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Reference:

1. Versus standard Ansell gloves with the same level of protection
- 2 & 3. Based on a survey of 52 glove wearers comparing Ansell gloves to the competitive gloves available on the market (May 2025); testing conducted with HyFlex 11-574 gloves. Results may vary across other gloves in the series.

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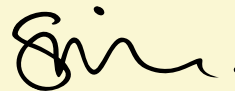
Hello and welcome to the January/February issue of Tomorrow's Health & Safety.

Wishing all our readers a very happy New Year! As we step into 2026, we're incredibly excited about what lies ahead for Tomorrow's Health & Safety. The year brings a refreshed editorial calendar, a growing network of expert contributors sharing high-quality insights, and our continued commitment to delivering informative and practical content for the health and safety industry. With discussions on all the latest trends, challenges, and innovations shaping H&S, we hope you'll join us throughout the year.

There's plenty of features to be digging into this month. Working at Height sees Tom Harris, Global Technical Lead at Gripple, discuss the fact that the most effective safety strategies are those that eliminate height hazards at their source. Meanwhile, Jangro heads up our Cleaning & Hygiene feature, whilst Oscar Acoustics and Forbes take a deep dive into Noise Monitoring & Acoustics. We also hear from Watco and Altro for our Floor Safety feature.

There's plenty in the following pages to get you through what can be a challenging month for many. We wish you all the best for the year ahead and hope you continue to enjoy what Tomorrow's Health & Safety has to offer.

Enjoy the read.



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IIRSM AWARDS FIRST FULL-CATALOGUE APPROVAL TO HSI'S 3,000+ TRAINING COURSES

HSI, a specialist provider of environmental, health, safety and quality (EHSQ) software and workforce development, has become the first organisation to secure IIRSM (International Institute of Risk and Safety Management) approval for its entire course catalogue under a new framework.

The approval encompasses more than 3,000 training courses, spanning safety, compliance, industrial skills and professional development, representing an unprecedented scale of independent quality verification in the UK training market. HSI's courses delivered 22m course views globally over the last 12 months, demonstrating the platform's reach across different industries.

The achievement marks a significant strategic milestone in HSI's ongoing European expansion. It builds on the continued market share growth of the HSI Donesafe EHSQ platform and is further strengthened by the company's recent acquisitions of Ireland-based Skillko, a workforce competency and compliance management provider, and UK-based HandsHQ, a specialist provider of RAMS and workforce training solutions.

HSI will offer organisations direct access to IIRSM-approved training courses, empowering Operations, HR and EHS leaders to elevate workforce capability, confidence and performance at scale.

Amanda Owen, Vice President of Content at HSI, said: "Organisations managing contractors and distributed workforces face mounting pressure to verify competency in real-time. Having our entire course catalogue IIRSM-approved provides customers with instant confidence that training meets rigorous, independent standards, whether for construction site workers, manufacturing operators, facilities teams or other employees.

"This news is particularly significant as we integrate our training catalogue with the HSI Platform and contractor management solution, enabling point-of-service competency verification. For principal contractors managing dozens of subcontractors across multiple sites, this removes a substantial compliance burden."

HSI specifically chose IIRSM as its partner because of its respected standing in the UK and European region, and the reach it has internationally. The IIRSM Risk

Management and Leadership Competence Framework aligns with how HSI has built its catalogue to support workforce competency across an increasingly diverse workforce, from seasonal and agency staff to contractors and permanent employees.

Sue Bull, IIRSM Professional Development Specialist, said: "This is the next step for IIRSM in terms of approving courses from organisations, such as HSI, which have a large and varied portfolio. It is important to provide a scheme which is relevant and agile to the needs of such an organisation and which can provide independent recognition, trust and credibility to those who sign up for their courses.

"In addition, it is recognition for HSI that their courses align with the IIRSM Risk Management and Leadership Competence Framework and support the ongoing development of those working in a range of risk-related areas."

The approval comes as a growing number of industries face increasing regulatory scrutiny around workforce competency, particularly in contractor management. The HSE has updated guidance on managing contractors and the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations place greater emphasis on verified competency before high-risk work begins.

Traditional approaches, where organisations must individually vet training providers or rely on unaccredited courses, create compliance risks and administrative burden. IIRSM's catalogue approval provides a quality benchmark across HSI's complete training offering.

The company already holds IACET (International Accreditors for Continuing Education and Training), NERC (North American Electric Reliability Corp) and SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management) for its courses.

HSI's UK presence includes its HSI Donesafe EHSQ management system, HSI Skillko workforce competency and compliance management solution, and HSI HandsHQ risk assessment and training compliance system, acquired in August 2025.

<https://hsi.com>



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PROGRAMME SUPPORTING WOMEN IN H&S WINS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

The Women in Safety Leadership programme has triumphed in the Most Innovative Institute Approved Programme category of The Institute of Leadership Awards 2025.

Developed by L'Oréal, and delivered in partnership with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), Nike, Inc. and Leaderlike Ltd, the Women in Safety Leadership (WiSL) programme empowers women to take leadership roles in health and safety, promotes diversity and inclusion through addressing the longstanding gender imbalance in an OSH workforce where only 30% of professionals are women, and ultimately makes workplaces and wider society safer.

Based around three core themes – Leadership by Design, Leadership in Action and Leadership as a Strategy

– the training element was updated by Leaderlike Ltd and L'Oréal in 2023 and is delivered by global safety leadership specialist and Leaderlike Ltd founder Karen J Hewitt.

WiSL provides a safe, collaborative space where women from diverse industries can explore their leadership potential and develop their ability to influence across organisations.

Following the initial training session, participants are matched with a mentor to support their continued leadership journey. Participants also become part of the WiSL Alumni Network, enabling them to share advice, develop new skills and work together to inspire the next generation of female health and safety leaders.

Over 100 women have progressed through WiSL since it was launched in 2023, with participants drawn from over 20 countries and a wide range of sectors including construction, utilities and shipping. The Leadership Award

crowns a particularly successful year for WiSL which, alongside attracting more applications than ever before, also appointed RoSPA Vice-President and consumer safety champion Baroness Crawley of Edgbaston as figurehead.

Baroness Crawley said: "This prestigious award represents well-deserved recognition for everyone at L'Oréal, RoSPA, Nike, Inc. and Leaderlike Limited, who have all come together to share their passion and expertise to empower women to lead in health and safety – at work, at home, and beyond. Most importantly, it is a testament to the dedication and energy of all of the inspiring women who have participated in the Women in Safety Leadership, and their commitment to developing skills not just for the benefit of their own careers, but to ensure others can work and live their lives free from the risk of accidental harm.

www.rospace.com

UK'S SICK DAY EPIDEMIC: THE INDUSTRIES PUTTING WORKERS AT RISK

New research has revealed the industries taking the most sick days, with transport workers topping the list, and healthcare staff not far behind.

People working in the transport and storage sector recorded a collective 10.6m sick days in 2025 – the equivalent of 6.5 days off per employee.

Coming in a narrow second are health and social workers, who registered 29.4 million sick days, the most of any sector, equating to six days per employee. Given their frontline status at hospitals, care homes and clinics across the UK, health and social workers continue to feel the strain, suffering from stress, exhaustion and burnout.

Workers from the mining, energy and water sector came in third, requesting an average of 5.5 days off per employee, and amassing 3.1m days off across the past 12 months.

Richard Stockley, Managing Director at RRC International, said: "These figures really highlight just how relentless the past year has been for people in demanding roles, particularly those within the transport and healthcare sectors.

"These are essential jobs that come with long hours, high stress, and immense responsibility. It's vital

that employers step up to support their staff's health and wellbeing, especially in sectors where burnout and exhaustion are all too common."

At the other end of the scale, some industries saw very little time off. Agriculture, forestry and fishing had the joint fewest sick days taken, at 2.4 days, with just 700,000 sick days taken. This was tied with real estate workers who clocked up 1m requests at 2.4 days per worker too.

Richard continued: "The roles that record the least sick days tend to be lone workers or people who are part

of dispersed teams. There tends to be less human to human interaction or have the majority of operations outside. Of course, this is not a luxury that the majority of UK workers can afford, so employers need to fully address this issue, with mental and physical health training and policy changes ranking highly."

In total, 148.3m working days were lost across all industries in the last year, a reminder that sickness absence continues to hit UK businesses hard.

<https://www.rrc.co.uk>



PLT TRAINING MAKES £1.25M INVESTMENT IN H&S CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

A specialist health and safety training provider has invested £1.25m into a new 'centre of excellence' in the West Midlands.

PLT Training, which was formed by Nicc Bennett in 2006, has expanded and purchased a facility in Oldbury, taking the shell of a 82,250 sq ft warehouse and creating a dedicated training space to support more than 10,000 learners every year.

The company has moved its administrative function to the upper floor, whilst downstairs features classrooms and six purpose-built zones for forklifts, advanced working at height, manual handling, first aid and a unique confined spaces course that includes working through a series of tunnels and fitting breathing apparatus.

It marks a perfect early 20th birthday present for the business, which currently works with over 1500 companies nationwide every year, ranging from SMEs and sub-contractors to major employers like Assa Abloy, Arvato SCM, AO Recycling, Williams F1 and Red Bull Racing.

Kath Lang, Operations Director of PLT Training, commented: "We had grown rapidly over the last five years and felt the time was right to look for a larger training space that allowed us to do more delivery at our own facility.

"The space in Oldbury came up and we jumped at the opportunity. It was a pretty blank canvas, which was good. This gave us the chance to shape the training zones exactly how our instructors wanted them, which gives the best learning experience for our clients."

She continued: "We've taken on an extra couple of people as part of the move and plan for more to join the team of 17 instructors in the new year. The feedback on the new

centre from existing and new customers has been great and we're already planning further enhancements and new capabilities as we go into 2026."

PLT Training has come a long way since founder Nicc used to spend weeks travelling the country, delivering health and safety sessions for free in order to convince people and companies that keeping your staff safe was important.

Fast forward nearly 20 years and the Black Country business is one of the leaders in its field, delivering more than 150 different courses at its centre at Oldbury or onsite at over 1500 client locations across the UK.

Courses range from COSHH Training/Awareness, First Aid and Fire Marshalling to forklift, plant and work equipment training, such as abrasive wheels and overhead cranes. Its team of expert trainers also deliver leadership and management courses, NEBOSH and IOSH accredited training and support to help employees with recognising mental health struggles and with menopause awareness.

Kath added: "Health and safety isn't just about compliance in the workplace. The proactive companies invest in this area to protect their staff, provide the best possible workplace environment and also to boost productivity as there are less incidents and injuries.

