ✚ Safe system of work hierarchy is used.
- ✚ You have all of the necessary protection, including additional protection such as marker boards, detonators as detailed in your SSOW pack or task briefing.
- ✚ Your pack must be complete and received before you start your shift.

**If you are in any doubts or you are not 100% confident STOP and CHECK.**

**Environment – oak processionary moths and caterpillars**

Oak Processionary Caterpillars and Moths  
Caterpillar (Larvae) Mass



Nest on tree trunk



Adult Moth



A number of oak trees with oak processionary moths, nests and caterpillars were identified recently at the following locations.

- ✚ Piccadilly line - Park Royal to Alperton area
- ✚ Central line – North Acton to Perivale and North Acton junction to Ealing
- ✚ District line – Acton Town to Gunnersbury
- ✚ Network Rail assets - Great Western routes towards Bristol.

These are not to be removed and work in these areas must be approved before you start.

Skin contact with these species can cause allergic reactions, inhalation can cause sore throat and any disturbance can result in prosecution as these are protected.

If noted in your area of work, stop and report it immediately, and if you do come into contact or inhalation report to A&E immediately.

All staff are reminded that during your works any species in the area should be considered to avoid disturbance and suitable controls put in place to protect them.

## Mobile phone use while driving– target audience: all staff

### The law

- ✘ It is illegal to use a handheld mobile device while driving.
- ✘ Handheld devices include mobile phones being used to follow a map, display a text or to check social media.
- ✘ The prohibition applies even if you're stopped at traffic lights or queuing in traffic

### Good practice

1. Whenever possible, turn your mobile phone off before you start driving. Even a text alert or ringing phone can be a huge distraction.
2. If you need to use your phone, you must always park safely first.
3. If you call someone and realise they are driving, end the call immediately.
4. The only time you can use your phone while driving is if you need to call 999 or 112 in an emergency and it is unsafe or impractical to stop. (The definition of an emergency is something dangerous or serious, such as an accident, which happens suddenly or unexpectedly and needs fast action in order to avoid harmful results).

## Spill response – target audience: all staff

Prevention is best: check all equipment, hoses and vulnerable points as part of your pre-user checks. If defective STOP and have this addressed.

In the event of a spill:

- ✘ Make sure you're aware of the location of spill-kit
- ✘ STOP WORK immediately.
- ✘ Identify the source of the spill and remedy.
- ✘ Contain the spillage – construct a bund around the spill to stop it spreading.
- ✘ Use booms to contain oil spills that have already entered a water course.
- ✘ Inform site supervision immediately.
- ✘ Wear appropriate PPE.
- ✘ Protect sensitive areas (eg watercourses or surface water drains) – use drain covers or construct a bund.
- ✘ Clean up the spill. Use absorbent granules/pads to mop up spills. Large pools of oil or spills which cannot be absorbed should be removed by pumping into a sealed container.
- ✘ Dispose of all contaminated materials. Ensure any contaminated water is taken to an appropriately licensed disposal site.

## Annual leave – target audience: all staff

Please ensure that you take your full annual leave entitlement in the current holiday year.

- VGC will not authorise payment in lieu of untaken holidays.
- VGC will not allow annual leave to be carried over into the following year.
- Unused holiday days and holiday pay will be lost!

You are required to complete an annual leave request form available from your contract supervisor, recruitment consultant or on the VGC website - and provide two weeks' notice of your intention to take annual leave. This form should be completed in full and given to your VGC supervisor / recruitment consultant for approval.

You may take a maximum of two weeks leave at any one time. Do not book and pay for holidays until your request for leave has been approved. VGC will endeavour to approve requests for annual leave however the operational needs of the business will need to be taken into consideration.

You are reminded to set aside a number of days leave every year to cover the Christmas construction industry shutdown period. This will be notified by individual projects.

## Reporting– target audience: all staff

The key towards achieving a successful, safe working environment is being able to identify hazards and controlling them:

Many clients record close calls, near hits, near misses, improvement opportunities, incidents, accidents etc. Irrespective of what they are called, identifying them helps us all control the hazards, reduce the risks and make our workplace safer for all of us

What should you report?

- ✘ Any accident, irrespective of the extent of the injury.
- ✘ Any incident, irrespective of the resultant damage or loss.
- ✘ Any near hit, irrespective of the fact no injury or damage occurred.

**Remember: it is just as important to report good practice for us to note as it is to record hazards and close calls.**