
ACDM March Newsletter



Dogs Trained to Sniff out Japanese Knotweed

When we think of innovation we often tend to think of automation and robotics and rarely of training dogs to carry out tasks. An Irish start up called Conservation Dogs Ireland (CDI) is doing just that. They are training dogs to sniff out Japanese Knotweed on construction sites.

Japanese Knotweed is an incredibly invasive specie of weed which can grow up to 10cm a day. It can also push through solid masonry and concrete in search of sunlight and water which is a massive problem in construction as this can cause major structural defects. By nature, it is also highly insidious which means that even a small fragment of the plant's rhizome can lay dormant for up to 20 years and can then spawn an entire colony.

Helga Heylen, the founder of the start-up, claims that her dogs can be 40 times more efficient than human surveyors and can even detect rhizomes that have yet to break the surface of the soil. She claims that a site that would take 5 surveyors 8 hours, one of her dogs can do in 1 hour to a much higher standard of accuracy.

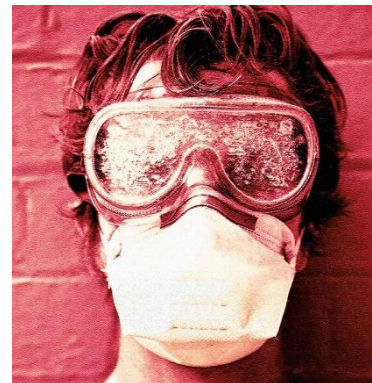


<http://www.constructionmanagemagazine.com/news/dogs-trained-sniff-out-knotweed-building-sites/>

HSE Advances Dust Exposure Investigation

Following the HSE's dust campaign last year, where they stated the high risks of inhalation of different dusts to workers in a bid to increase controls surrounding dust, the HSE has been carrying out an investigation on tool manufacturers dust extraction systems to determine if they were able to reach the HSE's work exposure limit for respirable crystalline silica (RCS) when cutters are used to cut materials, specifically concrete which can contain up to 70% crystalline silica.

Three different manufacturers were tested under laboratory conditions. The tests examined the effectiveness of three manufacturers' dust extraction system solutions for hand-held electric diamond cutters. The tools were operated by several trained professionals in order to ensure human error was not a factor. The tests were carried out at the HSE's Health and Safety Laboratory last year and the report has been authored by HSE scientists Dominic Pocock, John Saunders and Adam Clarke. In the report it seems like all three manufacturers failed to meet the limit of 0.1 mg.m-3 (which is across an 8-hour workday) with one manufacturer being 156 times over the limit. As RCS is now a known carcinogen and can lead to diseases such as lung cancer, asthma and silicosis.



Due to the extremely high health risk the controls currently in place using some of these standard industry manufacturers are not sufficient and need to either be combined with significant other controls or need to be redesigned in order to meet the HSE's workplace exposure limit.

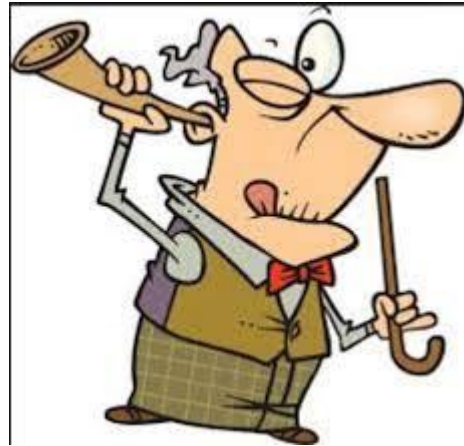
Full story - <http://www.constructionmanagemagazine.com/management/hse-advances-dust-exposure-investigation/>

Test results - https://www.hilti.co.uk/content/dam/documents/e1/health-and-safety/HSE_abridged_testing_report_final.pdf

Turning the Noise Down – Risks to Hearing Ability

Hearing loss is something that affects roughly 1 in 6 people in the UK, 8 million (or roughly 73%) of these are people over the age of 60. The fact that this problem affects the elderly more than it affects the youth creates a situation where younger people tend not to believe their current practices will impact their hearing and hearing loss is just something that comes with old age. Construction workers are one of the at-risk worker groups who are more affected by loud noises than the general public. Other groups include nightclub and bar workers.

