

Technical Information

Asbestos

The burying of asbestos on registered agricultural land is to be prohibited from June 2005.

DEFRA has a consultation out 'The Waste Framework Directive (Landfill Directive) Consultation', which ends on the 18th March 2005 with the plan that the regulations come into force in June 2005. This plan may or may not be disrupted by an election. This revised regulation will bring farming waste into line with industrial waste. So a number of products that a farmer has been able to treat as agricultural waste and bury on farm, will now have to be treated as Special/Hazardous waste and consigned to a dump licensed to take the waste.

This means that asbestos containing material (ACM) generated on a farm after June can not be buried on the farm but will have to be consigned to a dump licensed to take asbestos. If my reading is correct the farmer will be able to store the ACM for a while on site and he does not need to use a licensed haulier to take the ACM to the dump as he can transport it himself, although he will still need to consign it correctly and advise the dump in advance that he is coming. This Consultation Paper is available from the DEFRA web site.

Nets

Through the ACR we are working with the other associations to write the advice on how nets should be correctly rigged. It has been brought to our attention that the BS states that, the net should be fitted to ensure that gaps around the edge of the net do not exceed 100mm, in the past less than 300mm was acceptable. This is a very serious tightening of the rigging instructions and will be very difficult to accomplish, but I have already heard of roofers having prohibition orders put on them because the gaps exceeded 100mm but were less than 300mm.

Once again a regulation that is unlikely to actually save on injuries or lives but it will certainly put up the costs of netting and so increase the differential costs between the good quality contractors and the 'cowboys'.

Man Baskets

RIDBA's campaign for the continued use of non-integrated man baskets, has been successful

I can now confirm that our campaign has been a success. The HSE recognise that it will take a long time for all contractors to be able to use fully integrated man baskets. It has therefore been agreed that the RIDBA will write an advice note with the HSE on how non integrated man baskets can be safely used by experienced and trained operatives. PM28 will continue to be published and will cover other none experienced users.

Inspections for guarantees

Many roll formers have in the past insisted that for their guarantees to be valid the materials must be inspected annually. Corus Colours have now advised that this is not the case. The inspection regime should be agreed on an individual site basis, and will be dependent on the building, its internal and external environment and the materials used.

Boss gets 16 months for employee's death

In June 2003 a worker removing and replacing an old roof fell 6M through an old roof light to his death. His boss and the company employing him were prosecuted for manslaughter. They both pleaded guilty to a charge under section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work act in that they failed to ensure the safety and welfare of an employee. In January 2005 the boss was sentenced to 18 months in jail.

Latest Accident Stats

The HSE have advised that the latest accident stats show that the number of injuries to experienced roof workers are falling but the number of injuries are increasing for the inexperienced roofworkers and so they are drawing up plans to convince clients that they should only use competent contractors to carry out work at height. They are looking at ways to find the inexperienced roof workers. We have strongly suggested that companies that are members or reputable trade associations such as the RIDBA, FCMA & FRA will be the competent contractors and so they should spend their time trying to find the contractors who are not members.

HSE issues warning on correct use of twin tailed lanyards

Martin Holden, Principal Specialist Inspector with HSE's Construction Division Technology Unit advises that:

"It is vital that everyone using fall arrest systems based on twin tailed lanyards understands and follows the manufacturer's instructions. Remember that when one of the lanyard legs is connected to the anchor point, the second leg should not be attached to the user's harness, or to their belt or clothing, as this could limit the extension of the energy absorber in the event of a fall.

"If this happens, excessive arrest forces will be applied to both the user and to the system, which could lead to equipment failure with potentially fatal consequences. Unless the harness has been provided or retro fitted with lanyard "parking" points, which are specifically designed to break away in the event of a fall, the second leg should be left to hang free. Alternatively, on this and only this specific type of lanyard, the second leg can also be connected to the anchor point."

Asbestos on steel work

I have recently been advised of a contractor working on an asbestos cement (ac) roof. At the end of the contract the client said that the top of all of the steel work was covered in asbestos and the contractor was forced to pay for a clean up. He now checks all the steel work before he starts work on an ac roof and often finds asbestos on top of the steel work, which he asks the client to remove before he starts work. So if you are carrying out work on ac roofs check for the presence of asbestos below the roof before you start work or you could be asked to pay for a clean up of material that was not left by you.