

Health and Safety in the Construction Industry 2009



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SITE SAFETY

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, all persons entering this site must comply with all regulations under this act. All visitors must report to the site office and obtain permission to proceed on to the site or any work areas. Safety signs and procedures must be observed and personal protection and safety equipment must be used at all times.

Construction work in progress.

Parents are advised to warn children of the dangers of entering this site



Safety helmets must be worn
Unauthorised entry to this site
is strictly forbidden.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the UK and internationally, the construction industry is considered to be one of the most dangerous industries. Many have died, been injured or made unwell as a result of working in construction. The UK's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has stated that in the last twenty-five years alone over 2,800 people have died in the UK¹, with even more workers suffering serious injuries and long-term illnesses.

This is an acceptably high figure and the industry needs to do more to improve health and safety standards across the construction sectors. With this in mind, the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) has undertaken this research to help gain the insights of those health and safety risks directly affect.

The research reveals some very positive results, with 69% of respondents stating that their companies take health and safety very seriously. However, over a quarter of respondents agree that while it is taken seriously, it is not a top priority – even though it has a direct impact on the lives of all employees and also affects those not employed in the industry but who unavoidably have contact with construction work.

While safety is important, the construction industry must also provide a healthy work environment for employees. The results show that 73% of respondents believe that health is just as important as safety, although 26% deem safety more important. This reflects the perceptions of health and safety in the industry, and is also visible in other results in the survey (e.g. Respondents underplaying occupational stress, and not considering the negative impact that stress could have on their health and work).

This research only begins to explore the various important aspects of health and safety in the industry and shows that further research is needed. Ways to improve the industry need further investigation, particularly possible training programmes and ways to raise safety awareness. We hope this will be the first of a series of health and safety research reports produced by the CIOB.

By Laura Wane, Research Officer

Approached from the perspective of senior level construction professionals, this research examines some of the key topics needing serious consideration if the industry is to improve its health and safety record:

- The health and safety culture in the industry
- The effect of occupational stress
- The impact of the Construction Design Management Regulations
- The safety of temporary works
- Crane safety on construction sites

■ **73% of respondents believe that health is just as important as safety** ■

INTRODUCTION

The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) is the leading professional body for managers in the global construction industry. Established in 1834, the CIOB continues to lead the way in promoting and maintaining standards of excellence in the sector.

The CIOB draws its members from a wide range of professional disciplines, from across the building and construction supply chains. These include clients, consultants and contractors, as well as specialists in regulation, research and education.

The purpose of this research is to investigate health and safety in the construction industry and examine the importance placed on it by construction professionals.

This research will attempt to gain insight into many aspects of health and safety, to discover issues that need further examination and to find possible ways of improving safety in the industry.

■ *The CIOB continues to lead the way in promoting and maintaining standards of excellence in the sector* ■

Key Results

68.7% of respondents stated health & safety is taken very seriously in the company they work for.

84.7% said the recession has not affected the level of health & safety compliance.

31.4% of respondents are currently feeling a lot of stress at work.

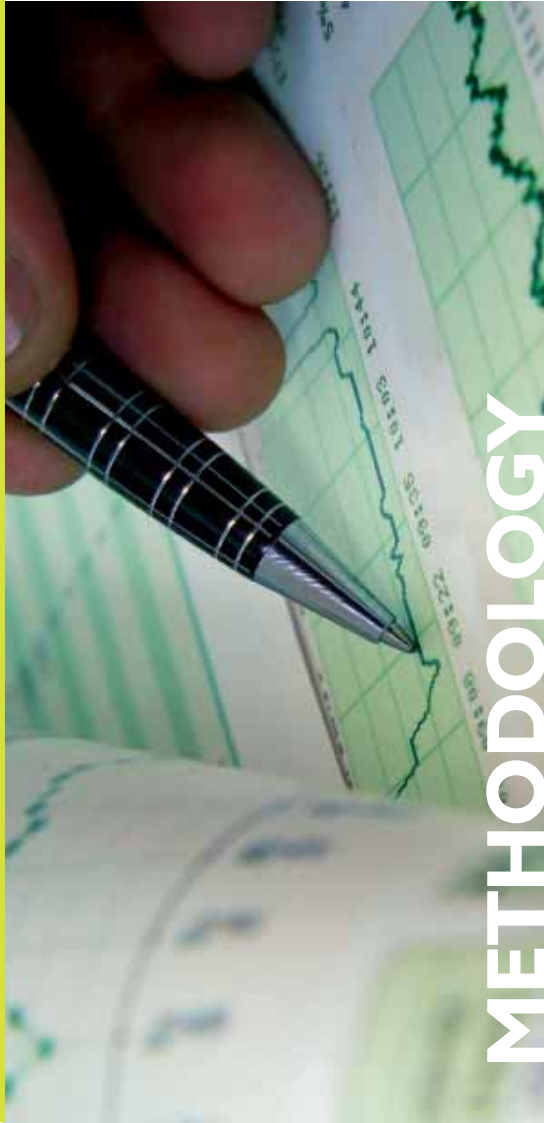
42.4% of respondents would continue working even if

they were medically diagnosed as stressed.