"This is where we come into the equation. We can provide one-off courses, or we can deliver a holistic service to clients, walking them through their requirements, delivering the training and also identifying future needs. A lot more businesses are opting to take this approach."

She concluded: "2025 was a great year for PLT but we're not stopping there. Plans have been signed off to introduce overhead crane facilities and PASMA courses at Oldbury, whilst we are looking for acquisition opportunities that could increase our geographic reach."

www.plttraining.co.uk



(l-r) Craig Flynn, Carla Solomon, Andrew Mander, Kath Lang, Georgina Cook, Jennifer Round and Vicki Detheridge

IN THE COURTS



CONSTRUCTION COMPANY PROSECUTED AFTER WORKER FALLS THROUGH UNPROTECTED FLOOR OPENING

A construction company based in the north-west of England, has been fined £60,000 after a wall collapsed, knocking an employee through an open stairwell onto a concrete floor below.

Ace Infra Ltd pleaded guilty after an incident led to employee, Mark Jones, to spend a month in hospital recovering from his injuries.

The court heard how Mr Jones, a general labourer, was sweeping up dust and debris on the first floor of the building at the end of the working day. Earlier that day, boards had been delivered and laid across a large opening in the floor where a staircase was to be installed. The boards did not cover the entire opening, and no edge protection had been installed around the remaining gap. There was no signage warning of the danger, and Mr Jones had received no instructions regarding his safety around this area.

While sweeping along the boards, a newly built wall to the left collapsed, knocking him over the unprotected edge onto the concrete floor 2.5 to 3 metres below.

The incident happened on 25 April 2024 at an Ace Infra site at NW Auctions Milnthorpe, Cumbria.

Mr Jones suffered multiple fractures and a dislocated shoulder, spending a month in hospital.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the risk of falling through the gap in the floor had not been addressed, as no preventative measures had been taken. Mr Jones had not been made aware of the risks or the safety measures required.

No site supervisor or manager was present when the incident occurred.

HSE guidance on working at height states that employers must take precautions to prevent falls from heights that could cause serious personal injury, including falls into floor openings. Employers have a duty to ensure workers are not exposed to risks to their health or safety.

Ace Infra Ltd, of 31 St James Drive, Burton, Carnforth, Cumbria, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 by failing to ensure that suitable and sufficient measures were taken, so far as was reasonably practicable, to prevent any person working at height from falling a distance liable to cause personal injury.

The company was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay £4,799.44 in costs, with a £2,000 victim surcharge at Lancaster Magistrates Court on 23 December.

HSE Inspector, Derek McLauchlan, said: "This incident could have been avoided had appropriate control measures and training been in place. Despite the serious injuries sustained, a fall of this height and nature could have resulted in far worse outcomes. Lessons must be learned from this case."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Chloe Ward and Paralegal Officer Zahra Shafique.

PACKAGING COMPANY CHARGED AFTER WORKERS EXPOSED TO HARMFUL GAS

A Cumbria-based producer of cellulose film packaging has been fined £200,000 after workers were exposed to harmful hydrogen sulphide gas.

On 24 December 2021, Futamura Chemical UK Ltd employee Alexander Cole was found collapsed in a pump room after exposure to gas at the company's factory premises in Wigton, Cumbria. Delivery driver, Robert Dyer, attempted to assist Mr Cole but was also overcome by the gas. Both men were rescued from the area and Mr Dyer quickly regained consciousness. Tragically, Mr Cole died in hospital the following day, which was Christmas day. A subsequent inquest concluded that, on the balance of probabilities, hydrogen sulphide had contributed to Mr Cole's death.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Futamura Chemical (UK) Ltd failed to adequately risk assess its production process, as it did not identify that hydrogen sulphide gas, a by-product of the process, was able to enter the site's water effluent system.

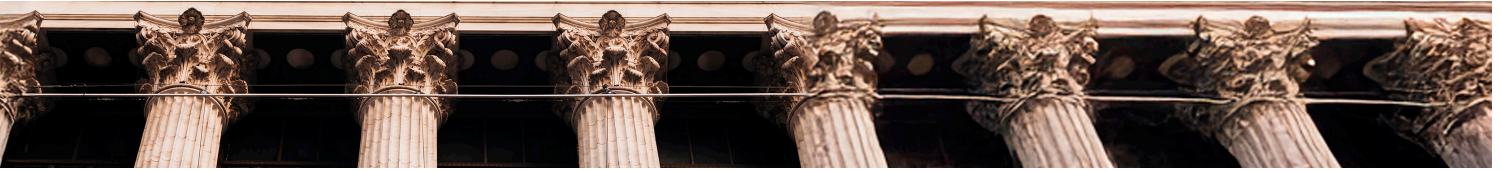
The court heard that Futamura Chemical UK Ltd had conducted a risk assessment for the presence of hydrogen

sulphide in the production area and implemented control measures. However, there was inadequate assessment and associated risk controls relating to the potential for hydrogen sulphide build-up in the site's drainage system. This meant there was a risk that the gas could be released from the drains, putting people at risk of exposure.

Hydrogen sulphide is a clear gas with the smell of rotten eggs and is known to be harmful to health. Depending on the concentration of the gas and the length of time exposed, symptoms can range from dizziness, loss of consciousness and eye irritation through to death.

Futamura Chemical UK Ltd, of Station Road, Wigton, Cumbria, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay £20,000 in costs at Warrington Magistrates' Court on 6 January 2026.

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Karen Park and Paralegal Officer Benjamin Stobbart.



MANUFACTURING FIRM FINED AFTER APPRENTICE SUFFERS SERIOUS INJURIES

A manufacturing company in Newbury has been fined £187,600 after the shirt of an apprentice got caught in machinery.

Harry Pullen, who was 18 years old at the time, was pulled into a radial-arm drill resulting in three broken ribs and needing skin grafts.

He had been working as a machinist for Power and Energy International, manufacturing industrial valves and filters, for less than a year when the incident occurred on 10 July 2023.

The apprentice was still learning how to operate the different machines involved in manufacturing. He was left with a large piece of skin removed from his chest, hospitalised for five days and unable to work for six months.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Power and Energy International had failed to take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of their employees. The company's radial-arm drills did not have adequate guarding. Machine operators, including Harry, had not been properly trained on using the safety features. The company was also found to have made modifications to the radial-arm drill which increased the risk of operators getting caught and pulled into the machine.

HSE guidance states employers must properly assess risks and take effective measures to prevent access to

dangerous parts of machinery. This is normally achieved with fixed or adjustable guards but where this is not practicable other protective devices may be needed that stop the movement of dangerous parts. Employers must also ensure that they provide their employees with the necessary level of information, instruction, training, and supervision to enable them to work safely with the equipment they use.

Power and Energy International Ltd of Stanley Street, Salford, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £187,600 and was ordered to pay £7,464 in costs at a hearing at High Wycombe Magistrates Court on 8 December 2025.

After the hearing HSE inspector, Peter Crees, said: "The fine imposed on Power and Energy International underlines the importance of having effective controls to protect workers who operate radial-arm drills and other potentially dangerous machines.

"Harry's injuries and the suffering it caused both him, and his family, could have easily been avoided."

Harry now has to live with permanent scarring and a loss of feeling on the side of his chest. He said: "I would not go back on a radial arm drill... it's not something I ever want to do again."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Iain Jordan and Paralegal Officer Melissa Wardle.

FATHER AND SON SENTENCED FOR CARRYING OUT ILLEGAL GAS WORK

An unregistered gas installer and his father have been sentenced after carrying out illegal gas work at two houses in Cheshire.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Scott Lodge, 37, carried out new boiler installations at two addresses in Northwich in April 2022 and December 2022 – doing so while not being registered with Gas Safe Register.

Carrying out gas work without registration is illegal and potentially dangerous, as unqualified work can lead to gas leaks, fires, explosions, and carbon monoxide poisoning.

On one of those occasions, his father Brian, 67, who is a registered gas engineer, signed off the work and commissioned the boiler on his son's behalf. He did this without attending the property to check the boiler for safety.

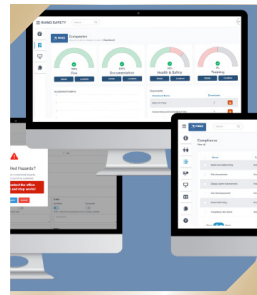
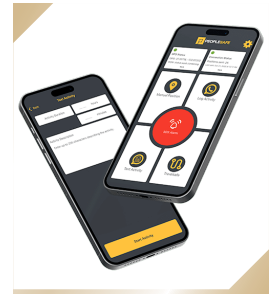
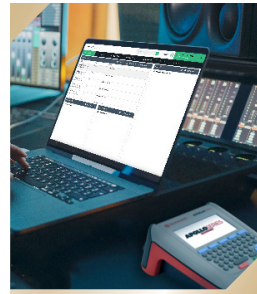
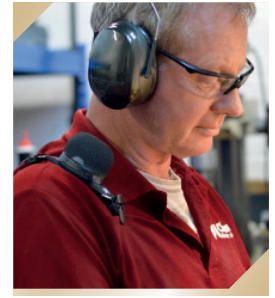
When one of the homeowners complained to the Gas Safe Register an inspection was carried out by a qualified engineer. That inspection identified defects resulting in the boiler being classed as at risk and a danger. This included a lack of support for the chimney

and flue system, which carried the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Members of the public are reminded that all gas work must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer. The Gas Safe Register is the official list of gas businesses legally permitted to work on gas appliances. Anyone can check whether an engineer is registered by visiting www.gassaferegister.co.uk.

Scott Lodge, of Adlington Drive, Northwich, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 3(3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He was given a 12-month community order and complete 200 hours of unpaid work. He was also told to pay £2,500 in costs at Chester Magistrates' Court on 22 December 2025. He must also pay £1,460 to one of the affected homeowners, which covered the cost of the work.

Brian Lodge, of Merriman Avenue, Knutsford, pleaded guilty to breaching section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He was given the same sentence as his son and ordered to pay the same in costs at the same hearing.



THE BEST IN H&S

The Tomorrow's Health & Safety Awards 2026 have officially launched, showcasing the standout innovations and game-changing services shaping the industry. This is your opportunity to select the winner.

Over the past 12 years, the Tomorrow's Health & Safety Awards have established themselves as a benchmark of excellence within the industry, and this year has seen our strongest field of entries yet.

Our awards are designed to recognise organisations that continue to push standards in occupational health, safety, and wellbeing through their products and services.

After months of exploring new launches and sifting through reader nominations, we've finally selected our top picks. In the pages ahead, we are able to showcase the very best products and services in the sector.

