

See it, share it



Thank you to Vasile Mihai on the A14 C2H project who identified his work area did not have a spill kit available. Vasile raised this with his supervisor before returning to the stores to collect a spill kit.

Fairness, inclusion, respect

We should treat every person as an individual, according to their needs.

We expect our workforce to:

- Support each other to do their best
- Make everyone feel they are a key part of the business
- Value the people we work with – everyone has different skills to bring to the team
- Be considerate, polite and fair
- Be aware of their language and behaviour

That will create an atmosphere where we all succeed – whoever we are and regardless of our backgrounds and beliefs.

Slips, trip and falls – working conditions

Recently an operative on a Highways England project fractured their elbow when they tripped.

The site had recently been inspected and was considered a safe place to work.

Remember:

- Check your work area and equipment before you start work.
- If conditions change, make sure they are rechecked before you carry on.
- Keep your site clean and tidy: make sure all materials are stored correctly

Be safe – report anything unsafe.

If you feel it is unsafe, even if you have been told it is safe, stop.

You are responsible for your own safety. Stop and report it. Do not carry on until you are sure everything is resolved.

Giant hogweed

Be careful if you are carrying out vegetation works: you may be working near giant hogweed.

If you get sap on your skin, wash it off straight away: sunlight can make the sap burn and blister.

- It can be harder to see if it is mixed in with other vegetation.
- Make sure you wear long sleeves.
- Be aware it can be shielded by other vegetation.
- Please report any sightings as soon as possible.
- Invasive species like giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed must be disposed of by specialists.



Working at height

During an unannounced inspection by the HSE, a scaffolder was personally fined for not clipping on a body harness.

HSE statistics show that falls from height are almost half of the fatal accidents in the construction sector. Scaffolders are most at risk when erecting, altering or dismantling scaffolding.



Remember you can also fall from height if you fall into an excavation, so take care near excavations too.

Using hand tools

Before you use tools, especially small hand tools, ensure that they are correctly engaged, and not likely to slip.

Recent injuries have happened where a tool was not correctly engaged with the clip, and slipped causing a bruise.

Drivers

If you are asked to drive a vehicle on site, please make sure you have had the relevant drivers' induction. Ensure your VGC line manager is aware and you have the correct driving licence - especially if you will be towing or driving a minibus. Highways England has also issued a safety notice reminder that all road vehicles on sites must comply with the 'chapter 8' requirements.

RIDDOR accident

Recently, on a Highways England project near Birmingham, a worker wearing the correct PPE boots stepped off a kerb onto some hard standing.

Unfortunately as he stepped back, he stood on a large stone. This caused him to roll his ankle causing a hairline fracture. Always be aware of what you are stepping onto.

Touch lookouts on noisy worksites

Network Rail's safety task force have changed the safety procedures for noisy worksites which require a touch lookout to warn staff of an approaching train.

It is better to use noisy equipment in a possession or a line blockage, with additional protection to remove the need for lookouts. If your work is noisy, you must wear hearing protection.



If the work on track involves noise from hand tools or other plant, and it is planned on open lines and therefore needs touch lookouts, Network Rail says there must be extra senior line manager approval for each specific work task. Each such task must be specifically authorised in advance by the infrastructure maintenance engineer (IME) or equivalent (or senior) manager. The IME must challenge the planned system of work; if possible, they must secure a safer method of protection.

If the work has to be done with touch lookouts - there is no way to do it with a safer system - then the IME must check the competences and experience of the staff in the work group, and make sure the site supervision is good enough. The system must be tested by the COSS or safe work leader before any work begins, to make sure it is safe.