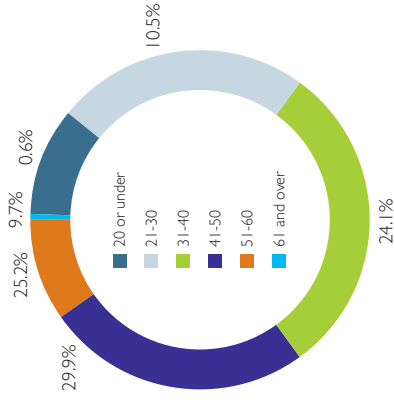
Job demands (**62.2%**), senior management demands (**32.3%**) and the possible loss of job (**30.4%**) cause respondents the most stress.

60.9% of respondents believe that health and safety has improved over the last three years as a result of changes introduced through regulation.





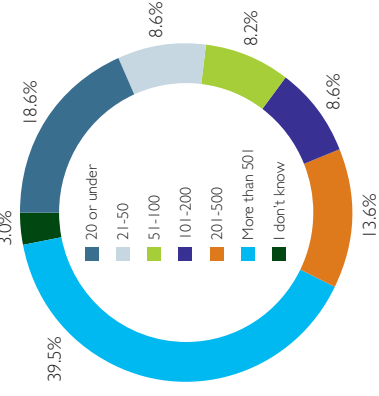
Graph 1: Age



Graph 2: Current job level

Alternative	Percentage	Value
Clerical/administrative	0.4%	5
Consultant	10.8%	136
Director/senior management	34.7%	437
Middle/junior management	30.2%	381
Educationalist	2.4%	30
Other professional	9.4%	118
Retired	0.8%	10
Student	3.0%	38
Supervisor	1.3%	17
Trainee	1.1%	14
Other, please specify	5.9%	74
Total	100%	1260

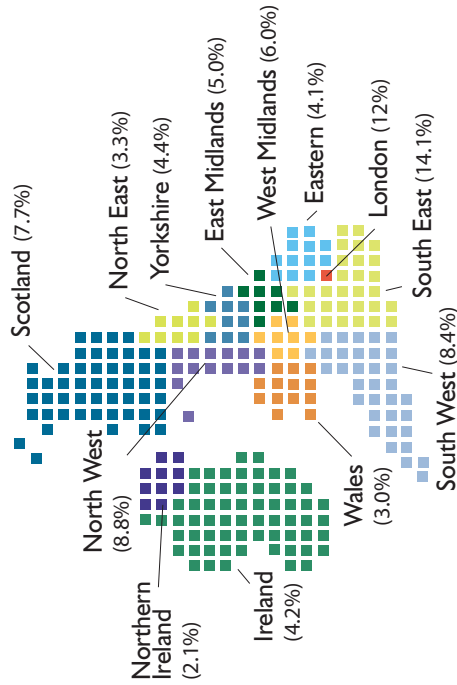
Graph 3: Organisation size



Graph 4: Job sector

Alternative	Percentage	Value
Architecture	3.0%	38
Building Control & Standards	2.3%	29
Construction management	31.6%	398
Education & Training	3.3%	42
Facilities management	4.4%	55
Health & Safety	4.6%	58
Heritage & Conservation	0.6%	8
Innovation & Research	0.1%	1
Planning	1.9%	24
Procurement	1.7%	22
Project management	20.6%	259
Site management	7.3%	92
Sustainable development	0.1%	1
Other, please specify	18.5%	233
Total	100%	1260

Map: Construction industry professional location



International respondents: 16.7%

The questionnaire used to gather our research was developed in collaboration with the CIOB Health and Safety Advisory Committee.

The survey was conducted using a web based application and an email was sent out to 27836 CIOB members, informing them that the survey was online. The survey was also available to the wider industry through the CIOB website.

Respondents were asked general demographic questions regarding their age, gender, job level and sector, and the number of employees in their organisation. The results have been analysed based on these variables.

There were both quantitative and qualitative questions in the survey; this allowed respondents to openly express their opinions on the topic.

