Nearly New

October 2013

Organics Recycling Group
Renewable Energy Association

Exclusively for members of ORG and the REA

call today on 020 7925 3570

Health and Safety News

Workplace Transport Edition

Inside this issue:

6 things to look at around your business over this next quarter:

1. Are you displaying your Employers' Liability Insurance certificate. Is it up to date?
2. Have you documented your last audit and have findings been put right.
3. Have staff been face fit tested to ensure that their RPE fits correctly.
4. Check that a new employee has been inducted correctly. Is the paperwork up to date?
5. Next month we will supply a simple director's audit form for you to use.
6. Who needs their training updated?

Having spent many years now looking at various different types of recycling facilities, I am always shocked that one of the key areas that is frequently lacking is the most dangerous yet often the most simple to fix.

Due to the very nature of the feedstock that needs to be dealt with, Large Goods Vehicles (LGV), machinery and plant is required to deliver, collect or move it around on site. Therefore the one thing that all sites have in common is pedestrians.

In my experience, this is where it can all go wrong as sites are often under significant 'job pressures', which commonly lead to human failures to carry out their job correctly and responsibly. Examples of these job pressures include, site capacity, usable space, poorly maintained equipment, missing or un-clear instructions, lighting and traffic - either in-house or external, or a mix of the two.

Then you add in physical pressures that can't be controlled easily such as the weather, customers, illogical design or layout of sites, (often caused as the site grows and is not recognised). What you get is a heady cocktail of danger that often goes unnoticed until something goes catastrophically wrong.

If you encourage your staff to near-miss report any problems that they identify then you stand a chance of turning the situation around but only if you listen and make any necessary alterations to improve safety.

You will often here Health and Safety professionals twittering on about risk assessments and safe systems of work and I apologise if I have lost you already. To be honest I am doing well if you have got this far! However, risk assessments and safe systems of work are required for two reasons:

Firstly and most importantly they are for you to ensure that you have thought about the hazards that might affect your business and then identified and implemented any control measures that are required. This should be done for your staff and any third party who might be affected by your business activities , however the latter group is often overlooked.

Could Legionella be a problem on your site?

Find out more on page 4

Secondly, they are for your evidence should anything go wrong. Over the last 12 months the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has been saying that paperwork is not important. In part I agree, until something goes wrong and somebody is seriously hurt or worse, killed. I can then assure you from personal experience that if this should happen the only thing that the HSE will be interested in is reviewing your paperwork and if it is not up to standard then there is every possibility that you will be off to court and facing prosecution.

So back to traffic management, I would strongly suggest that you write a traffic management plan for your business. Depending on the size and complexity of your business this can range from one page to 30 or 40 pages. It should also be updated regularly to ensure that it changes with your business. It will follow the basic principles of a risk assessment just with a lot more detail. Then the key findings can be simplified and given out to staff and visitors warning of the risks.

What things should I include in my traffic management plan?

- Pre-site entry issues
- A safe site
- Safe vehicles
- Safe workers

For further guidance on writing your own traffic management plan, please look at the Waste 09 publication by WISH available on the HSE website.

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/waste09.pdf

As I am writing this newsletter, a court case has just been heard (27th September), after a worker died whilst clearing out a build up of mud and debris from under a weighbridge. The person concerned was only 21 and had the rest of his life ahead of him.

The HSE said there was nothing to stop lorry drivers driving on or off the weighbridge despite the maintenance work taking place, and a suitable risk assessment for the work would have identified the potential dangers of lorries mixing with pedestrians on the site. The company was fined £250,000.

Is your site up to scratch?

Disappointing Returns from the health & safety monitoring survey Quarter 2: 2013.

We received eight responses to this survey covering a total of 617 employees. 4 responses (50%) showed no accidents or incidents occurring on site. Fifteen accidents were reported, one of which was reportable under RIDDOR (over seven day absence). The incidence rate for RIDDOR reportable injuries was 162.07 (per 100,000 employees) which compares favourably with the HSE reported figure of 1853 incidents of over three day absence per 100,000 employees, No diseases or dangerous occurrences' as defined under RIDDOR were reported. Four of the sites reported a total of 66 near miss incidents.

It is unfortunate that respondents are still not indicating which activities take place on their sites In contrast to recent trends, the highest number of accidents (6, 40%) occurred on open windrow sites

We would like to thank all those who responded to these surveys and encourage all members to respond to future surveys. We cannot stress highly enough the importance of the ORG gaining increased participation from industry to build our knowledge of the H&S issues which are impacting us the greatest.

Table 1: Reported Accidents Resulting from Different Activities

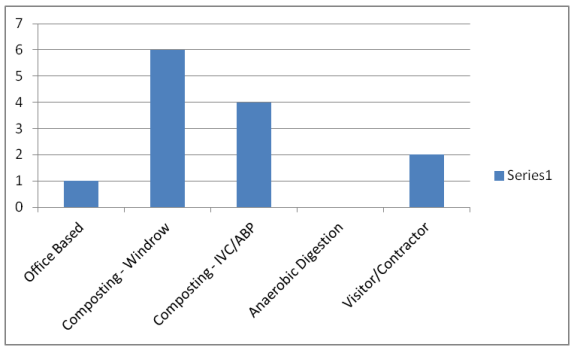
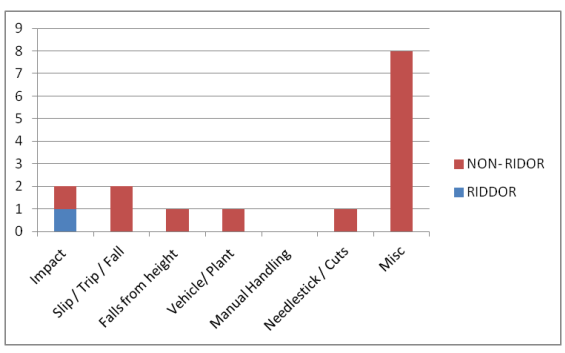


Table 2: Reported Accidents Resulting from Different Causation Factors.



