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## Welcome to our new Health & Safety AND Food Safety Newsletter

As the food safety and health and safety teams have combined (as reported in the last issue) it made sense to expand our regular newsletter to cover both subjects. It will be circulated more widely to all businesses under the Council's enforcement responsibility for food and health & safety therefore we extend a special welcome to our new readers. We hope you will find the features helpful towards ensuring a safer, healthier workplace for your staff and your customers.

## What does the Food and Safety Team Do?

We inspect hundreds of businesses each year for food hygiene as well as health and safety, including specific campaigns for certain sectors. We investigate: accidents at work; food poisoning cases; and complaints about food, hygiene or health and safety matters. We take food samples for examination, and we give advice, both general and specific, to businesses such as on planning applications and compliance with the law including smokefree requirements. We also provide a pest control service to residents and businesses.

## Is this your business?

### Food Safety

We often find dirty ice machines full of mould. Ice can become contaminated and a survey carried out by EHOs in Northamptonshire found traces of human excrement in a quarter of samples of ice used in pubs. How often do you clean your ice machine? Is it on your cleaning schedule? A separate handout is available on request form Nicky Woolley on 01737 276417.



### Health and safety

This business carried on trading allowing the public in the shop while being refurbished. As you can see there are several hazards putting the public and staff at risk.



*If you are going to carry out works in the public area then you must ensure it is safe to do so.*

*We must stress that businesses using ice machines have a responsibility to ensure that they are cleaned and sanitised and to make sure their staff are fully aware of the requirements of personal hygiene.*

## Legal Action - Food Safety

### Poor hygiene cost Horley business over £18,000

A Horley business appeared before Redhill Magistrates on the 28th November 2008 charged with five food hygiene offences under EC Regulation 852/2004. (See enclosed leaflet for more details).

### Restaurant owner fined over £7,000

The owner of a Surrey restaurant has been fined for keeping filthy premises and failing to implement their documented food safety management system. When a Runnymede Borough Council EHO, visited the Bank's Café Bar and Restaurant for a routine inspection in January, they found the kitchen, fixtures and walls were dirty and food debris covered the floor and food preparation area. In a prosecution at Woking Magistrate's Court the owner pleaded guilty to four food safety charges and blamed the high costs of running a business. However, the magistrates said the offences were very serious and fined him £6,000, £1,500 for each offence. Costs of £1,350 were awarded to the council and, in addition, Mr Banks was told to pay a £15 victim surcharge.

### ***Bogus Letter Warning***

*The Food Standards Agency is warning food business operators about bogus letters claiming to be from them demanding payment for supposed breaches of food safety regulations. The letter that has been drawn to the Agency's attention demands payment of £1,000. If you should get one do not pay it and report it to us.*

## Legal Action - Health and Safety

### Faulty scaffolding costs Hot Tub Company over £27,000

A Bristol hot tub company has been fined £15,000 after a warehouse manager was left confined to a wheelchair as a result of a fall from a faulty scaffold. The company, Hot Tub People pleaded guilty to six offences under health and safety legislation in August last year and were sentenced at Bristol Crown Court in September 2008. It was fined £2,500 on each count and ordered to pay £12,709 costs.

The warehouse manager was lifting boxes onto a scaffold racking structure at the company's premises when one of the steps became loose and dropped down. He fell and was knocked unconscious. He now suffers from serious ongoing health problems and has been forced to quit his job. He is confined to a wheelchair outside of his home and requires regular physiotherapy, as well as experiencing severe pain to his head and spine on a daily basis. Other injuries include poor balance, loss of hearing and blurred vision.

The scaffold had originally been put up as a temporary measure, but had not been properly maintained, causing this accident.

### Work experience schoolboy becomes trapped

A conveyor system that trapped a schoolboy's hand at a Yorkshire branch of Superdrug fell 'well short' of the accepted industry standards for guarding arrangements, said East Riding of Yorkshire Council. The investigation found several areas where employees could become trapped.

The boy was doing work experience when his hand became trapped in the conveyor as he was moving goods between floors. The fire brigade had to be called to release him. The conveyor equipment had been specifically prohibited for use by the school children when the arrangements had been made between the school's placement agency and the store, the investigation found. The council also discovered that store staff had not been provided with adequate training and instruction by Superdrug in order to identify such dangers. Superdrug pleaded guilty at Beverley magistrate's court to five serious breaches of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and health and safety Regulations. It was fined £8,000 and costs of £2,649.98 were awarded to the council.

## Useful websites:

[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) - For information on health and safety at work, which includes example risk assessments.

[www.healthandsafetytips.co.uk](http://www.healthandsafetytips.co.uk) - Health and Safety for Beginners provides downloads, support for health and safety courses, toolbox talks, careers advice, vibrant discussion forums and much more...and it's all FREE!

[www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) - For information on food safety.

[www.cieh-coursefinder.com](http://www.cieh-coursefinder.com) - For accredited training centres running both food safety and health and safety courses.

# Myth : Every possible risk needs a safety sign

## The reality

Using too many signs just guarantees no one will read any of them. Safety signs are useful when there's a significant risk that can't be avoided or controlled in any other way. But that doesn't mean you should add a sign for every possible risk, however trivial.

Where there are serious risks in your workplace don't just rely on signs - take practical steps to deal with them. If you do need a sign, make sure it has the right symbol and is clearly visible.

