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## The Herriot Way Charity Walk

Unfortunately due to illness we have had to postpone our charity walk until September, but be assured we will be going ahead then. Thank you to everyone who has sponsored us so far.

## Asbestos dust

What should you do if you suspect that asbestos has been disturbed?

Your first response should be to stop the disturbance and isolate the location. In many cases isolation will be straightforward and the room or area can simply be locked. If the space is occupied, tell employees to calmly leave the area and not to take anything with them. If the disturbance is in a large open-plan floor, it would be reasonable to cordon off the affected area, for instance if a hole has been drilled into an asbestos containing material then a 20m exclusion zone may be enough, however if there has been a more significant disturbance then an exclusion zone of 50m to 100m may be necessary. Don't forget to also check if anyone has already been in the area, then gone through to another area e.g. contractors taking breaks before the alarm was sounded. In some cases the building will need to be evacuated.

One of the most important first responses to a small asbestos disturbance is to reassure

everyone involved. We are all exposed to asbestos, due to its widespread use in the UK, and an incidence of extra exposure still only leaves us with a very low risk of developing mesothelioma. There is no point in anyone affected seeing a doctor as there will be no clinical evidence of exposure. The incident however should be recorded on any affected employee's health record or personal record.

For information about asbestos management see the HSE website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/protect.htm>

## Is your Emergency Lighting up to standard?



The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Article 14, states that "emergency routes and exits must be indicated by signs and emergency routes and exits requiring illumination must be provided with emergency lighting of adequate intensity in the case of failure of their normal lighting." All non-domestic buildings must have emergency lighting installed in case of fire.

But what does emergency lighting actually do? And how does it work?

In simple terms, emergency lighting is designed to withstand power outage and can activate even if the source of the fire is electrical. Escape routes need to be clearly signed, kept clear and lead out of the building to a safe area.

Escape routes and the positioning and type of signs and lighting should be done by a competent company and it is recommended that you choose one with the FIA (Fire Industry Association) logo as they have been independently certified.

## Monitoring Health & Safety

Steel fabricator Severfield (UK) appeared in court after a forklift truck driver who was not wearing a seatbelt died when his vehicle overturned. The company had a satisfactory risk assessment and had provided the forklift truck driver with suitable training, during which he had had to wear a seatbelt to pass, but the company had not taken any steps to enforce proper control measures, such as the use of seatbelts by the drivers. It was for this reason that the company appeared in court and were charged with a breach of Regulation 5 (1) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. They were fined £135,000 plus costs of £46,020.

### HSE myth buster

It was recently reported that a university plans to ban their students from throwing mortar boards in the air on graduation day for health and safety reasons. HSE has provided a response to this age-old myth: “You’d think universities would study history and do a bit of research before repeating tired health and safety myths like this one. The banning of mortar board tossing on supposed ‘health and safety’ grounds is one of our most popular myths and actually appears in our Top 10 all-time worst health and safety excuses. As far back as 2008, HSE made clear the law does not stop graduates having fun and celebrating their success in the time-honoured fashion. The chance of being injured by a flying mortar board is incredibly small and it’s over-the-top to impose an outright ban. We usually find the concern is actually about the hats being returned in good condition.”

The university later clarified its position and the tradition will carry on. Good news!



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We are always looking to assist businesses with their Health & Safety, if you know of anyone who would benefit from our services please do let us know. Many thanks.