The shortlist compiled represents every facet of the industry; from wearable technology and health and safety software solutions to protective eyewear and gloves, we've covered the full spectrum of the sector. Whether it's an everyday essential or a specialised solution, these are the products and services shaping the future of the industry.

In our **Awards Guide**, you'll find our finalists organised alphabetically by product name. Each entry includes a synopsis highlighting its features and benefits, along with a link to the company website and any additional contact details you may need. This allows you to access more information about the entry at your convenience.

PICK YOUR WINNER

It is now your responsibility to determine which entry will secure the leading position for 2026. Voting is open until Monday 9 March. Whether you favour a product used frequently within your organisation or one that demonstrates significant potential, the decision rests with you.

Innovation continues to shape the working lives of people across the UK, but we want to know which solutions have truly transformed health and safety in your workplace this year. Don't forget to cast your vote and show just how powerful the readers' choice can be.

HOW TO VOTE

Voting is quick, simple, and open to everyone. Here's how:

1. Visit our online poll.
2. Choose your favourite finalist.
3. Click to submit your vote.

That's it – no lengthy forms or complicated steps. Want to share why you've chosen a particular product or service? There's a comment box for that, too. But remember: you only get one vote, so make it count.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE GUIDE](#)

THE FINALISTS

AnselIGUARDIAN by Ansell
Centurion Armis T2 Elite by Centurian Safety
CheckedOK by CoreRFID
Comfort+ Series by Tlsatec
doseBadge⁵ by Cirrus Research
Electrovault by Chemstore
Fire Safety Services by Acorn Safety Services
G7 Multi-Gas Detector by Blackline Safety
HPAT550 & HPAT650 by Martindale Electric
Incident Reporting Software by Notify Technology
Mental Health Construction Signs by Stocksigns
OdorBac Tec4 by 2Pure Products
Omniwear Noise by TSI
PATGuard Cloud by Seaward Electronic
Peoplesafe Pro App by Peoplesafe
Pinpoint P2 System by Pinpoint
Quin Pod by Quin
RED ALERT by BELFOR

Rhino Safety Dashboard by Rhino Safety
R-Link Watch by Ideagen Reactec
Safe365 by Safe365
SoloProtect Shield by SoloProtect
Stronghold by Stronghold Anchor
Traffi Microdex LXT by Traffi
uvex 1 x-cite collection by uvex
Vortex3 by Casella
WypAll Range by Kimberly-Clark Professional

**CLICK HERE TO
VOTE NOW!**

MEASURE, ANALYSE, PROTECT

Cirrus Research explores how health and safety managers can defend workers' hearing in three simple steps.

Hearing protection is one of the most important pieces of PPE. However, many organisations often fail to provide the right level of protection, which can pose just as great a risk as not providing it at all.

Knowing the correct type of hearing protection to provide may sound daunting, but the team at Cirrus Research has made it easy to achieve in three simple steps with their advanced noise dosimeter, the doseBadge⁵. With the doseBadge⁵, you can defend your workers' hearing effectively in three simple steps.

MEASURE NOISE FREQUENCY DATA WITH THE DOSEBADGE⁵

The doseBadge⁵ noise dosimeter comes with 1:1 octave band filters as standard, which break noise levels down into frequency bands. This is the first key step in making sure you choose the most effective hearing protection. The doseBadge⁵ is compact and lightweight, meaning it's comfortable enough to be worn for the duration of an entire shift. Its pre-programmable timers also make it easy for you to create noise measurement schedules, meaning you don't have to be present on-site to start and stop measurements.

It also comes equipped with Bluetooth connectivity, which means you can operate the doseBadge⁵ remotely from up to 10 metres away, either through the dedicated smartphone application or the remote control wand.

ANALYSE YOUR NOISE DATA IN OUR LICENCE-FREE SOFTWARE, NOISETOOLS

Once you have completed your noise measurements, simply download your data into our licence-free software, NoiseTools. The powerful built-in analysis tools will provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the noise levels affecting your employees, helping you to make informed decisions on noise control and reduction methods.

NoiseTools also features a database of hearing protection from several leading brands, and the hearing protection selection tool will highlight which products are the most effective to supply, based on the specific noise level data your doseBadge⁵ noise dosimeters have recorded.

PROTECT YOUR EMPLOYEES' HEARING WITH THE RIGHT HEARING PROTECTION

By using the hearing protection selection tool in NoiseTools, you can choose the most effective PPE for your staff. You can avoid under- and over-protection using the comprehensive database of hearing defenders. Depending on the noise levels your employees are exposed to, you can provide the right PPE to ensure that your workers' hearing is safeguarded against the dangers of exposure to excessive noise.

Enquire now about the doseBadge⁵ to get access to the three easy steps to help you protect your workers' hearing.

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SMARTER STORAGE

For businesses operating in manufacturing, laboratories, energy, waste, logistics or any sector reliant on chemical processes, understanding the impact of winter weather on chemical behaviour is essential, explains Mike Brodie, Managing Director of Chemstore UK.

In the midst of winter, organisations that store or handle chemicals face a seasonal shift in risk that often goes underestimated. While operational safety plans typically focus on well-known hazards such as spills, exposure and incompatibility, the impact of cold weather on chemical behaviour can be just as significant. Low temperatures influence how substances move, react and interact with their containers and surroundings, and these changes can subtly, and sometimes dramatically, increase the likelihood of an incident.

HOW COLD ALTERS CHEMICAL BEHAVIOUR

One of the first changes in winter is the alteration in viscosity. Many liquids thicken as temperatures drop, becoming slower to pour or pump. Processes that normally run smoothly may start to stall, and routine transfers can require more effort or different handling. Thickened materials strain pumps, hoses and valves, all of which are more vulnerable in the cold. In severe conditions, certain chemicals can partially solidify or freeze. Beyond the operational disruption, this can introduce more complex safety concerns. Frozen or semi-frozen chemicals may crystallise, and once thawed can behave differently than expected. Crystallisation can change a chemical's structure or concentration, increasing reactivity or instability.

Volatile chemicals also behave differently in winter. Heavier vapours linger closer to the ground in low temperatures, rather than dispersing as they might in warmer weather. This increases the risk of inhalation and allows vapours to accumulate in confined areas or around low-lying plant. For flammable substances, this shift can heighten the potential for ignition. A minor

release that would pose little problem in summer can create a far more dangerous atmosphere in winter.

Storage infrastructure is also affected by cold conditions. Metals, plastics and elastomers contract as temperatures fall, causing seals to stiffen, joints to loosen and materials to become more brittle. Over time, this can lead to small cracks or gaps that result in leaks. Equipment that has already experienced a year's wear is especially susceptible. Winter, in effect, stresses every part of a containment system, often in ways that remain unseen until a failure occurs.

Working conditions add another layer of difficulty. Reduced daylight hinders visibility, making it harder to spot early signs such as small leaks or frost damage. Slippery ground increases the likelihood of impacts or drops during manual handling. Cold temperatures also affect dexterity, slowing reaction times when operating valves or carrying out routine checks. These factors compound chemical risks and demonstrate why winter preparedness is essential.

WHY PROPER CONTAINMENT MATTERS MORE IN WINTER

The key message is not to assume chemicals behave the same way year-round. Winter brings shifts in chemical stability and equipment performance that require careful planning and tailored controls. Reviewing chemical inventories, temperature limits and storage arrangements is vital ahead of the cold season. Keeping chemicals within their recommended storage ranges is fundamental to preventing instability, crystallisation, pressure changes and vapour-related hazards.

“CRYSTALLISATION CAN CHANGE A CHEMICAL'S STRUCTURE OR CONCENTRATION, INCREASING REACTIVITY OR INSTABILITY.”

This is why proper containment and purpose-designed storage are so important during winter. Temperature-controlled units, insulated outdoor storage, heated bunds and robust indoor facilities help maintain chemical integrity and reduce the risk of seasonal deterioration. Effective containment also limits the environmental impact of a winter-time spill, when frozen ground or heavy rainfall can complicate response efforts.

Winter often reveals weaknesses in chemical safety systems. Businesses that take proactive steps, including reviewing equipment, reinforcing containment, training staff and adapting procedures for colder conditions, are far better positioned to maintain compliance and protect their operations. And for organisations seeking specialist support, working with trusted, award-winning hazardous materials storage experts such as Chemstore can offer valuable assurance that their winter-readiness measures meet the highest standards.

www.chemstore.co.uk





IT HAS TO BE NASC.

Established in 1945, NASC is the UK's leading trade body for scaffolding and access.

Nearly 80 years later its members represent 80% of the UK scaffolding and access market by turnover and include leading contracting firms and their clients, as well as suppliers and manufacturers. Raising and maintaining safety standards remains at the heart of NASC's objectives, driving every activity it undertakes.



SETTING THE SCAFFOLDING STANDARD SINCE 1945

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TRAINING PROMOTES SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE



Training isn't just a legal tick box, it's a control measure that keeps people safe, keeps projects moving, and keeps your business compliant and safe, says James Wall, Konecranes' Business Development Manager for Customer Training. Here, James shares with us his wealth of expertise on health and safety, and related training.

Q: What are the latest GB statistics on workplace accidents?

Health & Safety Executive (HSE) provisional figures show that 124 workers were killed in work-related incidents in 2024/25 and 680,000 workers sustained an injury at work of which 59,219 were reported under RIDDOR. Add to this some 1.9 million people suffering work-related illness and the net loss to business is estimated at 40.1 m working days or £22.9bn. The overall long-term trend is a steady reduction in workplace fatalities and injuries due, in part, to improved training regimes.

Q: What are the most prevalent types of incidents that lead to industrial accidents and how are they caused?

Common causes include falls from height, being struck by moving objects or vehicles, being trapped by collapsing or overturning items and contact with moving machinery. Accidents typically stem from failures in planning or supervision, inadequate exclusion or management of traffic, poor guarding or isolation of machinery, misuse or poor selection of lifting/access equipment, and insufficiently assessed PPE. Our practical, site-specific training courses and pre-use checks help to reduce the risks.

Q: How has Konecranes' training business evolved?

We have always taken great pride in the standards of training and equipment provided for our teams. Today we ensure that our 240 service technicians, specialist installation teams and other personnel requiring site

access are fully trained in health and safety best practice and well equipped in terms of PPE. Our responsibility extends to the safety of all parties in the environments in which we work. We have an obligation to conduct our business in accordance with workplace legislation and regulations, including the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, LOLER 1998, PUWER 1998, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Working at Height Regulations 2005.

Our Customer Training department was established to offer the same high standards of training to third parties. Training business has continued to increase year-on-year, meeting customers' requirements for accredited and professional tuition.

Q: What resources and infrastructure does Konecranes have in place for its training activities?

The team comprises four dedicated instructors all of whom hold recognised accreditations, including IPAF, PASMA, assessor/trainer qualifications and Level 3 Award in Education and Training AET or working towards qualification. Tutors have expertise in other industry-related disciplines, such as abrasive wheels and first aid. Our team combines hands-on operational experience with theoretical knowledge to deliver top-quality training. Our UK training department is backed by Konecranes' global resources allowing us to call on additional trainers as and when required.

Training courses are typically delivered at the customer's premises allowing content to be tailored to replicate specific site and industrial processes. We have also established a training school at our Banbury office, where facilities include rigs for practical IPAF, PASMA,



harness/rescue exercises, as well as purpose-built anchor systems and open edge scenarios designed to simulate real life experiences. We practise a robust record-management system for training, assessments and refresher alerts to help duty holders meet legal obligations. We also maintain equipment inspection and examination regimes to support hands-on learning.

Q. What training do you offer and what is involved in the various courses?

Crane operator training is a fundamental element of our tuition. Conducted in accordance with LOLER 1998, PUWER 1998 and BS 7121 crane operation courses can focus on general lifting and moving or industry specific processes like waste to energy. Practical and theoretical content includes instruction on pre-use checks, lift planning, basic slinging and rigging, signalling, different sling types, shackles, eye bolts and their associated features and functions. It also includes guidance on emergency response and record keeping. Crane operator training courses instil confidence and improve knowledge in employees, enhancing safety and performance while reducing downtime due to human error. Correct use of the crane can also extend its longevity.

Q. What courses do you run for personnel accessing equipment at height?

In industrial environments, especially those using overhead lifting equipment, access at height for maintenance is a basic requirement. Our working at height training meets all relevant legislation and regulations relating to harnesses, leading edge, horizontal safety lines, emergency planning, suspense trauma awareness and rescue from height. Subjects covered include harness selection and inspection, PPE, horizontal lifelines, lanyards, connectors, anchor devices and assessment. The courses educate operators on the selection and use of fall protection kit and help them make sound decisions for rescue and retrieval of workers after a fall.

As an approved IPAF trainer we offer education on the correct and safe use of mobile elevated work platforms, including cherry pickers and scissor lifts. Courses are suitable for operators and supervisors. IPAF certification, which lasts for five years, confirms accredited operation, enhances safety, promotes best practice and demonstrates an individual's competence.

For mobile access tower users, we offer PASMA accredited syllabuses with certification valid for five years. Courses, which include theoretical and practical

elements, provide delegates with an understanding of current legislation and the capability to dismantle, erect, inspect and operate mobile access towers safely.

Q. Do you provide any other types of training?

Our manual handling training equips individuals with the knowledge and techniques to safely move and handle objects, minimising the risk of injuries like strains and sprains. It covers proper lifting techniques, identifying hazards, and using mechanical aids effectively. This training helps maintain a safe workplace, compliance with health and safety regulations and reduced risk of litigation.

We offer courses on safe and appropriate use of abrasive wheels. This course offers theoretical and practical instruction on how to safely select, inspect, mount, and operate abrasive wheels and grinders in line with legislation, manufacturer guidance, and best practice. Tuition includes delegates performing cutting and grinding under the supervision of an instructor giving them the opportunity to put into practice knowledge gained in the classroom.

The depth of our training capability is demonstrated by the broad range of bespoke and specialised courses we provide. Developed to the specific requirements of customers we can deliver site observation programmes during which we assess operational performance and safety regimes. These courses can include scenario-based exercises to monitor operators in a live environment. We have also conducted crisis management training featuring victim rescue and first-aid elements, which are very popular.

Q. How would you summarise the value of Konecranes' training?

Our hands-on approach and on-site customer cooperation, ensure that courses are relevant to the specific process. At the shopfloor level our one-to-one training regimes help operators to learn how to use equipment correctly. This upskills the workforce allowing them to perform their jobs safely, reducing the risk of accidents and injuries. The courses educate company directors and managers, encouraging them to implement robust health and safety policies, fostering a positive workplace culture, reduced downtime and enhanced productivity to contribute to the overall success of the business.

www.konecranes.co.uk



AI AT WORK

Paul Rapuano, Global Strategic Partnerships Manager at workplace safety software company Rapid Global, explores the health and safety opportunities that AI and digitalisation present.



Recent independent research we commissioned reveals a disconnect between how managers and frontline workers view the potential of digitalisation and AI in creating safer, more compliant and more efficient workplaces. Could the UK be at a safety crossroads?

On one hand, the research reveals a growing managerial confidence in digitalisation, with more than a third (36%) of managers believing AI will play a key role in reducing workplace risks. Almost half (47%) say their organisation is ready to adopt AI in safety processes, and nearly a third (32%) report it is already in use.

Yet the view from the frontline is different. Just 16% of workers believe AI can reduce safety risks, and the same low figure feel their organisation is ready for adoption. Only 8% say they have seen AI in practice. The gap is clear: while leaders recognise technology as an opportunity, many workers simply don't see it happening, or don't believe in its benefits yet.

OLD HABITS VERSUS NEW TECHNOLOGY

The divide reflects a broader reluctance or difficulty in embracing digitalisation. While 68% of managers agree that a unified workplace safety system would improve compliance, nearly one in four workers (24%) report that their organisation still relies heavily on paper-based processes for inductions, sign-ins and incident reporting.

Almost a third (29%) of workers cite "old habits" as a barrier to adopting new technology. These everyday behaviours, from manual reporting to inconsistent data capture, act as friction points. If modern tools feel disconnected from real working practices, or too complex, adoption will slow, regardless of potential value.



However, it's important to note that resistance does not stem from lack of interest. A third (33%) of workers want more education on how AI could improve safety, and nearly a quarter (24%) admit they don't fully understand what practical role it might play. The desire to learn is present, it just needs structured engagement and leadership support to be realised.

BEYOND THE HYPE: PRACTICAL AI FOR SAFETY

When discussing AI in workplace safety, the focus is on proven technologies such as AI-powered Computer Vision, machine learning and (where appropriate) facial recognition. These tools can help ID-check workers at the gate, identify unsafe behaviours, predict near misses, streamline audits and provide leaders with real-time insight into safety trends and compliance status.

These technologies are designed to support managers, and not replace human expertise. When properly implemented, AI-enabled systems reduce manual workload, improve reporting accuracy and give safety teams more time to focus on proactive risk management. But clear communication is essential: workers need to see how technology helps them carry out their responsibilities more effectively.

CLOSING THE GAP: EDUCATION, PROOF AND PARTICIPATION

To bridge this adoption gap, leaders should focus on three actions:

1. **Educate:** Provide clarity around what AI and digitalisation mean in the safety context, using tangible examples instead of abstract promises.
2. **Prove:** Implement pilot projects or proof-of-concept initiatives that demonstrate measurable benefits, such as faster reporting or reduction in near misses.
3. **Participate:** Involve workers early in the process, encouraging feedback and collaboration. Adoption is strongest when employees act as partners in innovation.

THE FUTURE: DIGITALLY ENABLED, HUMAN-LED SAFETY

Digital systems and AI-enabled platforms are likely to shape the next decade of health and safety performance. However, adoption depends not just on the quality of technology, but on culture, trust and the ability to demonstrate value.

The opportunity is real. The organisations that succeed will be those that connect leadership vision with worker experience, while using digitalisation and AI not as replacements, but as tools that strengthen health and safety outcomes.

The Rapid Global UK Workplace Safety Research Report 2025 is available to download [here](#).

<https://rapidglobal.co.uk>

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PROTECT YOUR PEOPLE

Peoplesafe offers some practical tips when choosing lone worker technology.

Data from our Alarm Receiving Centre, supported by wider industry reporting, shows a clear rise in employee safety incidents across the UK – particularly verbal and physical abuse. While there is no single cause, increasing public frustration, stretched services and changing expectations are all contributing to a more volatile working environment for employees operating alone.

As a result, many organisations are rightly prioritising lone worker protection. But selecting effective lone worker technology is not simply a matter of responding to rising risk or buying the latest solution. A successful programme starts well before vendor conversations or product demos. It begins with organisational readiness.

START BY UNDERSTANDING YOUR ORGANISATION, NOT THE TECHNOLOGY

Before evaluating solutions, you need a clear picture of where your organisation stands today.

- How are lone workers currently protected?
- Do you rely on manual check-in calls, informal buddy systems, or have no formal process at all?

Equally important is culture. How do workers feel about monitoring and tracking? In the UK, privacy concerns, union engagement and trust all play a major role in adoption. If lone workers already resist manual check-ins, introducing an automated system won't fix the underlying issue without proper engagement and communication.

“**LONE WORKER TECHNOLOGY SHOULD ADAPT TO YOUR WORKFORCE, CULTURE AND OPERATIONAL REALITY NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.**”

You should also be clear about what's driving the initiative. Is this a response to an incident, a regulatory concern, or direct feedback from workers? Understanding the 'why' shapes everything that follows from messaging to success criteria.

DEFINE REAL RISKS, NOT GENERIC REQUIREMENTS

Not all lone workers face the same risks. A facilities engineer working nights, a social care worker visiting clients alone, and a utilities technician in a remote rural location each have very different safety challenges. Mapping these real-world scenarios is essential:

- Where do workers operate?
- What coverage exists?
- What happens if they become incapacitated or miss a check-in?
- Who responds, and how quickly?

This is also where early involvement from IT, operations, legal and worker representatives pay dividends. Lone worker technology often touches data security, workflows and privacy obligations under UK GDPR. Addressing these considerations upfront avoids costly delays later.

FOCUS ON DECISION CRITERIA THAT ACTUALLY MATTER

Feature lists can be distracting. Instead, you should evaluate lone worker technology against practical criteria that affect safety outcomes.

Alerting and escalation are fundamental. How are alarms triggered? More importantly, what happens next? Effective solutions ensure alerts escalate automatically until help is confirmed, whether through supervisors, a 24/7 monitoring centre or emergency services.

Connectivity is another make-or-break factor. A solution that works well in an office but fails in basements, rural areas or industrial environments won't protect your people. Real-world testing in actual work locations is heavily advised.

Usability matters just as much. If a solution is cumbersome, intrusive or drains batteries quickly, workers won't use it consistently. High adoption is not a 'nice to have', it's a safety requirement.

RUN PILOTS WITH PURPOSE

Pilots should test assumptions, not simply 'try out' technology. Set clear objectives, measurable success criteria and a defined decision point. Include both enthusiastic users and sceptics – you'll learn more from those who challenge the system than those who adapt around its flaws.

