

# More than 1,100 construction sites fail safety checks

**Date:** 21 October 2013

Poor standards and dangerous practices were found at nearly half of the building sites visited during a month long safety drive.

During a nationwide campaign, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visited 2,607 sites where refurbishment or repair work was taking place.



*Falls risk during soffit replacement work*

Inspectors found basic safety standards were not being met on 1,105 sites. On 644 sites, practices were so poor that enforcement action was necessary to protect workers – with 539 prohibition notices served ordering dangerous activities to stop immediately, and 414 improvement notice issued requiring standards to improve.

The most common problems identified included failing to protect workers during activities at height; exposure to harmful dust and inadequate welfare facilities.

Heather Bryant, HSE's Chief Inspector of Construction said:

“It is disappointing to find a significant number of sites falling below acceptable health and safety standards.

Where our inspectors encountered poor practice, this often went hand-in-hand with a lack of understanding. Through initiatives like this we are able to tackle underlying issues before they become established, and we will continue to work with the industry in an effort to drive up standards. However, those who recklessly endanger the health and lives of their workforce can expect to face tough consequences.”



*Improvisation used in structural support*

During the month of September, ***inspectors made unannounced visits to construction sites*** to ensure they were managing high-risk activity, such as working at height and the control of exposure to harmful dusts.

Inspectors were also looking for good site order, sound structures and basic welfare facilities.

For more about the initiative, including examples of good and bad practice discovered by HSE inspectors during the campaign, see their online Safersites pages at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/campaigns/safersites/index.htm>

***Comment by County Hire Ltd.*** – Nowadays, it is not only large construction sites that are monitored by the HSE. They seem to be increasingly involved with small sites, including home improvement projects. The photo of the soffit replacement job just beggars belief! The job could have been done safely with lightweight *Aluminium Tower* and *Staging*.

As regards the *Acrow Prop* “pin”, if there was a reportable accident on the site, and particularly if the Prop was involved, the contractor would be on a hiding to nothing. Any hire company worth its salt would always ensure the equipment was fitted with the correct pin.