

June 2001

CDM II the effective process continues

Report on the 2001 Annual Workshop at the National Motorcycle Museum in June

This workshop was once again very well attended by 60 delegates, with several firms sending 'workshop parties' of up to seven members! It was obvious that both the subject and the 'workshop style' chosen for this event aroused a lot of interest and well-justified the 'sequel to last year's event.

The morning was devoted to giving some 'thought-provoking' insights into key elements of construction health and safety management to the delegates, so that they could carry these messages with them into the syndicate workshop sessions. BHSEA's workshops are not an easy ride and this one proved no different, with delegates under pressure, from the start, to complete the syndicate tasks and present their work afterwards. The keynote presentation by **Mike Totterdell of CONIAC** lit the 'blue touchpaper' in fine style with provocative statements about the shortcomings of the present arrangements. He had plenty of arrows to fire at all the duty holders, but also presented a glimmer of hope that CDM would be reviewed in about two year's time. In particular he said that "Revitalising Health and Safety" cites the CDM 'Supply Chain' approach as good practice that HMG will extend in initiatives like the 'Good Neighbour Scheme'. He quoted many examples of how dutyholders might make improvements.

The next speaker was **Ray Cooke, HM Principal Inspector for Construction with HSE Midlands Region**, who gave us the HSE experience of how duty holders were coping with CDM. He emphasised that there was a pervasive '**acceptance of risk**' in the industry which must change, he insisted. He backed up this assertion with the following accident statistics.

	1996/1997			1997/1998			1998/1999			1999/2000		
	fatal	major	3-day	fatal	major	3-day	fatal	major	3-day	fatal	major	3-day
employees	66	3,227	8,637	58	3,860	9,756	47	4,289	9,195	59	4,290	9,957
self-employed	24	827	1,029	22	466	509	18	367	381	19	349	335
public	3	405		6	339		3	378		7	401	
total	93	4,459	9,666	86	4,665	10,265	68	5,034	9,576	85	5,040	10,292

Although he could not show the complete **2000/2001** totals, he was able to quote the figures for fatalities during the **first nine months**, which were **92** – horrifyingly a lot more than last year's! Whilst these accident figures were traditionally held up as a

barometer for construction, Ray added, it was crucial to them in their proper perspective by considering the effects of ill-health. Just one killer alone – asbestos – accounted for 3000 deaths each year, of which about 750 were in Construction. Its effect is more insidious – so it does not get so much attention, as it is like a 'slow accident'!

Ray went on to say that he thought that the difficulties with CDM was that dutyholders did not understand it – or chose to ignore it! It was true to say that from the beginning definitions were unclear and that too much paperwork was produced. But frequently it is the interpretation that causes problems and the new ACoP was designed to remedy that. The main change is that it is topic based and concentrates on the roles of clients and designers, particularly on the areas and information they need to consider and include in the H& Plan and H&S File. Ray added that, rather than including everything and running the risk of diluting the overall impact, HSE wants the significant hazards addressing: -

- Designers don't need to mention every hazard or assumption - obscures the significant issues
 - Point out significant hazards which are
 - Not obvious to a competent contractor or other designers
 - Likely to be difficult to manage effectively
- Examples?
 - Temporary bracing to ensure stability during construction
 - Sequences of assembly or disassembly crucial to safe erection or demolition
 - Hazardous or flammable substances specified in the design
 - Structures with access problems (e.g. domed glass roof)
 - Elements likely to create handling risks
 - Areas needing access where normal scaffold ties not feasible

He then indicated that the new ACoP might get HSC approval in September, ready for a launch in early 2002.

Looking further to the future, Ray said that the imminent **Temporary Work at Heights Directive** will result in new legislation across **all** industry, which might mean the relevant parts would be removed from the Construction (H, S &W) Regs. The remaining parts of CHSWR might then be subsumed into new 'Construction Regs', incorporating CDM, possibly in 2 – 3 years time.

