



Our lowest ever AFR rating

We are pleased to report that Barhale has achieved its best ever AFR (Accident Frequency Rate) performance and we now have an AFR rating of 0.10.

This is an excellent achievement and puts Barhale with the leading contractors in the sector for health and safety. A score of 0.10 or less is seen as 'what good looks like' and is moving to 'world class status'.

So what does this mean to Barhale?

It means that fewer of our people have suffered an injury. It is obvious that injuries not only cause distress to the individuals concerned but also cost the business significant costs in terms of investigations and insurance cover. It also means that our existing clients and potential clients will see us in a favourable light in terms of our H&S performance and are more likely

to add us to their pre-qualification and tender lists.

Our improved performance helps to reduce costs in the business, especially in more difficult financial times.

The reporting of near misses has had a major influence on our H&S performance and the high level of reporting is the envy of our competitors. Our behavioural safety programme has also reinforced the good work of near miss reporting. Our continuing focus on near miss reporting for the remaining pillars of profit and environment will hopefully start to deliver similar business improvements in the near future.

Our goal of zero reportable accidents is now achievable. We must continue to be vigilant and not take short cuts or unnecessary risks.



Updated cardinal rules

We have recently updated the company's 'cardinal rules' to include two further high risk areas namely – use of quick hitches for excavators and the storage of shaft segments. The original rules were introduced in 2005 to cover both safety and environment high level risks.

New guidelines for quick hitches

As mentioned in the article about our cardinal rules we like many other construction businesses, have to play our part in ensuring that the use of 'quick hitches' does not put any of our people at risk.

Nearly 20% of fatalities on construction sites has been due to buckets falling from excavators.

So what have we done so far?

A working group was formed to review all aspects of quick hitch safety and have now identified a course of actions to reduce risk. We have produced a 'statement of intent' so that our clients and regulators can see what we aim to achieve. The key points are:-

- The use of semi automatic quick hitches will be banned from operating on all Barhale construction sites

from 1st November 2009. Only fully automatic hitches for machines above 9T and manual or fully automatic hitches for 9T machines and below will be authorised for use.

- From May 2010 only Barhale approved fully automatic quick hitches with double locking facilities for all machines above and below 9T or approved manual hitches for excavators below 9T will be permitted to operate on all Barhale operational sites.
- By the end of September 2009 all directly employed excavator operators will have received Barhale bespoke training in the safe use of quick hitches. All externally hired operators will be expected to provide formal evidence of quick hitch competency training by January 2010.



Recognition of our HS&E performance

The continuing good performance of our people has received external recognition recently:

At the Olympic development authority Health, Safety and Environmental Awards, Huw Preece won the worker of the year award. In addition, highly commended awards were given to Andy Bourne as supervisor of the year and the Barhale site team for the (1) lessons learned award for their near miss reporting and (2) the training award for implementation of the

behavioural MindSafety programme on the scheme.

At the Severn Trent/ROSPA Occupational Health and Safety Awards, Barhale Midlands received a merit award following its exceptional accident frequency rate and the associated safety programmes in place to achieve it.

Barhale was also recognised by Severn Trent in their corporate responsibility award for our outstanding performance at Albrighton.



Air Fuse

Our Southern regional team have successfully trialled an effective inline air fuse to be used in combination with a compressor and pneumatic tool.

The air fuse is a safety cut off device to reduce the risk of injury from a hose flying around after failure of an airline or fitting. It cuts off the air from the compressor reducing the risk of injury from a flying hose and is quick and easy to install. However, it is not designed to replace a whip check as injury could still be sustained from initial blow out.



Candid camera – capturing our community spirit at Albrighton



SUSA - Safe and Unsafe Acts

Following on from the MindSafety behavioural safety events we have now trained a number of coaches to act as 'train the trainers' to help improve the discussion of HS&E issues through observing safe and unsafe acts. To date the safety coaches have conducted their first training sessions and gained accreditation. The next step is to roll this training out to approximately 1 in 5 of site based personnel.

Each business unit will organise training sessions over the next 6-12 months. Please support this on-going initiative to further improve our HS&E performance.

Working in the community

On the Longdon Green to Gentleshaw Trunk Main replacement scheme for South Staffordshire water a mobile customer information unit was set up to give the local community the opportunity to learn more about the scheme.



Vacuum pot trailer and stillage frame

In the Eastern region the team have had a trailer modified to accommodate 1200 diameter pipes used for constructing 'pots' in a vacuum sewer system. A pot is effectively a manhole access into the system that assists in generating a vacuum. However, due to their unsymmetrical shape the pots were not easily transportable and therefore a flatbed trailer with an inbuilt trough was designed to increase stability. Consequently transporting these around villages has been made a lot easier and safer.