Test edge cases deliberately: poor signal, damaged devices, forgotten charging, shift handovers. These scenarios reveal whether a solution works in reality, not just in demonstrations.

MEASURE OUTCOMES, NOT ACTIVITY

Finally, define what success looks like. Faster emergency response times, high worker adoption and positive worker feedback are all meaningful indicators. Reduced time spent on manual check-ins and improved confidence among lone workers can also help build a strong business case.

“**IF A SOLUTION IS CUMBERSOME, INTRUSIVE OR DRAINS BATTERIES QUICKLY, WORKERS WON'T USE IT CONSISTENTLY.**”

At Peoplesafe, we see time and again that organisations succeed when they take a problem-first, readiness-led approach. Lone worker technology should adapt to your workforce, culture and operational reality, not the other way around.

When you start by asking what your lone workers need to feel safe, you're far more likely to choose a solution that delivers real protection, earns trust and stands up to scrutiny.

<https://peoplesafe.co.uk>



STRUCTURED SUPPORT

When it comes to working at height, designing out risk beats managing it, says Tom Harris, Global Technical Lead at Gripple.

Working at height remains one of the most hazardous activities in building and construction. Despite tighter regulation, training, and advances in access equipment, falls from height still accounted for over a quarter of fatal workplace injuries in 2024/25. For health and safety professionals, this statistic highlights that while managing risk is important, the most effective safety strategies are those that eliminate hazards at their source.

“FALLS FROM HEIGHT ACCOUNTED FOR OVER A QUARTER OF FATAL WORKPLACE INJURIES IN 2024/25.”

Suspension systems play a vital role in modern buildings. They support electrical lighting, HVAC, pipework, and other essential services in hospitals, offices, retail spaces, factories, and schools. But while these systems are essential, the way they are traditionally installed often puts workers at unnecessary risk.

HOW SUSPENSION SYSTEMS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO RISK

In early electrical installations, suspension methods were often simple and offered little in the way of organised cable management. Around the mid-century, cable trays supported by threaded rod and strut were introduced, transforming suspension by providing a safer, more structured support system.

Even today, rod and strut systems remain the go-to solution for many contractors. But installation is far from risk-free. Every piece must be cut to length, often estimated by eye, then drilled, bracketed, and fixed overhead. Cutting typically requires hot works permit, adding another layer of risk and compliance. These tasks mean repeated trips up ladders, lifts, or platforms, increasing time spent at height and the potential for falls, fatigue, and mistakes.

TRADITIONAL METHODS UNDER MODERN PRESSURE

Modern projects operate under unprecedented pressure. Skills shortages, tighter programmes, and higher safety expectations all sit side by side. Teams are expected to work faster, smarter, and more safely.

Traditional threaded rod installations struggle under this pressure. They take time, create waste, and rely heavily on skilled labour. More importantly, they keep people working at height longer than necessary.

DESIGNING RISK OUT OF INSTALLATION

Pre-engineered suspension systems take a different approach. Instead of managing risk once work starts, they remove many of the hazards before installation

begins. These systems are delivered ready to install, with pre-cut tracks and tool free fittings.

GROUND-LEVEL ADJUSTABILITY

Traditional systems often require repeated trips up ladders or lifts for fine-tuning, increasing exposure to fall hazards. Today's advanced solutions allow precise adjustments to be made entirely from the ground as many times as needed, dramatically reducing the number of working-at-height interactions.

BETTER ERGONOMICS

Lightweight components also reduce manual handling and physical strain and this benefit becomes even more critical when working at height. Every extra kilogram matters, especially when climbing ladders or using access equipment. Lighter systems mean less effort during installation, fewer trips up and down, and a lower risk of musculoskeletal injuries.

IMPROVED SITE CONTROL

Cleaner installations don't just look better, they actively improve safety, efficiency, and sustainability. Minimising debris and waste clutter reduces trip hazards and keeps emergency routes clear.

FASTER INSTALLATION, LESS EXPOSURE

Every minute spent working at height carries risk. However, systems that streamline installation reduce time off the ground by up to 85%, easing pressure on teams, and supporting tighter project schedules without compromising safety.

ELIMINATION OF HOT WORKS PERMITS

On-site cutting and welding introduces fire hazards, demands additional permits, and requires supervision. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), in 2023/24, welding and cutting accounted for 85% of hot work-related fires recorded in non-domestic buildings and in 10% of those, there was at least one casualty. Prefabricated kits remove these steps entirely, lowering risk, simplifying compliance with safety regulations, keeping sites safer.

ADOPTING FORWARD-THINKING APPROACH

Working at height in construction will always carry risk, but how we manage it is changing. By using installation methods that remove hazards from the process, businesses can protect workers, meet compliance requirements, and deliver safer results. Pre-engineered suspension systems make this possible – reducing time at height, eliminating hot works, and simplifying installation across all sectors.

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LOADING HAZARDS

Jerry Rudd, Author of Health & Safety in Logistics, analyses the dangers of working at height in warehouses and transportation.

Falls from height have been a consistent cause of death and injury in warehousing and transportation for many years. The height involved need not be great – it is quite possible to suffer a serious, or even fatal, injury by falling awkwardly from a vehicle's loading bed.

There are specific legal requirements in the UK. These necessitate risk assessments, to ensure all work at height is planned, organised and carried out by competent persons. If you can, avoid working at height completely, for example vehicles can be unsheeted from ground level. If such work is necessary, then you should use equipment which prevents a fall, such as a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP), or cherry picker. If neither of these options is available, then you must use equipment such as harnesses to minimise the distance of the potential fall, and severity of potential injuries.

A permanent solution, which protects all workers, is usually better than one to protect an individual, and brought into use every time.

For example, if loading roll cages on to the top deck of a double deck trailer, you could supply harnesses to be attached or detached every time someone enters or leaves the trailer. It is better to provide a curtain or net, which remains in position. Lone workers should never work at height.

FALLING FROM VEHICLES

Falls from vehicles are sadly all too common. The process of avoiding falls should start when the vehicle is specified, for example controls for ancillary equipment such as tail-lifts should be at ground level.

Steps and handholds should be provided to enable safe access to load areas, and all catwalks should be level, large enough, and anti-slip. Catwalks on top of a tanker should have handrails, preferably raised by a lever at ground level, and interlinked with the braking system. On artics, coupling hoses, or suzies, are best fitted on a sliding connector block to avoid the need to climb on the vehicle.

Also, everyone should wear non-slip footwear, and it is important to ensure adequate lighting.

DOCK LEVELLERS

One obvious risk of a fall is that of absent-mindedly walking off the end of the ramp. There should be something to prevent this: a chain, extendable tape, or purpose-deigned barrier.

One of the most serious accidents in a warehouse is for a fork-lift to fall between dock leveller and vehicle. There are two main ways for a gap to appear – a vehicle is driven away prematurely, or it creeps slowly away from the dock.

You must therefore minimise these risks. Possible solutions include various methods of deterring an accidental drive off, for example traffic lights, stop signs,

barriers, or even steering wheel covers. In some locations drivers must hand over their keys before loading begins.

Physical deterrents include locks fitted to the airlines of articulated trailers to prevent release of the brakes, wheel chocks, or permanently installed mechanical wheel locks, which clamp the vehicle in position.

If you are using loading platforms, such as scissor lifts, these should have guard-rails $\geq 1,100\text{mm}$ high, toe-guards $\geq 150\text{mm}$ high, and intermediate rails with gaps $\leq 500\text{mm}$. Controls must be of the hold-to-run, or deadman, type, with at least one other emergency stop control. Gates should be automatically interlocked with the controls.

ACCESSING RACKING

In practice, it will be necessary to access racking, either for maintenance or for order picking.

For regular work, specialised equipment such as high-level order pickers should be provided. It may be safe to use a suitable ladder at lower heights though the risks of musculoskeletal injuries should be considered.

Climbing racking should be completely prohibited – it is extremely dangerous. An exception may be maintenance by qualified abseilers with specialised equipment. People being lifted on lift truck forks, or an empty pallet, is equally dangerous.

Another option is a metal platform with hand rails, with slots for a pair of forks, and chains to attach it. Many people – including me – do not like these, and would not recommend them: in some countries they are illegal. Occasional use may be permitted, for example, checking damage which might pose an immediate risk. They should not be used for planned tasks.





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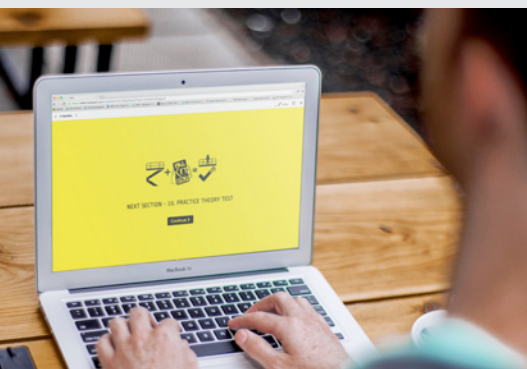
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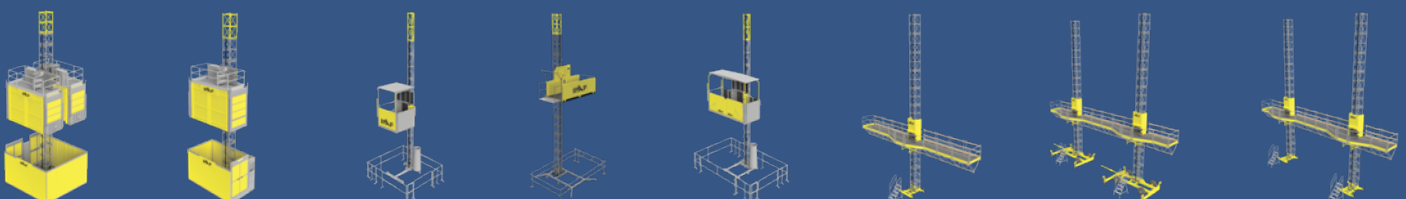
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YOUR **SAFE** SPACE

Safety, Health & Wellbeing Live Manchester 2026 takes place at Manchester Central from 10 – 11 February. With more than 125 exhibitors, five Training Zones and over 40 hours of content, its not to be missed.



The world of work is evolving faster than ever, and with it the role of the health and safety professional. From climate extremes and shifting workforce expectations to digital transformation and new legal frameworks, the modern safety function must now lead through uncertainty rather than simply enforce compliance.

Safety, Health & Wellbeing Live (SHWL) Manchester 2026 arrives at a critical moment for a profession facing rising complexity and increasing scrutiny. Designed to provide practical tools and forward-thinking insight, the event offers two days of keynotes, panels, and case-study learning focused on helping safety leaders strengthen strategy, demonstrate value, and adapt to a rapidly changing world.