The sample

The sample consisted of 1260 construction industry professionals, the majority of whom describe themselves as management.

■ 94.8% of respondents were Male and 4.9% Female ■



HEALTH & SAFETY CULTURE

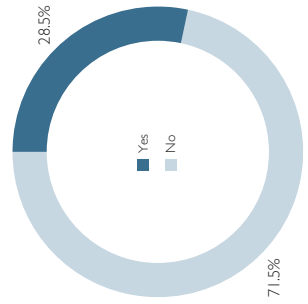
The construction industry is considered to be one of the most dangerous industries in which to work. There were 72 fatal injuries in the UK as a result of the construction industry in the 2007/08 period (31% of all fatal injuries across the main industries), which is a rate of 3.4 fatalities per 100,000 workers. There were also 3,764 major injuries reported¹. Other than a slight rise in the 2007/08 figures, there has been a steady improvement in these figures since, and the preliminary statistics for 2009 indicate a further improvement with 53 fatal injuries.

Construction fatalities compared to the other main industries:

INDUSTRY	NO. OF FATALITIES (2007/08)	FATALITY RATE (per 100,000 workers)
Construction	72	3.4
Agriculture	39	9.7
Manufacturing	35	1.1
Transport, Storage & Communications	20	1.1
Wholesale & Retail	17	0.3
Business & Finance	12	--
Public administration	10	0.7
Extractive & Utility	9	5.5
Hotels & Restaurants	1	0.1
Education	1	--

(Source: HSE statistics website - www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/fatals.htm)

Graph 5: Do you personally know someone who has been seriously injured in a construction related accident?



Despite these high figures, graph 5 shows the majority of respondents to this survey did not know someone who had been seriously injured in a construction related accident. However, 29% is still a disturbingly high figure.

The safety culture in the industry was examined by the HSE in an attempt to improve health and safety. It is partly assessed by investigating the number of near misses, accidents and illnesses that occur in, or as a result of, construction.

The Health and Safety Executive define health and safety culture in any industry as:

'The safety culture of an organisation is the product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, an organisation's health and safety management.'

Organisations with a positive safety culture are characterised by communications founded on mutual trust, by shared perceptions of the importance of safety and by confidence in the efficacy of preventive measures³

In this research, we investigated the importance of health and safety and asked respondents how seriously it was taken in their company and which of the two they felt more important.

69% of respondents state that health and safety is taken very seriously in their organisation, inferring a strong health and safety culture in those companies.

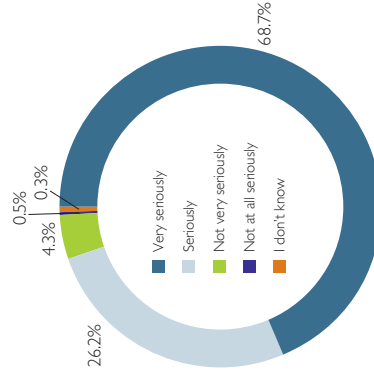
A quarter of respondents think it is taken seriously, but do not feel it has top priority in their organisation. (Graph 6)

The analysis shows that the larger the organisation the more seriously it takes health and safety. This is not surprising considering the resources bigger companies have available, and the fact that they probably have departments that specialise in managing health and safety. (Graph 7)

A positive safety culture develops through

- Leadership and a commitment to health and safety at all levels of an organisation
- Detailed risk assessments
- A health and safety policy
- Employee training
- Systems for monitoring and immediately investigating all incidents

Graph 6: How seriously is health & safety taken in the company you work for?



Graph 7: Company size analysis of how seriously health & safety is taken.

Size	Very seriously	Seriously
Below 20	52.1	40.2
21-50	50.9	42.6
51-100	71.8	22.3
101-200	74.1	25.0
201-500	73.1	24.0
501 plus	78.3	18.1

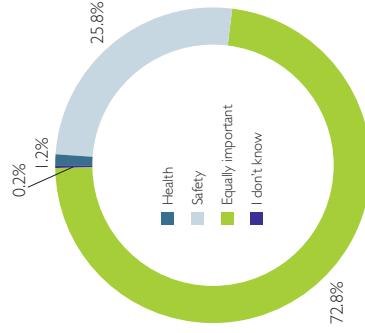
Graph 8 shows that results significantly varied when international and UK responses were compared. It appears, health and safety is taken less seriously outside of the UK, with only 47% of international respondents stating health and safety is taken very seriously compared to 74.1% of respondents in the UK selecting this option. Over 1/10 of international respondents stated that health and safety was not taken very seriously.

Graph 8: International analysis of how seriously health & safety is taken.

