

# what's news in occupational, health & safety?

latest news

17 april 2008

## **Further fines following death on a building site** 7 April 2008

A building practitioner was fined \$5,000 on 28 November 2007 by the Building Practitioners Board, following the death of one of his employees at a Maidstone building site 3 years ago. The Board found the building practitioner guilty of 2 allegations and fined him the maximum fine under the Building Act 1993 due to the seriousness of the circumstances. This follows Melbourne County Court proceedings against the practitioner's company, in which the company was convicted and fined \$100,000. [more...](#)

## **Asbestos works begin despite unanswered questions**

8 April 2008

Asbestos removal at a 47-unit public housing redevelopment site at Roberts Street Northcote began this week despite community concerns about safety and lack of disclosure about the project. Works commenced only 3 days after an Office of Housing public meeting at which serious community concerns were voiced and safety assurances sought. [more...](#)

## **Toxic legacy brings a bitter-sweet win**

6 April 2008

The truckie's fight for justice ended abruptly in the County Court on Friday when, after 4½ years of legal battling, his former employer agreed to settle out of court, paying him \$804,000 inclusive of benefits received to date, plus costs. His job with Knights Transport had required him to drive to Queensland and back 3 times a fortnight, help unload the tankers in Brisbane, claiming nobody at the company, which had extensive experience hauling chemicals, warned him of the dangers. The case reflects a growing trend of illness and injury caused by chemical exposure. [more...](#)

## **Ambo fatigue: 87% say fatigue affects judgement at work**

A survey of Victorian paramedics has found that fatigue is at dangerously high levels, with many admitting that they have fallen asleep at the wheel and made mistakes drawing up drugs. Steve McGhie, Ambulance Employees Australia State Secretary, said the findings are a wake up call to the government and Victoria's ambulance services. [more...](#)

## **Budget airlines discriminating 'in the name of safety': govt**

11 April 2008

The advent of low cost airlines in Australia and their over-zealous interpretation of safety regulations, has led to greater discrimination against people with disabilities, disability watchdog, the Federal disability discrimination commissioner says. [more...](#)

## **No link in fire station cancer cases**

13 April 2008

A state wide investigation into the prevalence of brain cancer among Queensland fire fighters has been launched after a study failed to identify the cause of a cancer cluster at a fire station in the state's north. QFRS has also commissioned testing of the Atherton Fire Station and has offered to lead a national investigation into the rate of cancer among fire fighters, proposed by Monash University. [more...](#)

## **Ergon staff walk off job over safety concerns**

1 April 2008

Ergon Energy staff have walked off the job at Dalby, Tully and Gladstone. They have accused the company of ignoring calls to improve the safety and quality of the electricity network. [more...](#)

**A sad reminder of building site safety**

2 April 2008

Victorian Building Commissioner, Tony Arnel, urged Victorian Registered Building Practitioners and their employees to ensure the ongoing safety at building sites, following the recent building accident where one person was killed after being crushed by scaffolding at a building site in South Dandenong. Statistics reveal 29 construction fatalities since the start of 2005 and around 2,800 injuries between February 2005 and February 2008. [more...](#)

**EU: European Comparisons 2005**

The latest comparisons for 2005 provide workplace injury statistics for most countries in the European Union. These latest comparisons are based on Eurostat data and presented on updated web pages on the [Health and Safety Executive site](#). According to the site a European worker is involved in an accident every 5 seconds.

**Lead 'unacceptable'**

3 April 2008

Tests have revealed that lead levels at Bluewaters power station are 10 times higher than acceptable. Construction, Mining, Forestry and Energy Union, occupational health and safety advisor Darren Kavanagh, said "an acceptable level of lead contamination in paint was just 1% and their employer Hitachi knew of prior contamination. [more...](#)

**UK: New chemicals health monitor online**

The UK Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) has launched a new Chemicals Health Monitor website that provides information about chemicals and related diseases. The new resource provides information about the links between chemical contaminants and ill health. There's also information on risk factors associated with these different human health conditions, trends in specific disease incidence, and disease-specific costs. [more...](#)