Regarding HSE priorities for 2001/02, Ray said that inspectors were being asked to 'track back' from site problems to see if they were caused by clients or designers who were not complying with their duties. These were in high-risk areas - transport, falls from height, duty to manage asbestos in buildings and were likely to be cross-industry. Other high priorities were heavy blocks, HAVS, noise and scaffolding.

Ray concluded by appealing for support for the local, Midlands WWT Action Group which aims to get all parties in the construction industry together to improve their

communication, co-operation and competence. He asked anyone interested to get in touch with Andy Chappell of BHSEA.

The next speaker was **Steve Perkins, Director of Health, Safety and Environment Services with the EEF West Midlands**. Steve started by defining the all-important distinctions between Contractors of all types and size and went on to describe typical work areas in which they may be involved. He emphasised that, no matter what the extent of the work, all contractors must operate to the same standards. This may require working with them in order to bring them up to the specified standard.

Steve continued by describing the relevant safety law that applied to work in general and the legislation which was specific to Construction work. He then identified the crucial stages of any contract, right from the inception - through to completion and review of its outcome. Pre-eminent were the Pre-Tender Questions to ensure that measures were addressed **before** contracts are awarded: -

- Do they have a policy
- Will they use sub - contractors
- Training levels of management, supervisors & employees
- Have risk assessments been carried out
- What hazardous substances will be used and have they been assessed
- What plant and equipment will be used and as it been maintained and examined
- Are method statements available and permit systems if necessary
- How is their safety performance monitored
- Do they have adequate trained first -aiders
- Will they be sharing our welfare facilities
- Have employees attended any passport scheme training

He was also careful to place equal emphasis on crucial information which has to flow the other way – from client to contractors. Key issues are: -

- Hazards in company
- Company rules & procedures
- What to wear
- About special equipment they may need to use
- What to do in an emergency
- Sound of the alarm and how and when to raise it

Steve concluded by reminding the delegates about the all-important task of **managing the work** done by contractors: -

- Familiarise yourself with plan of works
- Establish a contact
- Monitor performance against agreed methods

- Hold safety review meetings
- Review accidents and near misses

Steve's presentation was reinforced in the delegate pack by a free copy of the EEF booklet **"Safety and Client/Contractor Relationships – The Good Practice Guide for Manufacturing"**

The role of the Planning Supervisor in the pre-Tender Stage was described by the next Speaker, **Michael Stokes, Mouchel Management Ltd.** Mike said that it was significant to determine who could be a Planning Supervisor (PS), but implied that there were not any specific qualifications – apart from saying he should be 'Competent!' This could mean that the choice could vary from project to project – depending on the size and type of structure. Certain types of professional seemed to gravitate naturally to the task – such as Quantity Surveyors but that was certainly not a pre-requisite. It was easier, however, to be more categorical on the role of PS as this was laid down in the CDM Regulations: -

- "...Ensure that notice of the projectis given to the (Health and Safety) Executive,.....unless the PS has reasonable grounds for thinking that it is not notifiable"
- Ensure that a Health and Safety Plan has been prepared in such time as will enable it to be provided as part of the tender documents
- Take reasonable steps to ensure Co-operation between the designers, from a health and safety point of view and, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all designs have considered the health and safety issues.
- Give adequate advice to the Client and/or contractor on health and safety issues.
- Ensure that a Health and Safety file is produced and review, amend or add to it during the course of the project.
- Ensure that the Health and Safety File is delivered to the Client on the completion of the project.