TECHNOLOGY, AI AND THE DIGITAL LEAP

Artificial intelligence and big data are transforming how organisation's predict, assess and manage risk. For many, the challenge is no longer understanding the potential of AI, but understanding how to implement and govern it.

The session, An AI Revolution?, led by Karl Simons OBE, will explore how AI is reshaping safety management – from predictive modelling and automated monitoring to human-machine collaboration. A complementary session facilitated by MAKE UK will focus on AI in manufacturing, demonstrating real-world examples of AI delivering measurable improvements in safety performance and operational productivity.

Elsewhere, Storytelling Through Data will examine how safety leaders can translate complex data into compelling narratives that engage boards and frontline teams alike. Taken together, these sessions signal a profession moving decisively from reactive compliance to proactive prevention.

WELLBEING 2.0: MOVING BEYOND AWARENESS

While awareness of mental health has grown, workplace stress, burnout and anxiety continue to rise. Many

organisations are realising that wellbeing initiatives are most effective when embedded within structured systems – not as standalone gestures.

Under the event's Wellbeing 2.0 theme, speakers, panels and case studies will tackle the practical side of wellbeing management: how to use data to support difficult conversations, how HR and safety collaboration can reduce absence, and how to create cultures where mental health is openly addressed.

In Mental Health and Wellbeing – The Legal Landscape and Global Lessons, Emma Evans, Partner at Bexley Beaumont, will explore the legal responsibilities shaping mental health policy and the commercial drivers behind stronger wellbeing governance.

Alongside this, a dedicated session on Suicide Awareness in the Workplace will examine the new British Standard, discussing how it aligns with ISO 45001 and 45003 and how it can be used to build safer, more compassionate cultures.

CHANGING THE SAFETY CONVERSATION

Despite progress, the perception persists that safety professionals are rule enforcers rather than strategic partners. The interactive session Changing the Safety Conversation brings four influential voices together to challenge that stereotype and explore how to build credibility, influence leadership more effectively, and connect safety to performance and productivity.

The session concludes with an audience-led panel designed to surface real-world challenges and share practical solutions.

THE NEW RISKS: CLIMATE, CULTURE AND SOCIETY

The global environment and social landscape are shifting, and with them the risk profile organisations must manage. Extreme weather, environmental instability, and a more fatigued, less tolerant workforce are generating new pressures for safety leaders.

Dr Chris Davis of IOSH will address these realities in Integrating Climate Change into Occupational Safety and Health Practice, outlining how climate-driven extremes – heat, cold, storm impacts – affect people, equipment and operations. Another forward-looking session, The Changing Face of Risk – Why ESG Matters in 2025, will examine how environmental and social responsibility frameworks are redefining risk and reputation.

DEVELOPING THE FUTURE PROFESSION

The skills gap in safety continues to widen as senior expertise retires and early-career entrants struggle to find structured development pathways. SHWL Manchester's Future Profession strand will address talent, leadership and capability building.

Among the sessions, The Young Driver Transition – From Apprentice to Confident Driver, led by Jim Magner of Driving for Better Business, provides a practical example of how structured support can dramatically improve safety outcomes for younger workers. Other speakers will explore the soft skills – communication, persuasion and influence – that new leaders will need to succeed beyond compliance.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SAFETY

As organisations become more commercially focused, safety leaders must increasingly demonstrate financial value. The session 'Yes, But What's the ROI?' will bring together professionals who have secured investment in new systems by showing measurable outcomes such as reduced incidents, lower absence, improved efficiency and stronger culture.

The session is a blueprint for professionals striving to secure board-level support and reposition safety as a value-creating discipline.

LEGISLATION, REGULATION & COMPLIANCE

The event also features expert legal analysis of the Building Safety Act, Martyn's Law, and the emerging legal implications of AI, helping professionals understand and apply regulatory changes effectively and stay ahead of compliance expectations.

The full agenda can be found [here](#).

LEADING THE FUTURE OF SAFETY

Keynote speakers include Sarah Newton, HSE Chair of Board; Figen Murray OBE, Initiator of Martyn's Law

and Counter Terrorism Expert; and Richard Bate, IOSH President among many more. The full line up of speakers can be found [here](#).

WHY ATTEND?

Over two days, attendees will gain:

- Sharp, practical learning from industry leaders and CPD points.
- Tools to address modern risks and build resilient strategy.
- Insight grounded in real case studies.
- A platform for discussion, collaboration and networking.
- Inspiration to drive progress, influence leadership and shape culture.

PARTNERS

Safety, Health & Wellbeing Live works with a wide range of leading industry associations and partners. These include HSE, IOSH, NEBOSH, the British Safety Council, BSI, IITSM, IOM, NASC, HSM, IPAF, BOHS, UKATA, Safety Management, and Tomorrow's Health & Safety Magazine.

CONFIRMED EXHIBITORS

Meet more than 125 exhibitors – from Milwaukee and Bureau Veritas to Unigloves and Evac+Chair, visitors will have the opportunity to explore the solutions and suppliers driving innovation across safety, health and wellbeing.

The full exhibitor list can be found [here](#).

A PLATFORM FOR PROGRESS

Ultimately, SHWL Manchester 2026 isn't just about information – it's about transformation. It's where the profession comes together to share experiences, challenge assumptions, and shape the next generation of health, safety, and wellbeing practice.

Safety, Health & Wellbeing Live Manchester 2026 is where the industry meets that change head-on – confidently, collaboratively, and with purpose.

Register for free [here](#).

www.safetyhealthwellbeing.live



THE **HIDDEN** COST OF WORKPLACE NOISE

Oscar Acoustics investigates the evidence on how sound impacts employee wellbeing and productivity.

As organisations continue to navigate hybrid working, a challenge has emerged that's affecting employee wellbeing and productivity: workplace noise. Research from Oscar Acoustics reveals that more than half (56%) of UK office workers find their workplace too noisy, creating an environment that's not just uncomfortable but potentially damaging to both mental health and business outcomes.

THE REAL IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

The data paints a concerning picture of lost focus and heightened tension. Nearly half of employees (47%) struggle to concentrate due to noise, with nearly a third (29%) stating their productivity suffers and a quarter (26%) believing it reduces the work quality. The impact on wellbeing is just as stark, with 36% reporting irritability and a third experiencing stress directly linked to disruptive sound levels.

“THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR: ADDRESSING WORKPLACE NOISE ISN'T OPTIONAL.”

But the impact extends beyond individual productivity. Workplace noise is creating interpersonal tensions that risk fracturing teams. The research found that a seventh believe noise has negatively impacted relationships and culture at work. This manifests in direct conflict, with a fifth of employees admitting to snapping at colleagues and one in twenty reporting that noise had even contributed to physical altercations in the workplace.

“Noise in the office is not just an annoyance but a major workplace issue – one that can escalate conflicts, undermine productivity and damage employee wellbeing,” says Ben Hancock, Managing Director at Oscar Acoustics. “Addressing office noise should be seen as a strategic business imperative. Organisations that invest in acoustic design will build resilient and productive workplaces.”

THE NEURODIVERGENT EXPERIENCE

The research highlights a particularly concerning disparity in how workplace noise affects neurodivergent employees. Workers with ADHD (67%), dyspraxia (71%), dyslexia (66%) and autism (62%) report significantly higher sensitivity to noisy environments compared to the general workforce.

This creates an accessibility issue that many organisations may not have fully considered. As businesses work to create inclusive environments, acoustic management should be recognised as a fundamental component of workplace equity.

COPING MECHANISMS AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

Faced with disruptive noise levels, employees are finding their own solutions, though these often come with trade-offs. The research shows that 41% regularly wear

headphones to block out office noise, whilst 36% choose to work from home specifically to escape the din.

While these coping strategies demonstrate employee resourcefulness, they also highlight a systemic failure in workplace design. Headphone use can create barriers to collaboration and spontaneous communication, whilst the need to work from home to concentrate undermines the very purpose of bringing people together.

DESIGNING FOR ACOUSTIC COMFORT

The evidence is clear: addressing workplace noise isn't optional. Employees themselves are calling for change, with over a third (34.6%) wanting access to dedicated quiet spaces for focused work and 29.35% stating that improved acoustic absorption would help.

Professional acoustic treatment should be the foundation of any solution. Modern acoustic spray and plaster finishes can dramatically reduce noise levels and reverberation without compromising aesthetic design.

Creating designated quiet zones and improving the provision of meeting rooms and breakout spaces also ensures that collaborative work doesn't spill into areas where others are trying to concentrate. This spatial separation is crucial for managing noise at its source.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ACTION

Investing in acoustic solutions isn't just about creating a more pleasant environment. It's about building workspaces that support the wellbeing and performance of all employees, creating the conditions where people can do their best work.

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CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE

Nicola Dawn, a Partner who specialises in industrial occupational disease claims at Forbes Solicitors, looks at the importance of workplace noise risk assessments and control plans for protecting both workers and employers.



NOISE AT WORK

Occupational noise remains a health risk for organisations and staff. For the year 2024/25, the HSE estimates there were 15,000 workers with work-related hearing problems. Exposure to loud noises can damage sensory cells and nerve fibres in the ear, which can lead to hearing loss or tinnitus.

Workplace-related hearing problems can be caused by sudden, extremely loud sounds, such as an explosion and heavy equipment malfunctioning and banging, or ongoing exposure to noise over a period of time. In addition to the risks of hearing damage and deafness, occupational noise may also trigger stress, anxiety and cardiovascular issues. A 2023 study by the University of Leicester found a link between noisy road traffic and increased risks of rises in blood pressure among people living close to busy roads. Roaring engines and wailing sirens were recognised as potential causes of hypertension.

Stress, anxiety and fatigue caused by noise exposure may create further workplace hazards. Employee concentration can be affected, increasing the possibility of mistakes and accidents. Consideration should also be given to how loud noises may compromise safety procedures. For example, will warning sirens be drowned out by excessive noise levels? Will employees wearing hearing protection be able to hear alarms?

WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

Knowledge gaps are contributing to occupational noise problems, leaving employers at risk of failing to meet regulatory requirements, while also exposing workers to preventable health issues and workplace hazards.

In September 2025, the HSE reported that three-quarters of noisy workplaces lacked essential knowledge about maintaining and storing hearing protection equipment, including checking for damage and reporting faults. Inspections also revealed 80% of employees had received no instruction about techniques for properly wearing hearing protection and 95% of employers had failed to verify whether workers could still detect warning signals when wearing hearing protection.

MANAGING THE RISKS, CLOSING KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Creating a noise-control action plan can help to safeguard employees against noise exposure and enhance regulatory compliance.