The pots are augered into the ground by an excavator mounted auger. As with the pots, moving the auger around village streets when attached to the excavator dipper arm is awkward for the operator and potentially dangerous for other road users and pedestrians. The stillage holds both the auger and the drive unit neatly side by side in a frame that is simply hooked over the top of the stabilising blade fitted to wheeled excavators.

Segment storage

Following the RIDDOR major injury in April 2009 which resulted in an operative's foot being trapped and fractured by a falling shaft segment, a permanent solution to prevent re-occurrence has been finalised. The introduction of the segment storage frame complete with 'L' Brackets (as pictured) will enable segments to be stored in a safe manner, now and in the future. The use of the equipment is a mandatory requirement for all sites requiring segment storage from this point forward, hence any sites procuring segments will be required to hire the equipment directly from BCS. The equipment will be delivered with instructions for safe storage for shaft segments,



providing valuable instructions on their safe use and required storage area requirements to ensure future safe storage.



Modified ripping tyne

Normally used to break and rip out blacktop paving, the ripping tyne has simply been modified with a mounting plate that enables the tyne to be connected to a quick hitch. The work is done in the same way as a breaker i.e. the area to be removed is marked out, services identified and the road cut out. Then, instead of breaking up with a breaker attachment, the blacktop is ripped up using the tyne. This significantly reduces noise typically associated with a traditional breaker thereby reducing a major risk from a H&S and an environmental nuisance aspect. It also removes the secondary hazard of flying chippings. However, the risk associated with service strikes remains equivalent with breaking and therefore requires the same level of investigation and care.



Bags with chimneys

On Barhale rail schemes at Truck Road and St Agnes Railway bridges the rail business has used 1 tonne bags with chimneys to prevent all manual handling issues. In addition this innovative modification allows the accurate placement of stone.

Learning opportunities

Water Pollution

A small amount of hydrocarbon leaked from a river bank into a local watercourse. The source of the leak was a partially unscrewed drain cap on a 6" pump which had been unnoticed during a re-siting of a pump. Contaminated soil was removed from site to eliminate further pollution.



Digging out contaminated soil and inserting clay

On a surface water drainage scheme some material built up behind shuttering. When this was removed a large volume of water and silt flowed to a new outfall and discharged into a stream, causing heavy staining. The discharge was spotted immediately, operations stopped and straw bales were placed at the outfall to stem the flow.



Straw bales to restrict flow from outfall

Learning Points

- By identifying environmentally sensitive locations and communicating this information to the team will help everyone understand the risks and how to prevent potential serious damage.
- By carrying out regular inspections of plant and equipment plus monitoring watercourses should help to stop small spills or leaks developing into a major incident.

The Environment Agency recommends using the **Is My Site Right** 10 Point checklist for preventing environmental damage:

Storing and handling oils, chemicals and other risky materials

- Are storage containers fit for purpose, regularly inspected and maintained?
- Are storage areas and containers sited away from watercourses, drains and unsurfaced areas?
- Do storage containers have secondary containment, such as a bund, to contain leaks or spills?
- Do you have procedures and training for safe delivery and handling of materials?

Waste management

- Is your storage and handling of waste safe and does it comply with the law?
- Do you know where your waste goes? Are you sure it's disposed of correctly?
- Are you reducing and recycling your waste?

Site drainage

- Do you have an up to date drainage plan of your site?
- Is your site drained correctly? Only clean water, such as roof drainage, to surface water drains. All contaminated water, such as sewage and trade effluent, to foul drains.

Dealing with pollution emergencies

- Do you have a plan, equipment and training to deal with pollution emergencies?

If you answer no to any of the questions, or are unsure, contact your HS&E Advisor.



Barhale Pole Grab

Excavator safety

Following three separate incidents related to excavator grab failures during shaft excavation we are reviewing our management systems and currently implementing learning opportunities.

Each of the incidents highlighted that wrong bolts were used to connect the pole grab flanges, and no 'fail to safe' mechanism existed to prevent sections of the grab falling from height after failure. Improvements now include high tensile steel black engineering bolts grade 10.9 which is a minimum requirement for all internal and externally hired pole grabs and 2 safety chains at each pole flange joint.

We are in the process of communicating our standards to suppliers ensuring they comply with our requirements. In addition to the improvements made to the equipment, Operators will have to complete bolt security checks three times per day.

A corporate risk assessment to cover both Liebherr Excavator Grabs and general pole grabs has been produced for use on site.



Pole Grab bolts and safety chains

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Always remember – problems can be 'learning opportunities'