	UK	International
Very seriously	74.1	47.4
Seriously	23.3	37.0
Not very seriously	2.5	12.3
Not at all seriously	0.0	2.8
I don't know	0.2	0.5

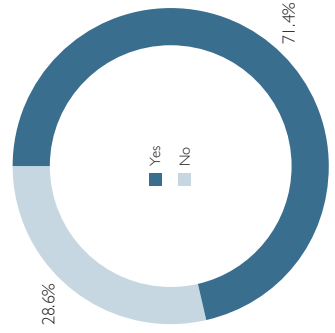
The research also examined the importance placed on both health and safety, with a quarter of respondents feeling that safety is the more important. Generally, it is positive that such a large proportion of respondents understand the importance of both, as the health aspects in particular can often be ignored despite the possible detrimental effects.

Graph 9: Which is more important, health in the industry or safety in the industry?



Further analysis of Graph 9 shows that over 1/3 of respondents aged between twenty-one and thirty placed more importance on safety. This was the highest percentage compared to the other age groups.

Graph 10: Have you undertaken any CPD in health & safety in the last 12 months?



Since training is an important aspect of ensuring a positive safety culture, it is encouraging that almost three-quarters of respondents have recently taken part in continuous professional development concerning health and safety. (Graph 10)

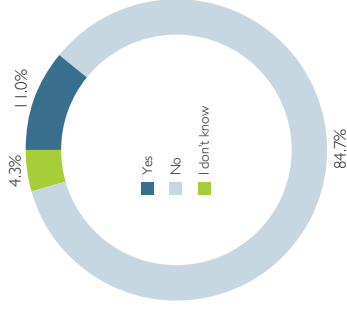
In the research, the CIOB wanted to assess whether the current economic climate was having an impact on health and safety compliance.

In the last recession the rate of major injuries fell from 285.9 per 100,000 workers in the 1989/90 period to 214.4 in 1993/94¹. A number of factors could have caused this reduction including a reduced workforce during this time or improve awareness.

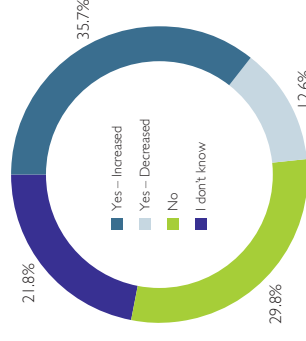
The current recession has also shown a downward trend. Preliminary figures have shown a reduction in the number of fatalities in the 2008/09 period with 53 fatal injuries compared to 72 in 2007/08.

Many companies have had to make sacrifices, but the results have shown that these sacrifices have not affected the level of health and safety compliance for the majority of respondents and in their organisation. (Graph 11)

Graph 11: Do you think the recession has affected the level of health & safety compliance in your company?



Graph 12: In your company, has the amount of money spent on health & safety (including training) changed in the last 12 months?



Only 11% of respondents stated that the recession had affected the level of health and safety compliance

We wanted to discover whether organisations were cutting their safety budgets. It is positive to see that for the majority this was not the case. (Graph 12)

Over a 1/3 of respondents indicated that their company had increased the amount of money spent on health and safety in the last twelve months



OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

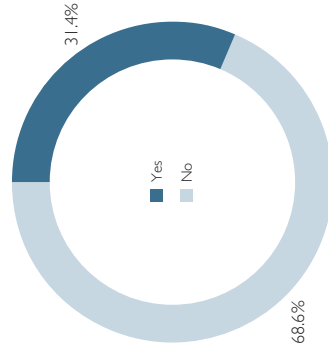
Stress can have adverse effects on job performance, often with serious consequences. The HSE's research shows that construction workers are prone to stress because of job demands, having the responsibility for other peoples' safety, working long hours and having a dangerous job. However, compared to other industries, the construction sector has relatively low levels of reported work-related stress. Even so, it is still a topic of concern for the industry and statistics often do not represent the actual level of stress felt by construction employees.

The CIOB investigated the impact of stress on the construction workforce in 2006⁵. The research showed that the majority of respondents (68%) had suffered from stress, anxiety or depression as a direct result of working in the construction industry.

Graph 13 shows that significantly fewer respondents (31%) report that they currently feel stressed. Of this figure, 79% state that the levels of stress have increased in the last twelve months. There could be a number of reasons for the reduction over three years in those reporting stress, including how respondents interpret the term 'stress' and because of the different scope of the

two surveys; in 2006 stress was the focus whereas it was one of six aspects in this research.

Graph 13: Are you currently feeling a lot of stress at work?

