

Birmingham Health, Safety & Environment Association

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Newsletter

November 2013

Monthly Meeting 11th November 2013

Dally Masaun, BHSEA Chair, welcomed Members to the meeting and extended a particular warm welcome to our new (but returning) Member Shabir Hussein, Management and Construction Consultant based in West Bromwich. Welcome to our invited guests here today including Andy Snape (who is a guest of Steve Parton).

Apologies were received from Gerry Mulholland.



CONGRATULATIONS!

To **Paul Wilkins**, Health and Safety Officer at St.Basils Housing Association and **Paul Dockerill**, New Business Director at Inex Home Improvements Ltd.

Paul Wilkins (pictured here receiving his certificate and prize from BHSEA Chair Dally Masaun), is one of the three 'winners' following comments/suggestions they submitted as part of the BHSEA Questionnaire which was circulated to all Members earlier on this year.



Paul Dockerill managed to escape our sleuth photographer and the third winner, **David Hitchen**, Safety, Health, Environment and Quality Manager at Interserve Site Services was unable to be at this meeting. We hope that David will be able to join us at the meeting on the 9th December to collect his prize.

The comments/suggestions submitted by both Pauls and David were judged to be the best when considered against the criteria set by the judging panel.

Not only do our Winners receive a certificate they also get one years' free membership of BHSEA!! Howzat!

Dally went on to introduce today's Speaker and topic.....

(Don't forget to check BHSEA website www.bhsea.org.uk for the slides covering today's presentations).

'Electrical Safety, Electrical Competence & Changes to PAT Testing Requirements'

Chris Johnston

Electrical Tutor, British Gas Electrical Services

Chris began by explaining that although he is not full-time with British Gas, he is a Chief Examiner with City and Guilds which deals with electrical qualification and verification.

Chris reminded us that his presentation today will be focused on the responsibilities of an electrical duty holder (see slides 5,6 and 7 of Chris's Power Point Presentation www.bhsea.org.uk).

The Responsibilities of the Duty Holder:

The responsibilities fall within Regulation 3 of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. If the employer has "control", then the employer has electrical responsibilities i.e. a duty to comply with relevant health and safety legislation, and is classed as a "Duty holder". The Duty Holder may be an employee who has control over a budget and/or employees. In large organisations it is normal to have a principal duty holder together with local or other duty holders.

Safe Place of Work:

This is covered by Regulation 4, which is a general but key Regulation:

*"All **systems** shall at **all times** be of such construction as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, **danger**".*

Chris explained that the duty to provide a safe place of work would include the fixed wiring within the building as well as anything connected or plugged in to it. Note the phrase "...at all times...", and there are no exceptions to this strict requirement, even if the job will only take a few minutes. BUT note "...so far as is reasonably practicable...", which does provide for some flexibility.

The wiring should also be in good condition and any work on or near a system

*"shall be carried out in such a manner as not to give rise, so far as is reasonably practicable, to **danger**".*



This applies even if it is only repairs that are being carried out. Chris drew our attention to the phrase “..give rise to danger...” (see Slide 9 of Chris’s presentation), in other words, there does not need to be an accident or injury to have occurred for danger to exist. It’s all about **prevention** and not the outcome.

*“Any equipment provided under these Regulations for the purpose of protecting persons at work on or near **electrical equipment** shall be suitable for the use for which it is provided....”*

Equipment must be in good working order, properly maintained and used correctly.

Strength and Capability of Electrical Equipment (Reg 5):

Chris gave us an example to illustrate this point. It involved a situation where a wooden panel was put in place rather than a metal panel. Chris reminded us that wood is inappropriate in the event of an explosion.

Access and egress to electrical switchgear must be adequate. There should be sufficient space provided to reach equipment for maintenance and repair purposes. Chris commented that most prosecutions come about via general enforcing authority inspections and not necessarily from electrical specialists. Why? Mainly because problems are often easy to spot/pick up.

Regular Maintenance:

Yes! It can be expensive. Chris said, in his experience, that money can be freely available around production areas, but non-productive areas can be perceived as not being worth the spend. Keeping a record of when things are moved or changed can be extremely useful. Records which detail the work of competent persons, including modifications made is evidence that the equipment has been correctly installed.

Periodic Inspection and Testing:

This may be via a third party. A report should be provided that details the recommendations to be carried out. A word of warning here from Chris...the cheapest quote for inspection and testing may just mean that the least amount is done. Chris noted that it can be hard to differentiate between the different levels of work being quoted for. Remember that as soon as the contractor has carried out some work, the duty holder retains responsibility under the Regs.

Chris noted that the Regs talk about “the system”, which is a generic term that means that parts can be missed or overlooked. For example, if you take a piece of equipment such as a hand dryer in the toilet accommodation, and the fixed wiring. The fixed wiring will be checked under the Regs, but the hand dryer may well be overlooked in terms of any formal inspection/testing regime. However, an initial inspection and test on installation should pick up any problems at an early stage. George Allcock, BHSEA Management Committee Member flagged up the fact that user (visual) checks can be very useful. Chris agreed. Visual checks should be part of the testing regime as well as other tests including isolating, disconnecting and the use of an instrument to test.

