Health and Safety Alert

Champion Products are examples of tools and formats used by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) in executing its programme. The ODA is publishing these as part of its Learning Legacy in the anticipation that they may be of use to future projects seeking best practice examples of tools and templates that have been used successfully on a large, complex programme.

Purpose of the document, description and how it was used

Health and Safety Alerts are used to raise awareness of a specific issue that has been identified as a potential hazard or risk during construction works. Depending upon the severity of risk, they were usually circulated across the London 2012 Programme within 24 hours of the issue being raised.

For example, there was a series of near misses, serious accidents and fatalities in the construction industry, many caused by the incorrect use and attachment of accessories to Quick-Hitches. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) attributed this in the main to operator error.

A Safety Alert was produced to highlight the importance of checking construction plant and quick-hitch attachments being used and training of operatives in safe systems of work. To further support this particular safety alert, a more detailed document in the form of an ODA ‘Common Standard’ was produced.

What is the benefit to future projects?

This alert is presented as an example method of communicating important and urgent health and safety information to suppliers, contractors and stakeholders for immediate action and close out.

Avoiding slips, trips and low level falls

Background

Over the past 12 months there have been an increasing number of serious personal injury accidents across the Programme attributed to either slips / trips on the same level or slipping / falling on steps and unseen hazards.

In the first three months of 2011 there were 15, accident / incident records, 9 due to slips / trips and 6 due to a combination of both. Where possible these accidents have been classified as either operator error, equipment failure or unsafe conditions / environment. It is important to familiarise yourself with your environment and look for potential hazards that could represent a personal injury risk to you and your work colleagues.

So what has happened over the last three months?

Some personal injury examples - Behavioural safety

* Whilst descending the stairs the Injured Person (IP) turned her ankle as she reached ground level. Injuries sustained included a chipped bone in her ankle and two strained ligaments.

* The IP was carrying a seating deck across the finished concrete slab when he twisted his ankle on an approx 35mm step between 2 levels in the slab.

* IP tripped on a redundant bicycle rack securing bolt and fell to the ground resulting in a severely bruised knee.

* The IP lost his footing and tripped over an exclusion zone barrier resulting in a fractured ankle.

* The IP slipped and fell onto his knee on flat and level ground resulting in a fractured patella.

* IP was descending a staircase after walking across a wet podium slab. He slipped and fell on the stairs, severely bruising his back.

* Note: The six examples above and three below are summaries of actual physical injury accidents (downloaded from the ODA reporting system), which occurred on the Programme between January and March 2011.
Safety Alert No. 22
Avoiding slips, trips and low level falls

Background

Over the past 12 months there have been an increasing number of serious personal injury accidents across the Programme, attributed to either slips / trips on the same level or slipping / falling on steps and unseen hazards.

In the first three months of 2011 there were 14 reportable injury accidents, 9 due to slips, trips and falls on the same level, all of which led to personal injury. Most of these could have easily been avoided by individuals taking better care when descending stairs or using walking routes on the same level or by better planning and thought being given when undertaking a work activity.

Unsafe places of work (changes to the construction site environment) have also been identified as an immediate route cause of some of these accidents. It is important to familiarise yourself with your environment and look for potential hazards that could represent a personal injury risk to you and your work colleagues.

So what has happened over the last three months?

Some personal injury examples - Behavioural safety

- *Whilst descending the stairs the Injured Person (IP) turned her ankle as she reached ground level. Injuries sustained included a chipped bone in her ankle and two strained ligaments.*
- The IP was carrying a seating deck across the finished concrete slab when he twisted his ankle on an approx 35mm step between 2 levels in the slab.
- IP tripped on a redundant bicycle rack securing bolt and fell to the ground resulting in a severely bruised knee and two weeks off work.
- The IP lost his footing and tripped over an exclusion zone barrier resulting in a fractured ankle.
- The IP slipped and fell onto his knee on flat and level ground resulting in a fractured patella (knee cap).
- IP was descending a staircase after walking across a wet podium slab. He slipped and fell on the stairs, severely bruising his back.

*Note: The six examples above and three below are summaries of actual physical injury accidents (downloaded from the ODA reporting system), which occurred on the Programme between January and March 2011.
Further personal injury examples - Site Conditions / Unsafe places of work

- *Whilst descending internal stairs, the IP slipped on temporary plastic protective covering on the bottom step and fractured his ankle.*
- Poor housekeeping - The IP became entangled in a loop of discarded nylon located on the third step, causing him to trip and fall 1 meter to the ground. This resulted in a fractured Fibula.
- IP was working on the roadway and stepped onto a piece of hardcore and twisted his ankle.

Advice for individuals (Taking personal responsibility)

- Take extra care and time when using stairs. Do not descend or ascend at speed or carry heavy objects. Always use the handrails provided.
- A change in level could cause you to miss your footing. If carrying work materials, always plan / walk your route in advance to ensure it is free of any hazards or obstructions.
- Ensure your safety footwear is in good condition and has been correctly selected for on-site work activities. Boots must be appropriate, securely fastened and have slip-resistant soles.
- Take personal responsibility for keeping your work area clear and free from obstructions and materials at all times.
- Always raise any concerns with the construction site management or Facilities Management (FM) team and seek immediate rectification.
Advice for Principal Contractors (Safer construction site environments)

All Principal Contractors must provide and maintain safe working environments at all times and deliver appropriate information, instruction and training to help keep their workforce better informed about any changes to their workplace. It is important to manage workplace hazards and remove the risk of site personnel stepping on or tripping up loose materials or objects, which in turn have led to low level falls and physical injuries.

Stairs

- Always keep stairways clean, dry, free of obstructions and well maintained.
- In addition to the above, temporary site steps should always be level and clear of excessive mud.
- Handrails must be secure and conform to the appropriate British Standards.

Walking Routes

- Well planned, maintained and clearly identified in an up-to-date Traffic Management Plan.
- Kept clear of all debris and obstructions.
- Level, compacted and free of trip hazards (cables and hoses, overlapping flooring - lips, step changes in slab).
- Consider the potential impact of wet weather on external non-cohesive compacted walking route surfaces. Undertake regular checks to ensure they are being correctly maintained. Walk the pedestrian routes daily.

Next Steps ……

Take forward the lessons learnt from the unfortunate personal injury accidents identified in this Safety Alert and ensure that they do not happen to you!

We must all take health, safety and well-being responsibility for ourselves and also consider our work colleagues. Report any concerns to a supervisor or manager at the earliest possible opportunity. Be Safe, Stay Safe.