

# NEWS BRIEF

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## HSE's Surprise Construction Site Inspections Start 3rd October

Beginning on 3rd October 2016, HSE inspectors will be conducting surprise inspections at construction sites where refurbishment projects or repair works are underway. These inspections will last through 4th November 2016. During these unannounced inspections, inspectors will ensure that high-risk activities are being properly managed to ensure the health and safety of the construction workers.

Inspectors will be especially checking for the following high-risk activities:

- 1. Exposure to dust:** Regularly breathing in dust—such as silica—can cause certain diseases, including lung cancer, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and silicosis.
- 2. Exposure to asbestos:** Asbestos can potentially be found in any industrial or residential building built or refurbished before 2000, and it is in many of the common materials used in construction—such as sprayed coatings, insulating boards, floor tiles, roofing felt, rope seals and lagging. Exposure to the material can cause lung cancer, mesothelioma and an impaired immune system.
- 3. Exposure to noise:** Many of the common construction tasks, tools and equipment can produce noise levels high enough to cause workers to develop hearing problems.
- 4. Exposure to hazardous substances:** Often, construction sites will contain at least one hazardous substance, which could include dust, cement, lead, solvents, isocyanates

(paint, foams and glues) and carbon monoxide (CO).

- 5. Exposure to musculoskeletal risks:** Factors such as repetitiveness and pace of work, force of movements, vibration, monotonous tasks, and manual handling can all contribute to the development of musculoskeletal disorders.
- 6. Working at height:** Whether a worker is briefly using a ladder or working for an extended period of time on a scaffold, the appropriate safety precautions must be taken to ensure that there is little risk for trips, slips or falls.
- 7. Equipment condition and quality:** Each construction task requires its own unique collection of equipment, which must be properly assembled, inspected and maintained.
- 8. Construction site organisation:** Poor site organisation can negatively impact the following: traffic, public and worker safety, materials storage, waste management, legal requirements for welfare facilities, and administrative paperwork.

If a serious breach in health and safety legislation is identified by an inspector, there will be immediate enforcement action—including fines and penalties. Yet, inspectors have been encouraged to provide guidance on how to establish a safe work environment.

For more information on safeguarding your construction site and ensuring your compliance, contact the experts at **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd** today.