What additional safety features can I consider on my site?

Back in February at the WISH and HSE conference Judith Hackett, Chair of the HSE, stated that the waste management and recycling industry had a poor health and safety record and action must be taken to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries that occur throughout our industry. She also stated that the paperwork was not important but the job being done on the ground was and that businesses had a moral and legal responsibility to reduce accident rates and ensure that staff and the public get home safely everyday. If health and safety is managed effectively in your business then this can have benefits to your bottom line. I think she was talking about your balance sheet!

How Could Technology Help?

Judith also said that she thought businesses should rely more on technology to help prevent accidents within the recycling industry. So I thought it might be useful to share a few that are on the market.

The reversing alarm now comes in many guises. You can record your own messages or even have curlews calling out or white noise if your neighbours are a problem.

Reversing Cameras are now cheaper than ever and easy to fit. Did you know that they now come as a wireless option. This can be very useful for monitoring plant or blind spots across the site from the vehicle cab.

360 degree cameras can be used to give a view looking down onto your vehicle. In my experience they are worth trialling but beware as they work best on very large equipment. On smaller equipment the cameras struggle to get a wide enough picture and this can then become stretched. If the cameras get knocked then the digital stitching required can be moved and this can lead to blind spots. Not what you need on a system to be relied upon.

There are various makes of radar brakes that can work very well on loading shovels and LGV's. They work by emitting a radar beam out of one or two receivers on the rear of the vehicle. They then will allow the vehicle to reverse up to a pre-set distance of an obstacle. As soon as that limit is reached the vehicle will automatically apply the brakes and prevent the vehicle from going backwards.

I have dealt with two systems: the Sentinel and the Ogden System from Vision Techniques. Both have limitations and I would suggest that they are trialled first.

There are now various personnel type shields that can be retro-fitted into a variety of different applications such as in-feed conveyors or loading shovels and excavators. The personnel or visitor on-site is given a lanyard to wear, this can then double up as their visitor badge or even time card. The machinery on-site is fitted with a 360° radar unit. Should the person then enter the pre-defined area the machine will audibly warn the driver and then automatically apply the brakes if the person gets too close. All pedestrians must wear a lanyard for the system to be effective.

Pitfalls?

If there are any down sides with these systems it will be that the drivers can either learn ways of getting around the system using overrides or they become complacent and rely on them rather than using their mirrors and actually looking. How many of your staff are always looking over their shoulders before moving off in your loading shovel?

Don't forget the simple things: cones, concrete blocks, chains on poles, earth banks can also be effective on-site for controlling traffic and protecting pedestrians

Four people were hospitalised due to Legionella after coming into contact with compost

NHS Lothian has found Legionella bacteria in potting mixes, compost heaps and composted animal manures but the exact way the Legionella longbeachae infection is passed from compost to humans is uncertain. It is thought that the bacteria is spread through breathing in very small dust particles or very small drops of contaminated water or from hand to mouth.

NHS Lothian also said: "This type of Legionella is quite rare in that unlike other strains it has never been identified in man-made water systems, like cooling towers.

Guidance

In guidance entitled 'Guidance on Legionella longbeachae', the ORG states: "ORG recommends that composted materials are made according to the requirements of PAS 100. The phase of high temperature composting should be sustained for sufficient time to kill Legionella bacteria, throughout each batch of compost production."

However, the Group said it is difficult to assess the likelihood of the bacteria's presence in materials supplied for composting.

In line with product safety regulations, PAS 100 requires that labelling of composted materials include a warning about the risks associated with handling the material. For example; "Every effort has been made to ensure this compost contains no germs, sharp fragments, toxins or regenerative plant parts. However, the compost producer cannot guarantee they will never be present. As with all products of this type, wear gloves when handling and wash hands after use. During handling avoid inhaling any dust or water vapour or droplets from it, or ingesting any of it."

ORG adds: "Exposure of all material in each composting batch should be achieved by a means suited to the composting process. For example, in turned windrow systems surface zone material should be placed into the core zone of each batch within an enclosed space, designed to ensure that all of the batch achieves the target temperature for the minimum necessary time before it is removed from that space."

Legionella Reduction Tips

- Ensure that all air misting systems are regularly serviced and that includes sanitisation at least annually.
- Beware that lagoon water or any stagnant water holding tanks etc can be a breeding ground for Legionella
- Ensure that you are composting to PAS100 and that you try and reduce the amount of turning when the wind is in the direction of neighbours.
- Ensure that staff are face fit tested to make certain that their respirators are working correctly

At whom is this publication aimed?

This publication is aimed at Company Directors, Managers and Site Staff and is designed to be accessible to all. If further clarification or help is required then please get in touch with Gordon@r-e-a.net who will put you in touch with us.

In the next edition

This next edition will be looking at Competence, Directors and staff responsibilities?

Check out this quarter's Tool Box Talks at the Members section on the ORG website.

1. Protection against toxin containing plants

With thanks to Business Health Partnership for compiling this issue and Chrestomatics for the Tool Box Talk that can be found on the ORG web site in the members area.

Business Health Partnership .co.uk

www.CHRESTOMATICS.co.uk