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 were introduced to ensure that workers' hearing is protected from excessive noise when working, and to lower the noise limits set out in previous legislation. The regulations include legal exposure limits and action values for noise volumes measured in decibels (dB). These cover three thresholds, with the volume of noise varying from 80 dB(A) through to 87 dB(A) and peaks of between 135 dB(C) to 140 dB(C). As well as the legal limits for decibels, the Regulations require employers to assess risks of noise to employees and take action to address these risks.

An effective noise-control action plan should start with assessments and sound tests. This will enable an organisation to determine the levels of noise risks and practical measures for eliminating and reducing noise as far as possible. This may include, for example, a review of alternative, quieter working practices, as well as barriers and screens to absorb, dampen or redirect sound, the identification of hearing protection zones and the specification and provision of hearing protection.

Developing a noise-control action plan can arm employers with information that improves knowledge for mitigating the risks of occupational noise and create a structure for regularly checking this. Best-practice plans will often focus on health surveillance and record keeping, with this involving scheduled hearing checks, medical examinations and employee engagement. These steps can identify problems such as hearing protection not being properly maintained, training deficiencies and any employee concerns about protective equipment and protocols.

A considered and robust noise-control action plan can help employers to remain vigilant against the risks of occupational noise, and any failings during the implementation of measures intended to protect employees.

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PUTTING HYGIENE BACK ON THE AGENDA



While health and safety protocols drive workplace decisions across industries, hygiene often slips down the priority list. This oversight is costly and hygiene must be central in every health and safety strategy, explains Joanne Gilliard, CEO of Jangro,

The Health and Safety at Work etc. 1974 Act (HSWA) is the UK's primary workplace safety legislation. While it doesn't detail hygiene specifically, the Act places a clear duty on employers to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their employees. That duty cannot be achieved without clean and hygienic working conditions.

This responsibility has never been more pressing. In early 2025, around 2.8 million people were economically inactive due to long-term sickness, up from two million in 2019. This rising trend underscores the importance of integrating hygiene and workplace wellbeing into effective health and safety strategies.

In industries such as construction, the focus often falls on visible risks like slips, trips, and falls, while neglecting the less visible but equally damaging risks of poor hygiene. Hygiene is not only about compliance; it's a frontline defence against illness, safeguarding workforce health and wellbeing, as well as business continuity.

THE IMPACT OF POOR HYGIENE IN WORKPLACES

Poor hygiene in workplaces can have far-reaching consequences beyond immediate health risks. It contributes directly to illness and absenteeism, leading to lost working days and reduced productivity.



"BY EMBEDDING HYGIENE INTO EVERYDAY OPERATIONS, BUSINESSES PROTECT THEIR PEOPLE AND STRENGTHEN LONG-TERM PERFORMANCE."

According to new research by employee benefits and protection provider MetLife UK, long-term sick leave is now costing employers an average of £20,735 per employee. In sectors such as construction or manufacturing, where tight schedules and margins are common, even small increases in sickness absence can cause significant project delays and costs. Investing in preventive hygiene as a health and safety measure is comparatively low-cost, but the returns of fewer absences, improved resilience, and stronger performance are substantial.

At the same time, hygiene is a matter of worker welfare. The NHS reported that good hygiene contributes to a more positive and supportive work environment, positively impacting employee morale and wellbeing. This is not a surprise, as providing clean facilities, safe food handling areas, and contamination-free workplaces





helps protect employees' health and demonstrates an organisation's commitment to their wellbeing. This not only reduces the likelihood of illness but also fosters trust and morale across the workforce.

There is also the matter of regulatory compliance. Employers have a duty under health and safety law to manage risks, including those related to infection control. Failure to maintain proper hygiene standards not only undermines workforce wellbeing, but can also expose organisations to legal and financial penalties. By embedding hygiene into everyday operations, businesses protect their people and strengthen long-term performance.

EMBEDDING HYGIENE INTO HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES

To make hygiene a tangible part of workplace health and safety, organisations must move beyond general awareness and commit to structured action. Health and safety managers can start by conducting comprehensive hygiene risk assessments to pinpoint potential sources of contamination or unsafe practices.

“IN EARLY 2025, AROUND 2.8 MILLION PEOPLE WERE ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE DUE TO LONG-TERM SICKNESS, UP FROM TWO MILLION IN 2019.”

Staff training is equally important, not only in cleaning procedures but also in the safe use of equipment, ensuring that hygiene measures protect employees rather than introducing new hazards. Robust contractor vetting further safeguards standards, reducing the risk of unethical or unsafe practices that can compromise workplace hygiene.

Building on that foundation, high-quality hygiene must also be central to hazard mitigation, particularly in areas such as food safety and cross-contamination prevention. In environments where materials, equipment, or even food products are handled daily, poor hygiene practices can introduce avoidable risks that compromise safety standards. Effective hygiene controls, from proper handwashing to clean storage and disposal practices, are critical in preventing contamination and safeguarding quality.

To ensure these measures continue to deliver results, businesses should regularly review cleaning protocols against health and safety KPIs. This ensures that hygiene practices remain effective, measurable and aligned with organisational safety goals. By implementing these actions into everyday operations, businesses can transform hygiene from a background task into a proactive defence for workforce health, wellbeing and productivity.

SPOTLESS STANDARDS

Hygiene is not a peripheral concern. It is a core component of effective health and safety management. By prioritising clean and well-maintained workplaces, organisations protect their employees, reduce absenteeism, and strengthen overall performance. Businesses that put hygiene at the heart of their health and safety strategy will not only protect their workforce but also safeguard their future.

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MEASURED, CERTIFIED, CARBON NEUTRAL

Following comprehensive life cycle assessments and alignment with best-practice standards, 2Pure Products has confirmed that its full product portfolio is now carbon neutral. Here, the company explains why the milestone reflects a commitment to low-impact manufacturing and outcome-driven cleaning solutions.

2Pure Products was established with the principles required to be a measurably sustainable business and has announced that all of its products are now fully carbon neutral.

MEASURING OUR CARBON IMPACT

"Understanding the pressing need to reduce carbon and properly understand the environmental impact of our products, we employed independent experts McGrady Clarke and Metsims to conduct a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) to cover every stage of each product's journey," says 2Pure Products Director James Law.

"Following the requirements of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol and the ISO 14040 and 14044 standards for Life Cycle Assessment to ensure our evaluations met globally recognised best practice, we were able to focus specifically on greenhouse emissions throughout the life cycle and identify 'Hot Spots' to make changes."

Law adds: "For OdorBac Tec4 and OdorBac Air, the total cradle-to-grave footprint is 0.063 kg CO₂e per litre of concentrate. For OdorBac Toilet & Scale, the total cradle-to-grave footprint is 0.121 kg CO₂e per litre. For all our products, the main emissions hotspots are the formulation and ingredients, packaging and transport. It should be noted that these figures exclude the use phase."

SUSTAINABLE BY DESIGN

Law continues: "Ever since we started the business, we ensured that we have operated as sustainably as possible. Manufactured in the UK using renewable energy sources, all of our 100% recyclable plastic containers are made from 100% recycled plastic using 88% less energy, 59% less water and 71% less CO₂.

"The original OdorBac Tec4 was designed to be one of the safest yet most powerful all-in-one odour eliminators and all-purpose commercial cleaners available. Suitable for both hard and soft surfaces – and compatible with scrubber dryers, carpet machines, trigger sprays and traditional mopping – its performance is delivered instantly through 2Pure's patented technology.

"Many customers find that OdorBac Tec4 replaces more than 95% of their existing cleaning products, reducing risk, training time and costs while increasing efficiency and results. With one product, teams can clean, degrease, sanitise and eliminate odours throughout an entire facility, including on fabrics and carpets.

"All 2Pure Products are also designed to be used in our LoopBox™ reusable container system that allows packaging to be collected, washed, and refilled in a continuous cycle. This doesn't just reduce plastic waste; it also cuts carbon emissions associated with producing and transporting new containers.



"The future of FM and cleaning lies in fewer SKUs, outcome-driven procurement, closed-loop packaging, and safe, non-hazardous chemistry. Sustainability must be integrated into efficiency, hygiene, and human safety, not treated as a side consideration. Organisations that embrace this approach can reduce environmental impact, protect employees, improve operational efficiency, and meet regulatory and client expectations."

NEUTRALISING OUR CARBON IMPACT

"We have committed to reducing our carbon impact by at least 5% per year and we have partnered with Gold Standard to offset the remaining emissions with verified environmental and social value projects," says James Law. "We are therefore proud to announce that all 2Pure products are certified carbon neutral (excluding the use phase).

ADDRESSING THE USE PHASE TO ACHIEVE CARBON-NEUTRAL CERTIFICATION

Law concludes: "We believe that responsible manufacturers should also account for the 'in-use' phase of the life cycle for all its products. We will therefore add extra Gold Standard carbon credits for the use cycle, making our products carbon negative at point of purchase.

"Customers that partner with us can receive annual carbon retirement certificates in their own business name for the use cycle. We will be issuing these for the first time in January 2026 and cover the whole of their purchases for 2025, and annually thereafter.

"In conclusion, we are delighted to announce that all 2Pure products are now fully carbon neutral, delivering meaningful impact where it matters most, with measured, certified change. Today, not tomorrow."

<https://2pureproducts.com>

FIRM FOOTING

Dave Ford, Altro's Specifications Manager for the North, explores the critical factors to consider when selecting flooring materials for public areas that experience heavy footfall.



When it comes to specifying flooring for public areas with heavy footfall, there is a greater need than ever for durable, easy-to-clean and attractive surfaces – and, thankfully, plenty of smart solutions to meet those demands.

Specifiers have a lot to balance, but probably top of that list has to be safety. Different environments demand different solutions to keep people safe, but

deciding what flooring you need doesn't need to be complicated. It's all down to the contaminants present in your environment, as it's contaminants that determine the level of slip risk.

For example, if you've ever been to a busy shopping centre when it's been raining outside – wet shoes and dripping umbrellas can make the floor slippery. Likewise, there's potential for wet floors in food and drink areas, restrooms and entrance areas. So, for many high-traffic areas, especially where there's a chance of water spillage, we recommend high-quality safety flooring.

All our solutions for high slip-risk areas have $PTV \geq 36$ and are within the R10 slip resistance category. These products deliver sustained slip resistance, reducing the risk of slipping to one in a million for the lifetime of the flooring in areas where water is the contaminant. Also consider practical ways to reduce the risk in the first place, such as installing good quality barrier matting at entrances to reduce dirt and water brought in.

