

Health and Safety in Path Construction - an Overview

This factsheet aims to highlight the health and safety law and regulations relating to path construction. If you are managing path construction, arranging for someone to carry out construction on your behalf, or doing the work yourself, you must comply with a number of pieces of health and safety legislation, e.g. Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.

The construction industry as a whole has a poor record for health and safety. Legislation introduced over the last few years aims to improve this record by introducing health and safety management right at the start of a project. Dealing with hazards should be an integral part of the design process to making sure a project is safe and healthy.

The path industry has a generally good record for health and safety. This is largely due to the generally low risk nature of the works commonly found in path construction work but also due to the reliance on a small number of skilled contractors. However, it is crucial to maintain this good record proactively to the benefit of all in the industry.

Good health and safety management will benefit a project. Avoiding hazards usually means adopting simpler, more efficient working methods. Project design and planning will be carried out more thoroughly, eliminating many of the unknowns that cause the majority of extra expenditure on site. While more staff time will be required initially, the increase in efficiency of subsequent project management will largely recover these costs. Consider also the cost, in both human and financial terms, of an accident or injury.

The following sections highlight the relevant health and safety legislation and briefly discuss its requirements and implications. We have also provided web links for more information about each regulation on Health and Safety Executive website.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

This is primary piece of health and safety legislation covering occupational health and safety in all types of working environments, e.g. construction sites. The key

principal of the Health & Safety at Work Act is that it places a duty of care on employers to their employees, self-employed, and members of the public affected by their work.

More information about the HSW Act, refer to Health and Safety Executive website: [HSW Act](#).

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The main requirement of these regulations on employers (and self-employed) of path construction is to carry out a risk assessment and employers with five or more employees (workers) need to record the significant findings of their risk assessments.

More information about risk assessment, refer to Health and Safety Executive website: [Risk management](#).

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013

These regulations place a legal duty on a responsible person (the employer) to report following certain events that happen at place of work (construction site) to the Health and Safety Executive:

- Fatalities
- Specified injuries
- Any injury that results in an employee not being able to either come to work or carry out their normal work for more than seven days
- An injury to a member of the public that results in the injured person being taken to hospital directly from the scene of the accident
- Specified diseases
- Certain dangerous occurrences.

More information about RIDDOR, refer to Health and Safety Executive website: [RIDDOR](#).

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002

These regulations are in place to protect people from injury or illness caused by hazardous substances and materials used in the work place.

More information about COSHH, refer to Health and Safety Executive website: [COSHH](#).

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

These Regulations cover all aspects of manual handling of loads in all working environments. They are particularly relevant to path construction as some kind of lifting, pushing, pulling or supporting a load by hand is inevitable in nearly all path construction work. The regulations require that all manual handling operations be assessed prior to carrying them out.

More information about manual handling operation regulations, refer to Health and Safety Executive website: [manual handling operations](#).

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998

These regulations cover all work equipment, defined as all equipment used for carrying out work at place of work, such as hand tools, small and large plant, and lifting equipment. PUWER applies to all work equipment and sets the standards for the provision and safe use of such equipment. The primary objective of PUWER is to provide all workers with suitable and safe equipment and to make sure its proper use. The regulations also make sure that work equipment does not give rise to any health and safety risks.

More information about PUWER, refer to Health and Safety Executive website: [PUWER](#).

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998

These regulations complement PUWER 1998 above and require that lifting operations must be properly planned, supervised, and carried out safely.

Lifting equipment such as cranes, slings, shackles, and lifting eyes etc, must be of adequate strength and stability. Equipment must be subject to thorough examination by a competent person and have pre-use inspections.

More information about LOLER, refer to Health and Safety Executive website: [LOLER](#).

Work at Height Regulations 2005

These regulations require employers to ensure that work at height is properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out in a manner, which is safe as far as reasonably practicable.

The regulations require the risks of a fall to be prevented wherever the fall is liable to cause personal injury regardless of the height.

More information about work at height regulations, refer to Health and Safety Executive website: [work at height regulations](#).

The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work Regulations 1992

These regulations cover all types of safety or protective clothing and equipment. The regulations state that employers have a duty to provide all necessary equipment to protect their workforce. They also state that the equipment should be of a suitable standard and be maintained and stored correctly. For path construction, such equipment is typically; safety boots, foul weather clothing, gloves, head, and eye protection. The requirement to wear hearing protection is contained within the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.

More information about PPE at work regulations, refer to this PDF on Health and Safety Executive website: [PPE at work regulations](#).

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005

These regulations set out exposure action levels of noise to which employees may be exposed to, as their employees have a duty of care to reduce the risk of damage to employees' hearing to the lowest level that is reasonably practical.

More information about control of noise at work regulations, refer to Health and Safety Executive website: [noise at work regulations](#).

The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations

These regulations require employers to prevent or reduce risk of exposure to vibration at work from vibrating tools, equipment, and machinery. There are two forms of vibration that affect workers and operators in path construction work: hand-arm vibration (HAV) and whole body vibration (WBV). WBV is less common form of vibration, where HAV is a lot more common. WBV can affect the body when vibration is transmitted to all of the body through a supporting surface, e.g. through the seat of a ride-on vibrating roller.

More information about control of noise at work regulations, refer to Health and Safety Executive website: [vibration at work regulations](#).

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

These regulations came into force on 6 April 2015 replacing CDM 2007. CDM 2015 aims to improve health, safety, and welfare on all construction sites – small and large – including path construction projects. They set out what people involved in construction work, such as path construction, need to do to protect themselves from harm and anyone else the work affects.

More information about CDM 2015, refer to Health and Safety Executive website: [CDM 2015](#), and factsheet 5.4 Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 in Path Construction.

Conclusion

This factsheet just cover some of health and safety regulations that will affect path construction projects. All of above regulations have guidance notes and some Approved Codes of Practice (ACoP), which are published by and available from the Health and Safety Executive website - www.hse.gov.uk. Anyone designing, planning and managing path construction projects should be familiar with their requirements.

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) also runs a variety of health and safety courses in construction. A good starting point is the Site Supervisors' Safety Training Scheme or Site Management Safety Training Scheme, which covers general health and safety and welfare issues on all types of construction sites as well as hazard identification and management, risk assessment and the implications of the current legislation.

Important note

This factsheet has been compiled using the best information available to Paths for All at the time of publication. It is intended as a general guide to the topic and should not be viewed as a substitute for expert advice and professional guidance.

Other publications

See Paths for All's web site at www.pathsforall.org.uk

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