Current exposure levels are capped at 80dB and the HSE estimate more than 1 million workers are regularly exposed to this or higher levels. Current experts however believe that the risk of hearing health limit should be reduced to 70dB which would put a significantly higher number of the public and workers above the safe limit for long term damage. Workplace monitoring of sound is only one way in which to protect workers hearing. Listening to music with earphones has proven to be very damaging to hearing with many young workers going into the workplace with pre-existing hearing problems due to years of loud music listened through headphones. Devices are programmed to give a warning at 85dB but in most devices this can be overwritten and maxes out at roughly 100dB which is significantly higher than the current HSE guidelines. In order to prevent future hearing loss and disorders workplaces can do their part to monitor noise levels and introduce contingencies for loud activities but it is also up to the individual and their personal preferences to make changes to protect their long-term hearing health.



https://issuu.com/redactive/docs/iosh_feb20_full - pages 45-48

HSE to carry out inspections following safety alert

Just over a year ago in February 2019 the HSE released a safety report about mild steel welding fumes. This was after scientific studies concluded that the inhalation of these fumes can cause lung and even kidney cancers so new safety measures were to be adopted. All employers who work with mild steel fumes are now expected to have the correct safety measures in place to protect their employees

The HSE have announced that their inspectors will now be reviewing the health and safety standards for companies who work closely with mild steel welding fumes. Anyone caught not following the new guidelines should expect to face improvement notices which must be complied with else employers will face large fines and possibly prison time for failing to protect their employee's health at work.

<https://press.hse.gov.uk/2020/02/20/hse-to-carry-out-inspections-following-safety-alert/>

Company Director Sentenced for Safety Failings

The former director of Bradford Builders (UK) Ltd was sentenced to 8 months imprisonment, 200 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay costs of £5,000 for repeated safety failings after ignoring improvement notices issued by HSE inspectors. HSE inspectors visited the site three times in 2018 and each time was issued with prohibition or improvement notices. An HSE investigation found that all of these notices had been ignored and the director had consistently failed to take suitable and sufficient measures to prevent falls from height.

<https://press.hse.gov.uk/2020/02/19/company-director-sentenced-for-safety-failings/>

Boss Who Forged Dead Workers Signature Jailed for 2 Years

Back in 2015 a worker was working on the roof of an ironmongers when he fell through a fragile rooflight where he sustained fatal head injuries. An investigation by the HSE determined that netting should have been provided for the rooflight which would have caught the worker when he fell. The manager of Roofing Consultants insisted this netting was not required on the £55,000 job. Experts say this netting would have only cost roughly £1,250 to safely install.

To make matters worse for himself the manager of the roofing contractor forged the deceased workers signature from a risk assessment to make it appear as if he had agreed to the procedures. As a result, the two companies involved in the project, Roofing Consultants Ltd and High Ridge Roofing Solutions Ltd were fined, as well as the manager of Roofing Consultants who forged the signature being sentenced to 2 years in prison. Roofing consultants were fined £100,000 plus £30,000 in costs. High Ridge Roofing were fined £12,000 and costs of £33,000.

<https://www.ioshmagazine.com/article/boss-who-forged-dead-worker-s-signature-jailed-for-two-years>

Even the Police can be Fined by the HSE

South Wales Police have been fined after a worker received an electrical shock which damaged his heart when installing data cables. Stories like this show that the HSE has the power to prosecute anyone and everyone for violations of health and safety law. Even the police are not above the law.

The HSE hold the power to attend any construction site in the country and immediately shut it down if they deem the site unsafe. Ignoring the HSE can lead to massive fines and in instances, like the previous two stories, can lead to Jail time if improvement notices are ignored. Health and safety however should not be seen as a financial burden and can increase employee productivity. Employees are much more likely to cooperate with management and carry out tasks in a timely manner if they do not fear for their safety.