Some practical issues that affect the role of the PS are: -

- Site investigations which have to be carried out to determine the nature and seriousness of any risks.
- Designs which have to be completed as the project progresses.
- Any 'missing' health and safety file information which has to be found

As far as the contents of the Health and Safety File were concerned, a rough guide to what should be included was: -

- Record Drawings
- Design loadings
- A project directory
- Any structural stability issues
- Statutory Approval Certificates

- Sub-contractor warranties
- Test Certificates
- Product literature for installed systems

The final speaker was **Paul Greaves, Project Manager, Wates Construction**, who dealt with the Principal Contractor's role. Selfishly, he started talking about a Principal Contractors (PC) **wish list** that, in the ideal world, would be sorted out by the client well in advance of the job start date: -

- Location of Welfare facilities
- Local Car Parking
- Notification to Public Utilities
- More detailed surveys of hazardous materials
- Local Resident and Business knowledge
- Set parameters for tender sub missions
- Emergency service location and contacts.
- **ADEQUATE LEAD-IN PERIOD!**

Paul then went over the key tasks for the PC, starting with the development of the **pre-tender Health and Safety Plan** by the Construction Manager, Project Manager, and SHE Manager. This contains all the arrangements for managing health, safety and environment matters: -

- Site organisation with responsibilities and accountabilities
- Method statements
- Fire/Emergency Plan
- Site Rules
- Manual Handling Assessments
- PPE Register
- Traffic Management Arrangements
- Site Risk Assessments
- Site Safety Committee
- Noise Assessments
- Training Register
- Plan Operators Competence Register
- Complaints, Accident Potential Registers

This plan is used as the basis for developing the next stage, the **Method Statements**, which ensure that only safe methods of working are used. The important elements are: -

- They are driven by the Risk Assessments or the Client's requirements
- Prior agreement should be reached over when they are required t the Safety Planning Meeting.
- All high risk MSs should be approved by the SHE Team
- Formal replies should be made to indicate "Non-Approval; Conditional or OK.
- A Control Register must be completed
- There should be a briefing form for operatives, presented at Method Statement Briefing meetings

A feature that runs right through the project is **Co-ordination and Co-operation** via a system of

- Pre-contract meetings
- Programming meetings
- Site meetings
- Client meetings
- Major/Minor Injuries Committee (Root Cause of Injuries)
- Fire/emergency plans
- Shared facilities

The **Training, communication with, and views of, contractors** are also an important matter, supported by: -

- Site based induction, designed in association with the SHE Team
- Site Employee Awareness Talks (SEATs)
- Weekly Safety Committee meetings
- Complaints, Accident Potential Registers displayed on site
- Formal checks on operative Competence ie. CITB CTA for plant.
- Circulars, posters, campaigns notices on notice boards.

Underpinning all of this is a very rigorous stance on the provision of first class welfare facilities, backed up by good security and site management, with separate pedestrian and vehicle access.

Health and safety Issues are always the first item on the agenda of any meeting and **Working Well Together** is to the forefront of our thinking. We have Health Action Zones and a **Target for 2001**.

Monitoring and review of safety performance is the thing that makes sure that it all happens, because all systems are quantifiable. There are: -

- Weekly samples by the site team
- Monthly SHE Team inspections, Performance Reviews, APRs etc.,
- Annual Audits by SHE Team of the Business Unit
- Accident/Incident reviews
- All findings circulated monthly to MDs.
- Monthly visits by Senior Management to all sites

The final measure is to ensure that all Health and Safety Risks that have to be managed during any subsequent maintenance, repair or construction work are notified to the Client for recording in the Health and Safety File. The ultimate aim is completion – accident-free and with a satisfied client!

Over lunchtime and into the afternoon, the syndicates tackled the workshop projects which were designed to give them practical experience in a typical, large project.

The key task areas which were identified were: -

- a) *Demolition*
- b) *High Level Brick/Block work*
- c) *Roof Truss erection*
- d) *Roofing refurbishment*
- e) *External decoration*
- f) *Excavations*
- g) *Heavy Machine Tool Installation*

In the first session, each of seven syndicates completed a Risk Assessment/Schedule of Hazards on one of the areas, which they passed on to another group for preparation of a sub-contractor's method statement/ Safe system of Work in the second session. In the third session, the Method Statements were passed back to the original syndicate for a review, against their initial Risk Assessment outline. During the fourth session, each syndicate gave a presentation of the review of the Method Statements. This provided a very lively exchange of thoughts and reinforced the learning process rather forcefully!