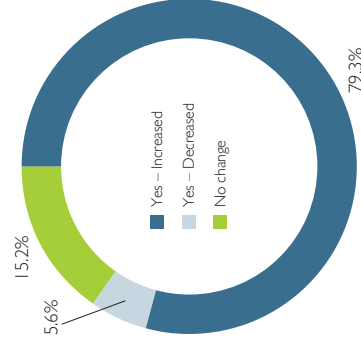


■ A 1/3 of directors and managers report feeling a lot of stress; this is compared to an average of only 17% of those who are at a lower levels. This supports the HSE's research that suggests managers generally report more stress⁶

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employees to assess the risks (including stress) caused by work and to take measures to control those risks. This research sought to discover how construction workers deal with their stress, and it is worrying that over one tenth of respondents say they would do nothing and only 14% would take time off work. 41% say they would speak to their line manager, which at least shows they will acknowledge their health issues.

Respondents who stated that they were currently feeling a lot of stress (31%) were asked if their level of stress had changed in the last twelve months; 79.3% of those respondents indicated an increase (Graph 14). When the results were analyzed it was shown that the majority felt this increase due to job demands and the possible loss of employment.

Graph 14: Respondents who stated they were feeling a lot of stress at work were asked if their level of stress had changed in the last 12 months:



Graph 15: What causes you stress in your work environment?

Alternative	Percentage	Value
Job demands	62.2 %	784
Demands of your senior management	32.3 %	407
Your line manager	13.0 %	164
Your work environment	20.7 %	261
Lack of or insufficient health & safety awareness in the organisation	7.5 %	95
Possible loss of your job	30.4 %	383
Insufficient training	12.1 %	152
I don't feel stress at work	13.7 %	172
Other, please specify	12.0 %	151
Don't know	0.4 %	5
Total	100 %	1260



Graph 16: If you were very stressed at work would you:

Alternative	Percentage	Value
Take a period of leave	13.7 %	172
Find a different job in the industry	8.6 %	108
Find a different job outside the construction industry	2.5 %	32
Speak to your line manager	41.0 %	517
Seek confidential counselling	7.1 %	90
Do nothing	11.1 %	140
I don't know	4.8 %	61
Other	11.1 %	140
Total	100 %	1260

Further analysis showed that students are more likely than other industry workers to take a period of leave if they are feeling stressed. 40% of students made this claim, which is significantly higher than the 9% of managers who stated they would take leave.

It is very interesting to see that very few would consider finding an alternative job outside the industry.

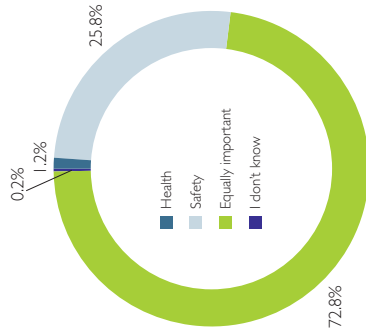
Despite the majority of respondents stating they would address their stress in some way, only 19% say they would take a period of leave if medically diagnosed as stressed. Continuing to work despite these feelings could have very serious consequences, including endangering their own lives as well as those of colleagues.

When we asked respondents why they would continue working, many claimed they had little choice in the matter. This could be because of financial reasons and the loss of earnings associated with time off work when self-employed, as well as an acceptance that a certain level of stress is expected.

Occupational Stress in the Construction Industry 2006

- 68.2% of respondents had suffered from stress, anxiety or depression as a direct result of working in the construction industry.
- 85% stated that the construction industry does not adequately address mental health in the workplace.
- Lack of feedback, poor communication and inadequate staffing were the main causes of workplace stress.

Graph 17: If you were medically diagnosed as stressed, would you continue working?



This research attempts to assess what affect the CDM Regulations 2007 have had on health and safety in the industry; the majority (61%) have noticed an improvement, and 45% have stated the improvement was a direct result of CDM2007.

The CDM Regulations came into force in 1995 with the aim of requiring all parties involved in construction projects to take responsibility for health and safety. The over-arching purpose of the regulations was to reduce the ill-health, accident and fatality rates within the industry.

The CDM Regulations encompass all project work, including demolition, maintenance and new-builds. However, a two-tier system designates each project as either notifiable (to the HSE) or non-notifiable. The classification of a notifiable project is one that:

- is expected to last for more than 30 days; or
- lasts for a shorter duration, but is expected to involve more than 500 person days

The HSE has the duty to enforce the responsibilities of the parties involved in the project. The roles and responsibilities of those parties are defined under four designations (termed 'duty holders') that identify the party's main activity.