'Health and safety' banning everything from ladders to school trips is a familiar headline, but it's rarely true. The Health and Safety Executive has a myth of the month, which can be found, on their website: [www.hse.gov.uk/myth/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth/index.htm).

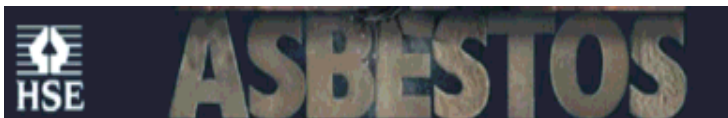


## Asbestos Quiz / Myth Buster

- 1. Are you more likely to die in a road-related accident than from an asbestos related disease?** No - currently over 4000 people die every year from asbestos related diseases - that's more than are killed on the roads each year.
- 2. Is asbestos only found in old buildings?** No - asbestos is not used anymore but can still be found in buildings built before 2000.
- 3. If asbestos is in good condition and is undisturbed, is it OK to leave it?** Yes - but if asbestos does eventually need removing, then it must be appropriately dealt with. Most asbestos products should only be worked on by a licensed contractor. Non-licensed people, who have been trained, can work on asbestos cement and textured coatings (and for a short duration on some other products), providing the right control measures and precautions are in place. Although asbestos is a dangerous product, as long as you work around it, don't disturb it and wear the appropriate clothes and masks, you can leave it in situ.
- 4. Is paying for safe removal of asbestos a waste, as it eats into the job's profits?** No - factoring in asbestos removal costs is part of the job. If you don't follow correct procedures, you may be putting yourself, your workmates and your family at risk. There could also be claims and legal action against you. Do you want this damage to your reputation?
- 5. Is asbestosis the worst disease I can get from handling asbestos?** No - working with asbestos can be fatal if you develop mesothelioma, lung cancer or asbestosis.
- 6. It only affects old people?** No - it just doesn't normally show up for 20 to 40 years. If you are careless with asbestos when you are young it could have serious consequences later in life.

Woolworths was fined £40,000 at Exeter Crown Court after staff at two of its stores were exposed to asbestos dust. Woolworths had contracted LCH Contract Ltd (LCH) to remove asbestos ceiling tiles from its branches in Bideford and Tiverton in April 2004. LCH should have erected ceiling to floor polythene tents before removing the asbestos. It failed to do this and asbestos fibres covered stock and shelves in the two stores.

The assistant manager at the Tiverton store recalled "dust throughout the shop, thick coating on stock and dust visible in the store". She said she was told to open up the branch to the public the next morning. Staff cleared up the asbestos containing dust using dustpans and brushes. Food, including pick and mix, was covered with dust and a bottle of Cola was observed being cleaned with a baby wipe.



## 10% of restaurants, cafes and takeaways describe their fish products incorrectly

Fifty two local authorities across the UK collected 380 fish samples between October 2007 and February 2008 from restaurants, takeaways and pubs; of those 38 were described incorrectly. The most common mistake was inadvertently selling haddock for cod. Results also show that on occasion cod was substituted for haddock. The survey concluded that misdescriptions are likely to be due to poor control procedures.

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## Food Allergy - What's the fuss?

It's very important for all caterers to be aware of food allergy and to take it seriously. This is because when someone eats a food they are allergic to, even the tiniest amount, can cause a very severe reaction called anaphylaxis.

If someone with a food allergy asks you whether a dish contains a certain food, you should never guess the answer. Find out the information the customer wants and let them decide if they can eat the food. If you can't find out, be honest and tell them.

*In the UK about ten people die every year from an allergic reaction to food and many more end up in hospital. In most cases, the food that causes the reaction is from a restaurant or takeaway.*

The FSA has produced FREE online training. This training was developed for enforcement officers but it might also be of interest to anyone wanting to learn more about food allergy.

The online training can be found: <http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/>

Advice for caterers can be found: [www.food.gov.uk/safereating/allergyintol/guide/caterers/](http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/allergyintol/guide/caterers/).

## Dirty reasons why diners don't return to restaurants

A survey conducted online by Harris Interactive in the US during August 2008 found that 88% of those who visit restaurants believe that toilet cleanliness reflects the overall hygiene standards throughout the restaurant, including kitchen and food prep areas.

*How clean are your toilets? Are they putting off your customers?*

According to the poll, the top 10 dirty toilet factors that would prevent restaurant customers from returning are: Overflowing toilets (58%), Unpleasant odours (57%), Slippery/dirty floors (49%), Dirty partitions, doors, doorknobs, walls or fixtures (38%), Dirty and wet sinks and countertops (38%), Insufficient toilet paper (33%), Overflowing bins (31%), Insufficient liquid soap (28%), Non-working toilet paper dispenser (22%), Management/employees unavailable for reporting problems (19%).

Nearly one-third of those surveyed (29%) would never return to a restaurant with an extremely unclean toilet. The survey also reports that negative toilet experiences trigger strong negative "word of mouth" reports to others.

## Scores on the Doors Update - Will your business get 5 stars?

How we rate your food business for food safety will soon be available to the public as the Food Standards Agency has decided on a UK-wide 5 star 'scores on the doors' scheme. A date for when it is to go live has not yet been revealed. For details of councils already running schemes go to: [www.food.gov.uk/safereating/hyg/scoresonthedoors/](http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/hyg/scoresonthedoors/)

## Train to Gain

There is funding of up to £500 available from Train to Gain for key workers/management up to £500 to go towards training which includes food hygiene. If you are interested call Train to Gain skills broker on 0800 015 55 45 or visit [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk).