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DID YOU KNOW?

Build UK has created a new colour-coded scheme for hard hats to improve site safety. The scheme does away with the traditional yellow and introduces new colours that correspond to the wearer's job position. Highways England will switch over to the new scheme in 2017, which uses the following four hard hat colours:

1. Black: Site supervisor
2. Orange: Slinger / Signaller
3. White: General use
4. Blue: Inexperienced person / visitor

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Read about how mental health issues have become a troubling trend within the sector.

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The construction industry has made great strides in overcoming the uneven growth of 2015, but despite these improvements, firms are still losing money on their projects.

Fewer Inspections as Fatalities Rise: Managing Your Risk

Regular health and safety inspections are recommended for any company, especially those that are often inundated with hazards, such as those in the construction industry. Yet, 80 per cent of construction companies have never had a health and safety inspection, and only 17 per cent have had an inspection within the past 12 months, according to a recent survey published by the Trades Union Congress.

This pervasive inattention to health and safety is especially troubling as the HSE has reported that there have been more construction deaths this year—43 in 2015-16 compared to 35 in 2014-15. These failings are very apparent to construction workers, with 87 per cent of them believing that their building site was a health and safety hazard, according to the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT). What's more, is that 48 per cent of the surveyed construction workers reported that they had suffered an injury whilst at work—30 per cent of which had to go to hospital because of the incident.

For that reason, it cannot be emphasised enough that the responsibility for ensuring the safety of your workers rests solely with your company—especially since there have been more fatalities and fewer inspections. In order to help your company cultivate safe systems of work, the HSE has developed a leadership and worker involvement toolkit. The toolkit is interactive and helps contractors and managers measure their organisation's health and safety acumen. After assessing the current practices, the toolkit then provides pragmatic recommendations on how safety can be improved. The toolkit is free and can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/construction/lwit/index.htm.

In addition, you may want to have your safety managers and supervisors review the health and safety responsibilities under CDM 2015. This review can ensure that each worksite, piece of equipment and task is compliant in order to guarantee your workers' health and safety, and to ensure that your company does not receive any fines. For more information about how to keep your workers safe and secure, contact the insurance professionals at **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd** today.



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Suicide Kills More Workers Than Falling From Height

In 2014, there were 6,122 recorded deaths by suicide. What's more, is that suicide kills six times as many construction workers as falling from heights, according to Samaritans, a mental health charity. Whilst the charity's numbers are provisional, they still highlight an important and alarming trend within the sector. According to a survey from UCATT, 75 per cent of construction workers have experienced depression and 58 per cent have experienced anxiety.

Whilst 75 per cent of construction workers that experienced a mental health issue did not discuss it with management, this pervasive issue has not gone unnoticed. A staggering 80 per cent of building engineering services firms have stated that they anticipate workplace mental health will have a more pronounced impact on their business over the next decade, according to a recent survey from the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA), the Building Engineering Services Association (BESA) and Constructing Better Health. However, despite this forecast, 31 per cent of the surveyed firms noted that they found on-site mental health hard to manage, and only 56 per cent of the surveyed firms already have a plan in place to address mental health issues.

This limited participation is troubling, since failing to provide this essential support for your employees can lead to higher turnover, absenteeism and potentially higher costs due to more accidents. In fact, employees that experienced stress, depression and anxiety missed an average of 23 days over the course of the year, which amounted to a total of 9.9 million working days lost in 2014-15.

It is therefore essential that you provide your employees with a workplace where they are able to receive comprehensive assistance for mental health. If an employee is experiencing a mental health issue, you can have them call the free Construction Industry Helpline at 0845 605 1956. In addition, your company may want to participate in [Mates in Mind](#), a Health in Construction Leadership Group programme that will be launched in 2017 with the goal of improving and promoting positive mental health within the construction industry.

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Despite Improvements With Efficiency, Firms Are Losing Money

Despite the inconsistent growth that had plagued the sector for much of 2015 and the uncertainty brought upon by Brexit earlier this year, the construction industry has not only endured these tumultuous conditions, but has come out of them reinvigorated. In fact, according to the most recent key performance indicators (KPIs), 64 per cent of projects were on or under budget in 2015, compared to 56 per cent in 2014. In addition, 55 per cent of projects were completed on time or before schedule in 2015, compared to 48 per cent in 2014. Yet, even with these positive developments, there is an important area that has gotten worse—profitability.

Profitability has dropped from 2.8 per cent in 2014 to 2.5 per cent at the end in 2015 (the second-lowest on record). An explanation for this decline, in spite of growth in other areas of the sector, is that clients are increasingly expecting a higher level of quality for their money. And, whilst client satisfaction with the final product rose from 81 per cent to 85 per cent in 2015 (a four-year high), the effort to maintain this level of quality is threatened by a number of factors, including higher material and labour costs and lingering effects of the recession.

However, there are several ways that your company can counter this financial pinch. Productivity and quality can be improved by investing more into workers' skills, since the more knowledgeable employees are, the more efficient and effective their work becomes. This effort would also help address the skills shortage that is currently troubling the sector. One way to improve workers' skills would be to ensure that all of your employees hold a Construction Skills Certification Card, which shows that they are up to date on their training, along with confirming that they at least meet the standards for National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2.

Another strategy that your company may want to consider implementing is to invest in digital technology to help streamline your operations. By adopting digital devices and processes, you can increase your productivity, the safety of your employees and your profitability. For more information on how you can bolster the value of your firm, contact **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd** today.

Client Satisfaction Up, Profit Margins Down



Source: Construction News