These are:

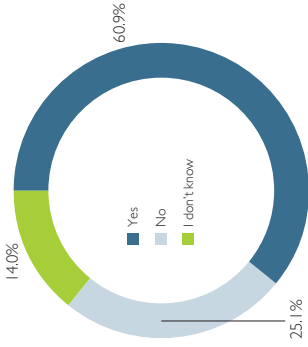
- Clients
- Designers
- CDM Coordinators
- Principal Contractors

Duty holders are expected to take responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of those involved during the project – and throughout the life of the building – by identifying risks, and taking action to mitigate these risks.



TEMPORARY WORKS

Graph 18: In your experience, have the health and safety changes introduced in the last three years resulted in a healthier & safer construction environment? E.g. CDM Regulations 2007



Over 1/3 of respondents have stated that CDM2007 has had little or no effect on how they address health and safety; this could reflect the impact on their specific role, not the impact of the regulations overall. However, further responses indicated that the regulations need more consideration before they can encourage and enforce significant improvements across all aspects of the industry. (Graph 19)

Many respondents believe there needs to be more onus on the contractor to demonstrate the competence of the workforce, as well as more responsibility on individuals for their own acts.

Implementing CDM Regulations should be the responsibility of all involved – from designers and clients through to the CDM coordinator, contractor and workforce.

Several respondents also state that the CDM coordinator should be more involved with the design team, throughout the life of the project, to ensure risk is properly managed. Comments also highlight the need to reduce the paperwork involved, and to improve training, to ensure greater compliance.

It is a widely held perception that there is too much regulation in the industry; surprisingly the results show this is not the case.

Graph 20 indicates that majority of respondents would not be against more regulation if its purpose was to improve health and safety.

■ Only 21% of respondents felt that health and safety is too regulated

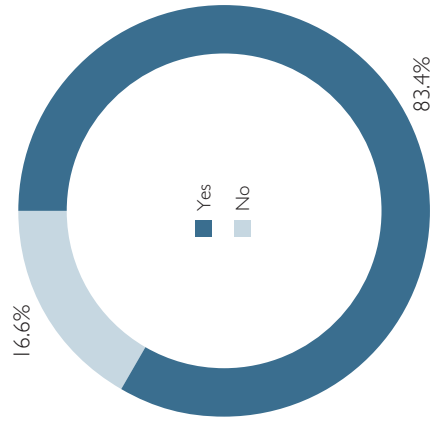
Graph 19: What impact has CDM2007 had on how you address health & safety?

Alternative	Percentage	Value
None	6.9 %	87
Very Little	29.4 %	371
A reasonable improvement	31.3 %	394
A significant improvement	14.1 %	178
I don't know	7.5 %	94
N/A	5.8 %	73
Other, please specify	5.0 %	63
Total	100 %	1260

This research sought to discover how considered temporary works were in the development of a project. The majority of respondents (83%) had experience or knowledge of temporary works and 82% had worked on a project involving them in the past two years.

Because of the temporary nature of these works, the need for a proper assessment of the health and safety risks involved often takes a low priority.

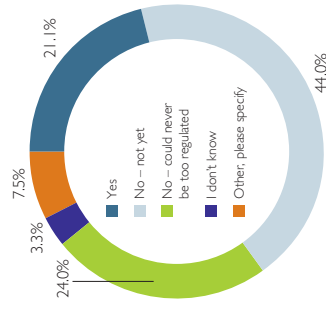
Graph 18: Do you have any experience or knowledge of the procurement, design, construction or use of temporary works on site?



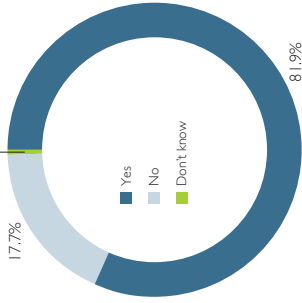
Temporary works are used during the stages of construction or renovation and are not intended to be permanent. They include, but are not limited to:

- Scaffolding
- Temporary roofs
- Temporary bracing
- Access bridges
- Crane supports

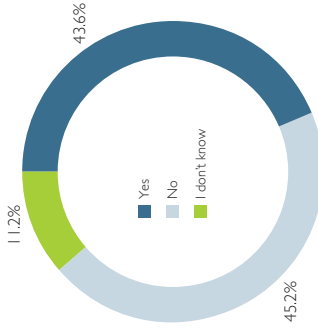
Graph 20: Do you think health & safety is too regulated?



Graph 22: Have you worked on a project involving temporary works in the last 24 months?



Graph 23: Was a Temporary Works Coordinator (TWC) or Falsework Coordinator formally appointed for the project?