Person Competent to Prevent Danger and Injury:

If a person is not competent, then supervision must be in place. There is no mention of a qualification within the Regs, moreover Chris's view is that the competent person should have technical knowledge **and experience**. Shouldn't be an either or which the Regs seem to indicate. Why? Chris described a situation where an electrician moves between a domestic environment to an industrial one, the technical knowledge may be there but experience could be lacking! Here is an example of where there would be a need for supervision because of a lack of competency.

IET Wiring Regulations – Seventeenth Edition:

Chris noted that there have been some recent amendments to these Regs., (formerly known as 'IEE', but now changed to IET).

What's New/Noteworthy?

1. Electrical Installations designed more than 2 years ago can comply with the Regs at the time of the concept. Electrical installations designed after December 2011 must comply with the new document. So the Regs are not retrospective. Only new work has to comply with the amended Regs.
2. Periodic Inspection and Testing is qualified by the term 'so far as is reasonably practicable', which means that as far as you have control, you must make sure that the electrical installation complies. Chris added that there is Guidance available from the IET which support the Regs.
3. Certification and Reporting. Here, there is not just a name change, the most significant change is the coding of issues identified/observed during the inspection. Each observation gets coded:
 - **Code C1** means danger present **now**. This must be a breach and has to be reported to the named contact person.
 - **Code C2** means that the issue observed is **potentially dangerous**. Which means that something else needs to occur before the danger exists. So it is urgent but not immediate.
 - **Code C3** is where the inspector makes a suggestion of improvement, for example, in the case of a hand dryer with the earth cut off.

Once the equipment is plugged in, it becomes part of the electrical system and therefore part of the in-house inspection and testing regime. Chris added that there are often problems in places such as hospitals where patients/relatives bring in electrical items from home and plug in to the supply. Care homes are another problem area. Hotels and guest houses are also difficult areas to manage and at the end of the day it will have to come back to 'so far as is reasonably practicable'.

User Checks:

There may be a need to have some level of training together with a reporting procedure. Chris mentioned that he had recently carried out a half day training session with cleaning staff.

Records and Checks:

Records will need to be kept throughout the life of the equipment. Checks will be subject to sampling rates, which are covered in the Regs.

Chris concluded by reiterating the advantages and benefits of employing a competent electrical contractor.

Members' Questions

Mick Collins from Loughborough University asked about compliance and whether there is anything planned along the lines of 'Gas Safe'? Chris said that nothing is expected and that the nearest body we've got is the N.I.C., which is similar to a 'mini' governing body which promotes and sells the quality standard. Chris also mentioned the E.C.A. which is a contractors association which promotes quality but has no monitoring role.

Linda Ley from Unipart Logistics asked about Code C1 and whether, in the case of there being a large number of these, there is any responsibility to report to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)? Chris said that, in his experience, if the client receiving the C1 agrees for the contractor to do the remedial work there and then, the HSE will not need to be informed. Chris added that where a report is submitted containing a number of C1's, then the client should have known about the situation and dealt with it long before the report came through!

Roger Caleb from the National Grid commented that in his opinion, thermal imaging is useful in detecting electrical problems. It is effective and there is an i-phone App that can be used!

For the full and comprehensive detail of the presentation given today including slides, please refer to the BHSEA website www.bhsea.org.uk

Dally thanked Chris for his excellent presentation. The depth of Chris's knowledge of his subject was clearly demonstrated by the quality of his presentation and the responses to questions raised. Dally went on to introduce our Speaker filling the Members' Corner 'slot' today, BHSEA's very own Tim Prestage, Director of Tim restage Ltd., and BHSEA Vice-Chair:



'Asbestos in Machinery Matters'

The reason for bringing this particular topic to Members today is to underline the fact that asbestos contained within machinery can so easily be overlooked. Although the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (CAWR) 2012, covers buildings **AND** machinery, machinery is not included within the usual building Survey, and there is frequently sparse information available.

Tim began by explaining that the 'cut off' point in terms of asbestos used is 1999. The last batch imported was in 1994, when 40,000 tons of asbestos came into the UK. The focus today will be on machines brought prior to 1999.

CAWR 2012

The Regs make specific reference to asbestos in machinery, however it is regarded as a 'specialist area' and therefore is often ignored/overlooked. Tim said that he had experienced this 'neglect' in an Asbestos Surveyors Course that he had recently attended.

