

### Are your employees fit to drive?

Following the tragic accident in December 2014, involving a bin lorry crashing into a crowd of Glasgow Christmas shoppers there is increasing pressure on employers to ensure that their employees are fit for driving and operating heavy machinery.

The operators of large plant within the construction industry play a vital role and it is crucial that they are both physically and mentally capable of performing their tasks safely while protecting themselves, co-workers and bystanders.

Employers and others have a significant part to play in making sure that plant operators have the appropriate level of fitness and the construction industry has produced clear guidance to those with an interest in ensuring that operators of large plant are fit for this type of work. It provides straightforward, comprehensive and



easy to adopt steps, which includes the fitness aspects of recruitment, managing employees who may develop health problems at work and setting up medical fitness assessments with Occupational Health units.

Workplace Health and Wellbeing support the construction industry by offering initial and ongoing health assessments involving a range of techniques to determine fitness to drive. Our assessments meet the required standards compiled from the DVLA, CBH and the HSE, and focus on the following core areas:

- **Health Questionnaire** – Looking at previous health history, current problems and medication
- **Musculoskeletal Health, Mobility and Co-ordination Assessment** – The ability to access and control the machine effectively and safely
- **Cardiovascular Health** – Indicates acute or underlying health problems
- **Nervous System** – Ability to control machinery effectively and safely
- **Visual Acuity, Colour Perception and Peripheral Fields** – Looking at sight and the ability to judge distances and anticipate hazards
- **Hearing** – Assesses the ability to hear warnings and receive directions
- **General Health Assessment** – Looking at indications of acute or underlying health issues that may lead to a reduced ability or incapacity
- **Psychological/Mental Health** – Stability for working in isolation (in a machine cab) and in stressful situations with responsibility

To read the industry guidance in full go to:  
[http://www.ipaf.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/documents/en/SFPSGMedicalFitnessforPlantOperations.pdf](http://www.ipaf.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/en/SFPSGMedicalFitnessforPlantOperations.pdf)

Contact us today if you would like further information about our **Plant Operator Assessments**.

### Small family business fined for COSHH and vibration breach

A stone-masonry company based in County Durham received the fine from Consett Magistrates' Court for breaching both the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) and the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 (CVWR).

There are well known risks from silica and vibration within the industry and despite previous Health and Safety Executive advice, employees were put at risk of preventable suffering and serious health conditions. No risk assessments were made for employees working with vibrating tools and the HSE said that exposure to upper limit vibration was likely and if risk assessments

had been carried out lower vibration tools would have been identified, which would have reduced the risk of exposure. The HSE also found that no health surveillance had been carried out between 2008 and 2014.

#### Health Surveillance – We can help!

Workplace Health and Wellbeing can support your organisation with specialist advice and support on a comprehensive range of health surveillance services. To speak with one of our Business Managers about your Health Surveillance needs please call 01603 286667/286644.

## Construction Industry – what Occupational Health can do for You!

By law, the construction industry must eliminate, prevent or control the risks to its workers, which includes; exposure to asbestos, manual handling of loads, the use of vibrating tools and exposure to loud noise, dusts, lead, chemicals, sunlight and exhaust emissions.

The Health and Safety Executive has published construction industry guidance to help employers manage occupational health risk. The guidance intends to help employers understand; how to assess the risks to health, what a company needs

to do to comply with legislation, when an occupational health provider may be needed, what to expect from an occupational health provider and how they can help an organisation control and even prevent risks.

To read the full document, visit:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/coniac/coniac-oh-guidance.pdf>



## FREE NHS Health Checks – don't miss out!

We're proud to be able to provide the NHS Health Checks to organisations in Norfolk. Working in partnership with Public Health Norfolk to support the delivery of the national disease prevention programme. We are able to bring this to your workplace free of charge\*. The Health Check is aimed at those aged between 40-74 years and looks for early warnings for heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease. The good news is all these conditions are preventable!

The Health Check will take between 20 and 30 minutes and includes:

- Blood pressure measurement
- Height and weight
- A lifestyle assessment, which will help employees to understand how diet and activity levels could affect health
- A simple blood test to check cholesterol and/or blood sugar levels if required

For more details about the NHS Health Check programme, please see: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/nhs-health-check/Pages/NHS-Health-Check.aspx> to find out when we could visit your business please contact [karen.warnes@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:karen.warnes@nnuh.nhs.uk) or [jane.egle@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:jane.egle@nnuh.nhs.uk)

*\*Providing employees satisfy the declared criteria around age and current health conditions. Travel expenses will be charged for workplace visits outside of Norwich.*

## Sunlight exposure and outdoor workers: the good, the bad and the ugly...

Too much unprotected sun exposure can be harmful and even deadly for outdoor workers who are at an increased risk of skin cancer, cataracts, skin ageing (photoaging) and even suppression of the immune system. Sun exposure isn't all bad however, the sun can have a positive effect on psychological wellbeing and human skin can make large amounts of vitamin D which is essential for bone health.

At the beginning of February, NICE published a report giving guidance on how to communicate the risks and benefits of natural sunlight exposure (specifically, ultraviolet rays UVA and UVB). Recommendations within the report will help tailor public health activities and focus on those groups most at risk from over or under exposure to sunlight. Employers are given clear guidance and the report also recommends that outdoor workers should modify their behaviour to reduce their risk of skin cancer and vitamin D deficiency.

### Guidance for employers:

- Implement a policy on sunlight exposure to help meet your responsibilities, under the Health and Safety at

Work Act sun exposure is an occupational hazard for people working outdoors.

- Incorporate information on sunlight exposure into routine practice and health and safety training.
- Provide advice according to people's occupation and role.
- Train employees to understand the risks and benefits of sunlight exposure and encourage basic self-checks for mole and skin changes.

### Health and Safety Executive advice for outdoor workers:

- Keep your top on.
- Wear a hat with a brim or a flap that covers the ears and the back of the neck.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible, during your breaks and especially at lunch time.
- Use a high factor sunscreen of at least SPF15 on exposed skin.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- Check your skin regularly for any unusual moles or spots and see a doctor if you find anything that is changing in shape, size or colour, itching or bleeding.

## Workplace Health & Wellbeing; a local provider of choice

Jane Egle and Karen Warnes, Business Managers at Workplace Health and Wellbeing, are on hand to provide details on our range of services and how we may best offer support to your business.

Call us on 01603 286667/286644 or email [jane.egle@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:jane.egle@nnuh.nhs.uk) / [karen.warnes@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:karen.warnes@nnuh.nhs.uk) .

"Fit healthy and motivated individuals are the key to success in any well run organisation"

Why not have a look on our website for further information of how we can help to protect and maintain employee health at work <http://www.workplacehealthandwellbeing.co.uk/>

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