Graph 24: What is/was the value of the project?

Alternative	Percentage	Value
<£200,000	14.3%	136
£200,000 – £500,000	8.8%	84
£500,001 – <£1M	6.5%	62
£1M – <£5M	20.3%	193
£5M – <£15M	16.2%	154
£15M	27.5%	262
I don't know	6.5%	62
Total	100%	953

Further analysis of Graph 22 has shown that the majority of respondents who had not worked on a project involving temporary works were employed in small companies or had not worked directly on site in the last two years.

■ **45% of respondents stated that a TWC was not appointed on their project**

It is mainly smaller companies who do not appoint a TWC; 56.9% of respondents who were employed by companies employing less than 20 employees stated one was not appointed.

Whether one was appointed also depended on project size. 78% of respondents working on projects worth more than £15 million stated a TWC was formally appointed compared to only 23.9% of those working on projects worth less than £200,000.

It appears there is more awareness and experience of temporary works on higher value projects, particularly those worth over one million pounds.

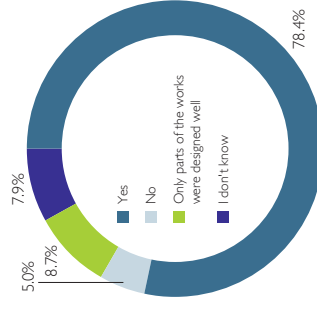
It is often the role of the Temporary Works Coordinator to look after the design, installation, loading, maintenance and dismantling of temporary works, however this is not a requirement.

It may not be practical to appoint a TWC on smaller projects, but it should be a requirement on medium to large sized projects, where temporary works are a prominent part of the construction process.

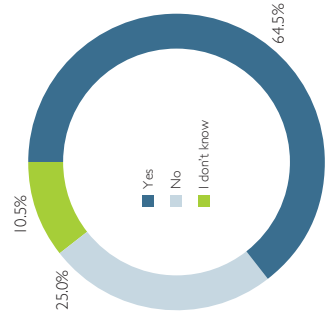
Graph 25: Who was responsible for coordinating the safe design, erection and use/loading of temporary works?

Alternative	Percentage	Value
Scaffolder (or those installing the temporary works on site)	21.8%	209
Site based structural or civil engineer	13.6%	130
Site/setting-out engineer	3.3%	32
Surveyor	0.8%	8
Chartered builder	2.0%	19
Site manager	25.1%	240
Visiting contracts manager	2.4%	23
Visiting civil or structural engineer	11.5%	110
I don't know	6.2%	59
Other, please specify	13.3%	127
Total	100%	957

Graph 26: Did you feel the temporary works were properly designed?

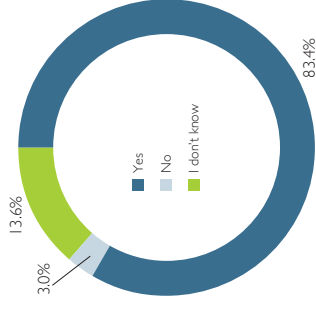


Graph 28: Did you have a formal temporary works procedure?

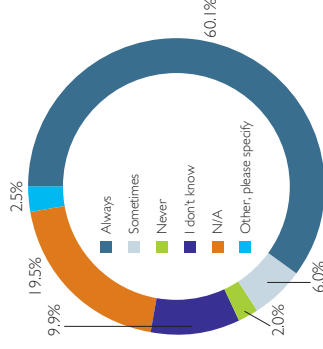


Graph 30 shows that 83% of respondents are aware of crane certificates being checked when the machines arrive on site, while 97% highlight the importance of regularly inspecting tower cranes that are in operation. (Graph 29)

Graph 30: Are the crane certificates checked every time a new crane arrives on site?



Graph 31: When working in a tower crane do you have an emergency rescue plan?

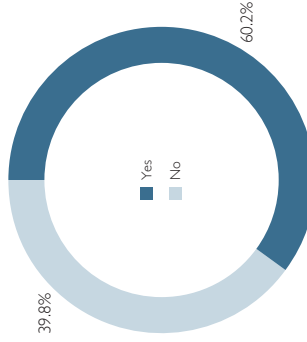


Graph 32: What do you think is important for tower crane safety? (Please select all that are applicable)