Tim reminded us of some key facts about asbestos:

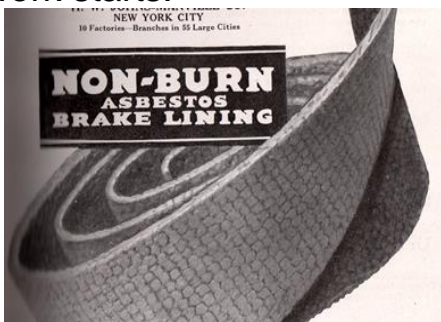
- In the general environment, asbestos fibre levels should be less than the control limit i.e. 0.1 asbestos fibres per cubic centimetre of air (0.1 f/cm³).
- Most of us who are over 50 years of age will have been exposed to asbestos levels that are not acceptable today.
- Finding asbestos is a specialist job and the fibres cannot be seen/defined by using the naked eye.
- The environment becomes safe (after asbestos removal) only if clearance monitoring has been carried out and confirmed that asbestos fibre levels are not elevated.
- By April 2015, all workers and self-employed persons carrying out non-notifiable work will have to be signed up to a programme of health surveillance.
- If a machine is made and CE marked post 1999, it is very unlikely that asbestos is present.

CAWR says that maintenance work on plant or equipment that might contain asbestos, needs to be risk assessed. In other words, the location of asbestos needs to be identified, the type and condition, and the risks assessed managed and controlled.

Where Can Asbestos Be Found in Machinery?

- Clutch & Brakes: ACM in friction material.
- Control Box: ACM in millboard as thermal material.
- Isolator: ACM in millboard as thermal material.
- Cabling: ACM in felt and cardboard used as insulation in electrical equipment.
- Plaited tubing: in some electrical cabling.
- Drive belts: ACM woven in composition belts.
- Air system: ACM acoustic linings in baffles, silencers, and pipe insulation.
- Filters: ACM in Oil or Air Filters.
- Electrical Wiring: Braided or plaited cable.

Your contractor should be asking to see the asbestos assessment before any work starts.



Brake and Clutch lining ACM



Electrical Equipment Arc Shields, ACM in fuses and electrical contacts

What Next?

1. Compile a register of machines being used (there are simple documents that can be downloaded to help with this).
2. Talk to your maintenance engineer and check the records for clutches that have been changed.
3. Label the machine.
4. Log the location of each machine and the number of that machine.
5. Complete a permit to work for all who carry out work on the machine.

Helpfully, Tim reminded us that the HSE has a website that gives very comprehensive and useful information. Don't forget the Asbestos Guides and the 'Essentials' Guidance Sheets.

George Allcock added that asbestos can also often be found in the gasket to heat treatment services and that asbestos insulation was used on metal moulding tools. **Mark Hoare** mentioned that the University of Birmingham had found asbestos in a braille making machine. **David Hughes** added that he had come across a block of asbestos under a furnace in a foundry!

Dally thanked Tim for his presentation. We have been reminded of a few key issues concerning asbestos and we know not to overlook machinery and equipment in our own organisations.

(Don't forget to check BHSEA website www.bhsea.org.uk for the slides covering today's presentations).

Announcements:

• **Join BHSEA in Getting Your Business Known.....**

Following on from the 'Mock Trial' Article in the Express and Star (E&S) in October, BHSEA has negotiated for a further article(s) in the E&S Regeneration Supplement (including a glossy business magazine) which will be circulated in January 2014. It will also appear online at www.expressandstar.co.uk The Express and Star has a readership of 231,000 the article/ads will also be in front of 1,037,940 unique visitors to the E & S website. We will also benefit from a glossy magazine which will be distributed to a targeted business audience. The January Article will be a full newspaper page, half of which will be used to advertise BHSEA and the other half will be available to BHSEA Members who want to advertise the services of their own organisation. There are eight advertising 'slots' available. Don't delay....three Member organisations have already booked a 'slot'.

Contact the Secretary secretary@bhsea.org.uk for prices and further details.

• **Job Opportunity:**

A small group of companies, with 43 employees based at the office in Cradley Heath, is looking for a local safety advisor to assist in the improvement of Health and Safety operations. The initial task would be to update Risk Assessments followed by guidance on various issues identified in a recent H & S audit.

Contact Peter Davies Managing Director of Woven Wire Limited as follows:

Tel: 01384 411991

Mobile: 07802 202422 Email: Peter@davieswovenwire.co.uk

- **BHSEA's Newest Honorary Member:**



Congratulations go to Tony Hall on his retirement! Tony left Willmott Dixon Partnerships in November. Tony's son Dave arranged a 'surprise party' which was held on the 9th November. The photograph shows Tony receiving his Honorary BHSEA Membership Certificate from Andy Chappell, our former Secretary. Tony tells us that he will continue to 'do a bit' work-wise on a part-time basis, and the Construction Group is very much hoping that he will continue to work with the Group.

- **2014 BHSEA Dates for your Diary:**

Our monthly Programme meetings have been fixed as follows:

13 th January 2014	9 th June 2014
10 th February 2014	8 th September 2014
10 th March 2014	13 th October 2014
14 th April 2014	10 th November 2014
12 th May 2014	8 th December 2014

Printed Programme with full details of topics and speakers to follow. Don't miss out!

Date of Next Meeting

2.00 pm Monday 9th December 2013
Birmingham Medical Institute

'Driving Safely for Work'

Simon Monk
 Fleet Risk Assessor - AA DriveTech
 &

Members' Corner

'Skin Matters - It's in Your Hands'

Mike Cleverley, Deb Ltd.

Don't forget the buffet lunch at 1.15 pm