<https://press.hse.gov.uk/2020/02/07/south-wales-police-fined-after-employee-injured-during-cable-installation/>

Importance of 3rd Party Certification

3rd party certification is the method in which sole traders and large organisations are both regulated in their fields. The accreditation company assess the company or trader's competency to carry out their trade in a competent and safe way.

For gas work this is the Gas Safe Register. The story linked below is from the HSE that details how an unlicensed gas trader has been sentenced to jail time for carrying out unlicensed gas work that could have led to major risks for his clients. The trader in question carried out unlicensed work to 7 homes across England. Several Defects were found on his installations and experts mark that it was only a matter of chance that no one was seriously harmed. The trader was jailed for 16 months.

This story emphasises why everyone, especially domestic clients, should ask for 3rd party certification and if unsure should check with the HSE what qualifications the trader should have. If a trader refuses to show their qualifications or tries to convince you that it is not necessary then that is a red flag and you should acquire someone else's services.

<https://press.hse.gov.uk/2020/02/10/gas-fitter-jailed-illegal-gas-work/>

Managing Upper Limb Disorders in the Workplace

In January the HSE revised their guide on managing upper limb disorders in the workplace. Upper limb disorders are more common in tasks that involve:

- prolonged repetitive work, particularly using the same hand or arm action;
- uncomfortable or awkward working postures;
- sustained or excessive force;
- carrying out a task for a long time without suitable rest breaks;
- working with hand-held power tools for long periods of time.

Other things that may have an influence are:

- poor working environment (including temperature and lighting);
- poor work organisation (including workload, job demands and lack of breaks);
- individual differences and vulnerability (some workers are more affected by certain risks).



This can make disorders prevalent to anyone working behind a desk with very little differentiation in their workload or construction workers who use vibrating tools. If any employee suffers from any of the symptoms of an Upper Limb Disorder should carry out a risk assessment to determine the causes of the disorders.

https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg171.htm?utm_source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=digest-12-feb-20&utm_term=download-indg171&utm_content=uld-update

Scaffolding Sector steps up Mental Health Focus

The National Access and scaffolding confederation (NASC) have set up funding to support mental health training within the scaffolding industry. This follows from statistics from the Office of National Statistics showing that construction workers are 1.6 times more likely to take their own lives than the average worker. This alarming statistic shows that mental health needs an ever-increasing priority.

The NASC also provides its members with literature that helps companies come up with mental health policies for their businesses and provides literature that can help them deal with issues. What they can achieve however is limited as none of the NASC are mental health experts so cannot help each and every one individually. Despite this the organisation is more than doing their part to help combat the stigma surrounding mental health in the construction industry by helping others receive training in mental health awareness and management. Hopefully before long the rest of the construction industry follows suit and mental health gets the same attitude as physical health and safety.



Full story -

<https://edition.pagesuite.com/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&pubid=33c1ca2d-e41b-434b-8d84-3f8a96934d84> – page 24

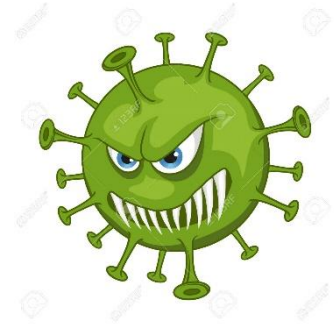
Government Guidance for Employers and Businesses about Covid - 19

The government have developed guidance for employers and businesses about the recent Covid – 19 outbreak that originated in Wuhan, China.

This guidance will assist employers and businesses in providing advice to staff on:

- the novel coronavirus, COVID-19
- how to help prevent spread of all respiratory infections including COVID-19
- what to do if someone with suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in a workplace setting
- what advice to give to individuals who have travelled to specific areas, as outlined by the Chief Medical Officer ([full list is available here](#))
- advice for the certification of absence from work resulting from Covid-19

We Highly recommend everyone reads the guidance so as to ensure they are properly informed and do not make rash personal or business decisions based on the media reporting.



Government guidance -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19>

WHO Q&A - <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>



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