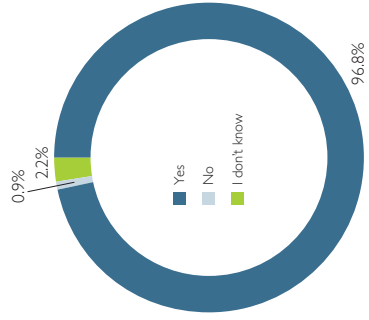
Alternative	Percentage	Value
Competence training	92.7 %	699
Handbook for crane drivers	52.9 %	399
Tower crane on F10 notifications	42.8 %	323
Early discussions on location and erection techniques	82.6 %	623
Specialist tower crane supervisor	77.9 %	587
Other, please specify	14.5 %	109
Total	100 %	754

While regular inspection could greatly improve the safety of cranes on site, respondents also highlight the importance of competency training, early discussions about the location of cranes and erection techniques, and the need to employ a tower crane specialist. (Graph 32)

Graph 28: Do you have any knowledge or experience of crane safety on site?



Graph 29: Do you have any knowledge or experience of crane safety on site?



Since 2000, there have been eight deaths in the UK as a result of crane accidents, each receiving high levels of media attention. Globally, there were at least 217 deaths reported in 2008⁷. However, it is harder for the HSE to establish the number of crane accidents not resulting in death because so many remain unreported. This makes it difficult to assess crane accident trends.

However, it is clear that there has been a significant increase in the number of tower cranes in use over the last ten years, as the construction industry has expanded. Because of this increase, and the high profile nature of crane deaths, a Tower Crane Interest Group was established after the accident involving a crane at Canary Wharf in 2000.

In addition, the HSE launched a consultation exploring ways to improve crane safety on construction sites (July 2009)⁸.

For this research, we asked respondents about their experience of working with cranes on site - and the results show some positive attitudes towards crane safety.



IMPROVING HEALTH AND SAFETY

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the questionnaire, we asked respondents to openly state how they thought health and safety could be improved in the industry. We also invited opinions on what the CIOB could do to help this improvement.

Not surprisingly, the top responses to the first question were 'more training' and 'better awareness'. The majority feel that training is essential at all levels of an organisation and that it should be on-going. Continuous training would ensure that awareness is kept up-to-date and that knowledge is refreshed. Several respondents feel that these developments would create a better health and safety culture than simply more legislation.

Companies must ensure that all levels of their organisation are involved in raising awareness of health and safety issues. Every employee would then have a better understanding of the issues and an appreciation of their own responsibility.

Another common response was the call for more Health and Safety Executive involvement, in terms

of advice, support and more site inspections – including more unannounced visits. However, instead of just inspecting, inspectors should be qualified to offer advice and support to companies too. Many stated a particular concern for small to medium companies, which are often overlooked by the HSE. Generally, responses inferred the HSE must take a more all-encompassing approach to help improve health and safety in the industry.

As for the CIOB's role in improving health and safety, training was again the most popular response. Many state that they would find CPD events, seminars and workshops on the topic beneficial.

Many also cited health and safety management training as a way to help companies create an effective health and safety culture.

Awareness training was also particularly important to respondents. Many advised that good and bad examples of health and safety would help raise this awareness and prove

very useful in improving their own approach to health and safety.

The majority also raised the importance of working with other professional institutions and the HSE, as it would ensure a coherent approach and a collaborative strategy of improvement. Joint promotion and shared knowledge should form part of this strategy, to help raise the profile of the issue in the industry.

■ There should be increased collaboration between stakeholders and professional institutions, in unison with the HSE, to develop a collaborative approach to improving health and safety - Respondents indicated the importance of having a collaborative approach to ensure that there is a coherent voice on the issue. A joint strategy could promote the importance of health and safety and offer advice and guidance in various forms.

■ Guidance on recognising and handling stress in an organisation should be available to managers – The majority of respondents stated that they would speak to their line manager if they were feeling stressed; managers should be able to provide an effective solution in these situations. In order to ensure appropriate advice is given, managers should receive guidance and training on how to recognise and manage occupational stress.

■ A more all-encompassing approach from the HSE is required - The HSE needs further resources to ensure their inspectors are able to give more guidance and share best practice. It has also been indicated that more inspections would benefit the industry, particularly visits to small and medium sized companies.

■ Continuous health and safety training should be essential at all levels of an organisation – Ensuring all staff have up-to-date training will encourage a better awareness of health and safety and is likely to result in a overall improvement in safety in the industry.

■ Temporary works need more consideration in safety standards – Temporary works are not given as much consideration in the CDM Regulations as other aspects of construction despite the possible risks they pose to safety. More attention should be given to the various elements of temporary works to ensure their safety.

■ Regulation is needed to progress health and safety improvement in the construction industry – The industry should not be against more regulation if it is appropriate and will contribute to reducing the number of accidents and deaths in the industry.

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