**Worksite safety fears as cashed-up tradies turn to illicit drugs**

3 April 2008

WA's building boom has been linked to a massive increase in methamphetamine addiction among cash-rich young tradesmen, fuelling concerns for worksite safety according to industry and medical sources. The MBA and CFMEU reject random drug testing on building sites. [more...](#)

---

**practice notes/directions****New construction safety rules from 1 July 2008**

Victoria has introduced new safety regulations for the construction industry which will apply from 1 July 2008. In Victoria, health and safety in the construction industry has been regulated through the OHS Act and a number of hazard-specific regulations, such as those for falls prevention and plant, but not through construction-specific regulations. The new requirements, which are consistent with the National Standard for Construction Work, build upon industry's existing safety practices by setting out specific OHS responsibilities for principal contractors, employers, workers and self-employed people. [more...](#)

**New Victoria licensing system**

April 2008

People who operate forklifts, cranes and a wide range of other high-risk equipment as well as those working in a number of occupations under 'Certificates of competency' or 'tickets' need to switch to the new 'Licence to Perform High Risk Work'. All certificates of competency expire between 31 January 2008 and 30 June 2012. The new licence is being introduced to align Victoria with national safety standards. It includes a photograph to reduce fraudulent activity and improve interstate recognition of current skills. They need to be renewed every 5 years.

**Hazard alert – asbestos contaminated mastic**

3 March 2008

Visits, conducted by the Plumbers Union after members raised concerns, found that there is the potential to be exposed to asbestos during refurbishment and demolition work. One of many concerns is the presence of asbestos fibre contained in mastic, particularly in buildings pre-dating the 1980's. There is an increased risk that the asbestos fibre can become airborne and inhaled when disturbed due to the deterioration of the mastic over the period of time. [more...](#)

**National campaign to reduce hospital worker injuries**

April 2008

A national campaign - 'Safe Steps: National Hospital Intervention and Compliance Campaign' - aimed at reducing the number of slip, trip and manual-task injuries sustained by non-clinical hospital workers is now underway. Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities chair, John Watson, said the health and community services industry is a key contributor to the high levels of slip, trip and manual-task injuries in Australia.

**Are you ready for an inspector to check plant operator competency at your workplace?**

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland is inviting employers to attend a licensing seminar to gain tips on how to ensure their workplace passes WHSQ inspection in 2008. The seminars will be held from February to April 2008 and form part of a State-wide education program following recent changes to training and assessment requirements for people wishing to obtain licences to operate and use particular plant and equipment. To register your interest in a 2008 seminar or for more information on changes to occupational licensing requirements, visit the 'Alerts and announcements' section on [www.deir.qld.gov.au](http://www.deir.qld.gov.au). [more...](#)

**Cattleyard safety**

27 March 2008

Separation of cattle and people while loading cattle at saleyards. This health and safety solution provides simple design solutions for preventing injuries while loading cattle at saleyards. [more...](#)

---

**contact details****melbourne**

Charles Power, Partner  
t: +61 (0)3 9321 9942  
e: [charles.power@holdingredlich.com.au](mailto:charles.power@holdingredlich.com.au)

**brisbane**

Paul Hardman, Partner  
t: +61 (0)7 3135 0675  
e: [paul.hardman@holdingredlich.com.au](mailto:paul.hardman@holdingredlich.com.au)

**sydney**

Stephen Trew, Partner  
t: +61 (0)2 8083 0439  
e: [stephen.trew@holdingredlich.com.au](mailto:stephen.trew@holdingredlich.com.au)

---

**disclaimer**

The information in this publication is of a general nature and is not intended to address the circumstances of any particular individual or entity. Although we endeavour to provide accurate and timely information, we do not guarantee that the information in this publication is accurate at the date it is received or that it will continue to be accurate in the future. We are not responsible for the information of any source to which a link is provided or reference is made and exclude all liability in connection with use of these sources. This publication is not legal advice and should not be relied on.

**melbourne**

350 william street, melbourne vic 3000  
t +61 (0)3 9321 9999 f +61 (0)3 9321 9900

**sydney**

level 65, mlc centre, 19 martin place, sydney nsw 2000  
t +61 (0)2 8083 0388 f +61 (0)2 8083 0399

**brisbane**

level 1, 300 queen street, brisbane qld 4000  
t +61 (0)7 3135 0500 f +61 (0)7 3135 0599