

SEC GROUP *focus* FOCUS

Voice of the Specialist Engineering Contractor

The members of the
SEC Group are:

Association of
Plumbing and Heating
Contractors

British Constructional
Steelwork Association

Electrical Contractors'
Association

Heating and Ventilating
Contractors'
Association

Lift and Escalator
Industry Association

SELECT

SEC GROUP CHAIRMAN

RAISES THE STAKES ON HEALTH AND SAFETY



AT SUMMIT 2005

At the invitation of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) **Trevor Hursthouse**, Chairman of SEC Group, made a presentation at the 2nd construction health and safety summit held in London on 24 February 2005.

The Cost of Accidents

The industry research body Be estimates that accidents account for 3% to 6% of total project cost. The HSE believes that the cost of injuries to the construction industry comes to more than £660m a year.

Summit 2001

The first construction health and safety summit in 2001 was initiated by John Prescott the Deputy Prime Minister. The summit took place against a back-drop of 120 construction deaths in 2000. Targets set by the 2001 summit were:

- Reduction in fatalities/major injuries of 40% by 2005 and 66% by 2010.
- A year on year 20% reduction in accidents.
- Reduction in cases of occupational ill-health of 20% by 2005 and 50% by 2010.
- Reduction in working days lost per 100,000 employees from occupational ill-health of 20% by 2005 and 50% by 2010.



What has SEC Group being doing since the 2001 Summit?

SEC Group's health and safety strategy can be located on the website at www.secgroup.org.uk. SEC Group's role has been to facilitate, support and coordinate the activities of the member Associations. The focus for this work is SEC Group's Health and Safety Taskforce chaired by Bill Belshaw.

Key activities included:

- Encouraging firms – through guidance and seminars – to treat health and safety as an integral part of their quality agendas.
- Coordinating the reporting of accidents across the engineering sector [there is a SEC Group pro-forma for accident reporting].
- Affiliating operative registers to the construction skills certification scheme (CSCS).
- Promoting membership of trade association corporate qualification and registration schemes.

What have we achieved?

Within the SEC Group there has been a reduction in RIDDOR – reportable accidents of over 5% since 2001. Within that figure the ECA – which launched its **ZAP** safety initiative following the 2001 summit – has recorded a reduction of almost 30% (including significant progress in reducing falls from height).

SEC Group's accident returns now cover 75,000 operatives within the engineering sector. By 2006 the aim is to report **significant** falls in RIDDOR reportable accidents across the sector and to be reporting on 100,000 operatives.

Furthermore, over 150,000 personnel in the sector have undertaken health and safety training or testing in a little over 3 years. This has been achieved without any financial support such as training grants or levies.

SEC Group Chairman's Summit 2005 Speech

Speaking alongside Jane Kennedy, the Health and Safety Minister, and Peter Rogers (construction director of leading client, Stanhope), Trevor Hursthouse reminded the industry that there is no room for complacency. SEC Group will be seeking improvements in a number of areas.

"The is nothing more galling for a contractor to discover that his exemplary health and safety performance has been ignored in the selection process and the work given to the lowest price bidder who has little or no commitment to health and safety."

Trevor Hursthouse



Greater use of Reputable Qualification Schemes

SEC Group has produced core criteria to enable clients to recognise reputable schemes of corporate qualification that audit for high standards of health and safety. This should help eliminate the wasted costs incurred by SME's in having to pre-qualify under a number of schemes with varying standards whilst already in membership of a reputable scheme. **Moreover we must insist that public sector procurers use reputable schemes of corporate qualification.**

Specialist Engineering Design

According to recent research carried out for HSE almost 50% of accidents could probably been avoided by a design change. Engineering contractors, consultants and even manufacturers are not working as a team to manage out health and safety risks. To help in this process SEC Group - working with consultants and manufacturers through the Specialist Engineering Alliance – will devise health and safety gateways for the design tasks associated with specialist engineering works. This will provide a systematic approach to designing out health and safety risks so that the project will be safe to construct, use and operate.

Safe Site Access Certificate

Poor site management contributes to half of all accidents. Building on an initiative adopted by one of SEC Group's member Associations – the British Constructional Steelwork Association – SEC Group has developed the **Safe Site Access Certificate**. This was launched by the SEC Group Chairman at the 2005 Summit.

It is in the form of checklist enabling each trade to discuss its health and safety requirements (including site welfare facilities) with the principal contractor before the workforce enters the site.

The Certificate can be found on SEC Group's website.

Audit of workforce for CSCS Compliance.

At the summit Trevor Hursthouse announced that the Joint Major Contractors' Group – representing the 16 largest M&E companies in the UK – will be undertaking an audit of the workforce they control on construction sites. It will check card-holding amongst the directly employed, sub-contract and agency sections of the workforce. The audit will take place on 7 April 2005.



Key Messages from the 2005 Summit

- We must adopt a zero tolerance attitude towards accidents – all accidents are avoidable.
- We must come forward with specific measures to improve occupational health and safety.
- Contractor selection procedures should root out those not committed to high standards of health and safety.
- Procurement policies must change so that consultants, contractors and key manufacturers work together as teams to design and manage out health and safety risks.

"If we are to succeed in creating a modern, world-class industry the culture of the industry must change. We must value and respect its people."

Sir John Egan, 2002

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