

March 1997

## *Presentation on " Safety of Machines " by Neil Maycock and George Allcock.*

George Allcock opened this joint presentation by stating that employers often become complacent about the risk of machinery accidents because they figure infrequently in >3 Day Accident statistics. When they do occur, however, they are often very serious and HSE analysis shows that they appear in the top ten causes of major injuries. In order to combat this problem, it is important for employers to adopt sound principles by ensuring that:-

- Machines are located in a safe environment.
  - Commissioned safely.
  - Operated in a safe way.
  - Set up and cleaned safely.
  - Maintained properly.
  - Kept in a safe condition.
- AND
- Disposed of in a safe manner.

To illustrate a strategy for achieving these ideals he quoted a case history in a manufacturing firm which owned many old machines where there were problems with:-

- Faults on guards and safety devices.
- Few Annual Inspections.
- No special system for regular inspections on other than power presses.

The dilemma faced by the management was whether to carry out risk assessment of all the machines OR to carry out remedial work. It was decided that a risk assessment programme on 1000 machines would take too long, so it was decided to balance the two approaches on the basis of priorities determined by risk and complexity. The effectiveness of this approach was enhanced by:-

- Simplifying the technique for generic application to three categories of machine.
- Increased resources by getting machine setters to do risk assessment, instead of Engineers.
- Involved users in the programme.
- Ensured that the programme was highly visible to all employees in order to gain co-operation and commitment.

This approach produced a fast turn round and good results.

This ambitious programme was launched with a "workshop" for fitters, Works Engineers and Shop Stewards to design the working System and the various forms required (examples included with this newsletter). The programme was:-

- One Business Unit first.

- High Risk/complex Machines first.
- Condition Survey first - Risk Assessment last. Works well in practice.
- Set up a register of Maintenance of machine Guards and Safety Devices.

This was then extended to other business units, other machines and finished with a full risk assessment. A review was built in, supported by regular site checks, to a Quality Management System and Site Audits. George went on to describe the way in which the machine risk assessment was carried out (sample form enclosed) and to say that a machine diagram was attached to complete the picture.

In the second part of this presentation, **Neil Maycock** neatly turned the tables on members of the audience by subjecting them to a quiz. This revolved around the key items of legislation-

- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992
- Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 1992

Needless to say this quickly revealed the gaps in the audience's knowledge and a group assessment of "must do better"!