For areas with a low slip risk, where spillages rarely happen and there's no direct access from outside bringing wet or muddy footprints, smooth flooring solutions could be ideal. For corridors, waiting areas and wards, smooth flooring also delivers ease of cleaning and durability and a wide range of aesthetic options.

For high-traffic, heavy footfall areas, durability is a key consideration. Most safety flooring is impact-resistant, which makes it very durable, but look for manufacturer guarantees that prove confidence in the longevity of the flooring. Our safety flooring provides a robust, hardwearing surface that resists many common stains, odours and common chemicals for better hygiene.

Also remember that how that flooring is maintained is essential to how it will perform, so cleaning should form part of the durability considerations. To combat stains from food and drink, salt and dirt, it's important that the cleaning regime is frequent and simple, and to use the right technique for the right flooring, communicated properly to the cleaning teams. You can find easy-to-use cleaning guides for all our products on the Altro website.

Safety and durability are key for flooring for high-traffic areas, but the good news is that there is a huge variety





of products to choose from that allow you to deliver that and also design creatively when it comes to the look and feel of a space too. Long gone are the days of grey or blue or nothing. There is a vast array of bright or muted colours available, including those without the safety flooring 'sparkle', plus ranges that allow biophilic-design to 'bring the outside in'.

For example, Altro Illustra draws inspiration from the natural world with natural stone, textile and mineral designs that deliver visual texture and softness yet provides all the performance characteristics you'd expect from a safety floor. Designs such as these, along with nature-inspired wood safety floors, offer a harmonious blend of style and functionality with textures and softness to help create and enhance feeling of wellbeing within spaces.

High-traffic areas mean large numbers of people are using them, and that means specifiers need to consider the needs of all, including those with disabilities. For example, to consider the needs of the visually impaired, there must be adequate visual contrast between adjacent surfaces. The standards recommend a Light Reflectance Value (LRV) contrast of at least 30 points. This is far easier to achieve now there is such a wide range of design options to choose from, and many manufacturers provide detailed information on LRVs and also now on Chroma values. There have also been huge steps forward in designing for those with dementia or neurodiversity, which should be a consideration when specifying for all high-traffic areas – see the Altro website for more information on this.

Looking generally at design for wellbeing, something else that flooring can do is affect the acoustics of a space and help dampen the sound produced by footfall and other traffic. Acoustics can significantly impact an environment and be problematic for specific sectors, like hospitals, care homes, dementia and mental health facilities. With flooring options that help reduce the decibel level of sound reflected off them, you can help create calming and comfortable environments wherever they are needed.

Acoustic flooring generally refers to flooring that helps provide sound insulation, thus dampening the effects of sound from within the room, be it airborne noise or impact noise. Acoustic flooring is different from soundproof underlay or flooring, which is designed to reduce sound coming through the floor from adjoining areas. Many modern flooring options incorporate sound reduction, so look for those details along with slip-resistance, aesthetics and durability. With flooring available offering different levels of sound reduction, you can tailor your project to its exact specifications.

The last factor we're considering is sustainability – increasingly important for us all. The growth of adhesive-free flooring is great news for us all, as it comes with excellent sustainability credentials, with some, such as Altro's, being 100% recyclable post-consumer and offering up to 50% saving on embodied carbon versus the equivalent flooring installed with wet adhesive.

Additionally, there are cost and time saving benefits, for example, Altro adhesive-free flooring has no need for a DPM, faster installation, less noise and downtime and no adhesive odours. Many ranges are now available for adhesive-free installation, including many suitable for high-traffic public areas.

www.altro.com



DON'T SLIP UP

Scott Saunders, Technical Service Manager at Watco, discusses how to stay on top of floor safety hazards to prevent accidents in winter months.

In the winter months, the combination of shorter daylight hours and unpredictable weather can increase the number of risks around the workplace.

Research by Watco revealed that only 25% of facilities hadn't been affected by slips, trips and falls within the previous 12 months. Uneven flooring, slippery surfaces, and worn steps are common hazards that can lead to slips and trips, particularly in areas such as car parks and building entrances when visibility is poor. In the winter months, this can be caused by the lower levels of daylight, or during periods of rain or snowfall.

Simple solutions including new lighting, applying anti-slip coatings, and conducting regular inspections can make a big difference in ensuring safety. By planning for the hazards that occur year-after-year, you can reduce the number of them, protecting the team and company's resources.

SLIPS: ADDING ANTI-SLIP COATINGS

In the winter, the wet weather adds a constant layer of water to outdoor surfaces, which can become very slippery. High rainfall is common in the UK, however, with reduced light in winter, it is harder to assess slippery surfaces, leading to accidents. Increasing lighting in outdoor spaces and introducing signage for areas that become particularly slippery when wet, such as decking, will help to reduce accidents – particularly for those visiting an unfamiliar premises.

Rainwater is also brought into buildings on clothing and shoes. Anti-slip coatings can be applied to areas close to entrances where water gathers in the wetter seasons, to increase grip underfoot and highlight where to take caution. Wet floor signs should also be readily available for team members to put out, and the process for addressing wet floors should be clearly communicated to all in the building, such as what to do as an individual vs when to alert the cleaning team.

TRIPS: REPAIRING UNEVEN FLOOR SURFACES

Trips are often the result of surface damage, with holes in the floor or loose material causing people to lose their footing. Cracks, holes, potholes and loose door thresholds make the floor surface uneven and increase

the number of trip hazards in and around a building. In the winter months, with less daylight and wet or icy surfaces, these damages become harder to safely navigate.

Incorporating common areas for surface damage into building inspection lists will help to identify and address these hazards as early as possible. Freezing temperatures overnight can lead to rapid deterioration in floor damage because water pools in the crack or hole, freezing then thawing which weakens the floor surface and widens the damage. Therefore, this effort must be supported with capacity to complete repair work. It is also critical to have a damage reporting system in place throughout the building so that damages are logged for repair when first spotted. By logging areas of surface damage more quickly, FM's can also ensure that signage is used to block off areas of the floor and prevent trips prior to the repair.

FALLS: INCREASING GRIP ON STEPS

Steps pose a greater threat to safety in the winter because the edges are harder to see in low lighting, and water or ice can collect on the surface. Inside, rainwater brought in on clothes and shoes can still collect on steps. This can result in both indoor and outdoor areas becoming slippery and increasing the risk of falls.

Applying step covers, treads and tapes will increase grip underfoot. Treads, covers and tapes can be selected in a different colour to the step, often a bright colour like yellow for added visibility of the step edge too.

USING RELEVANT RESOURCES

Conducting a team session or circulating resources with teams to highlight hazards that are more common in winter and how to tackle them will help to ensure that all members of a building are up to date on processes. Resources should be tailored to the building, and may include where to find salt or grit for ice, the location of wet floor signs for exposed entranceways or how to report hazards such as loose step treads.

To download free resources from Watco on safety underfoot, floor repairs and more, click **here**.

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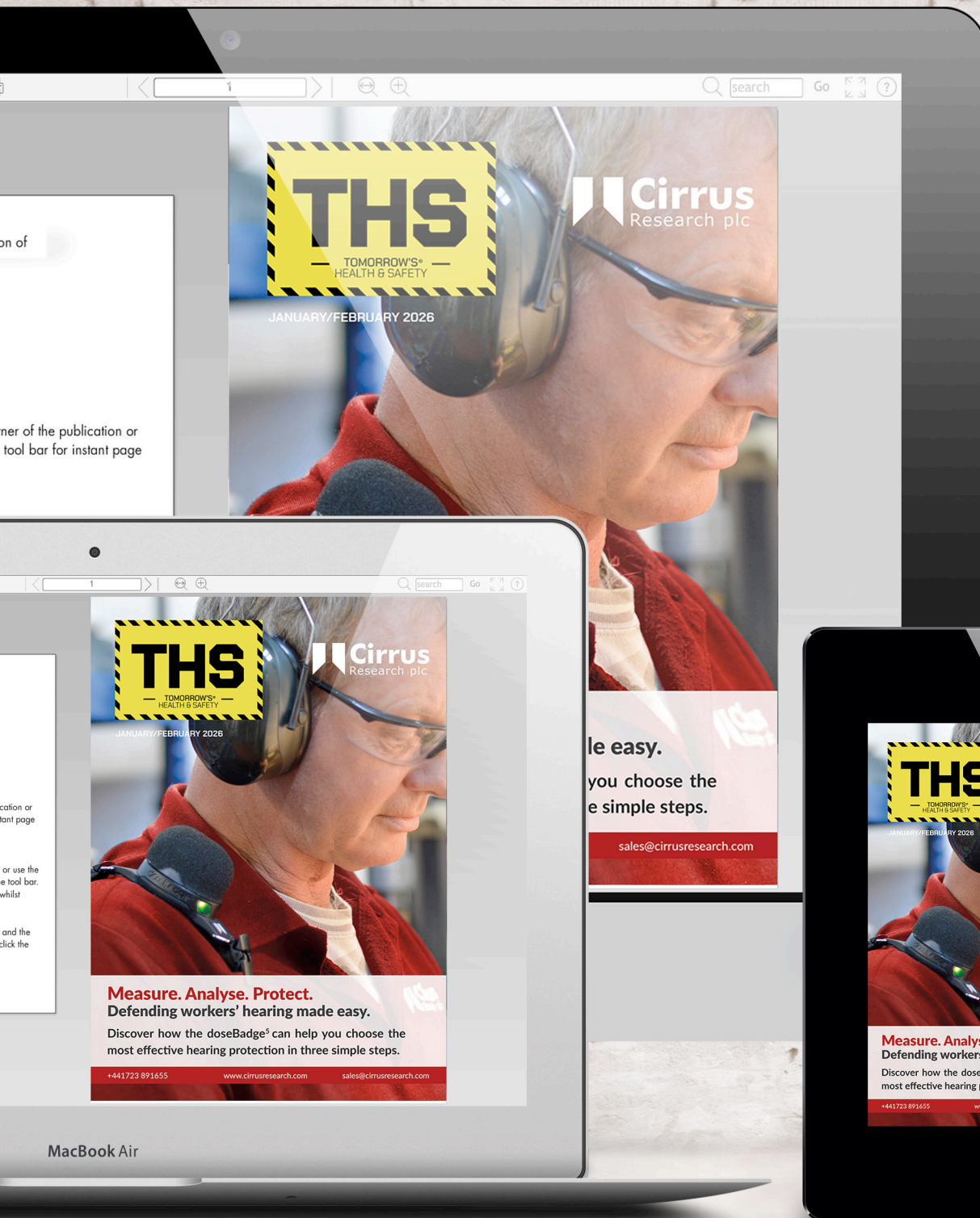
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