

Red Tape, Blue Tape. Isn't It All Just Bureaucracy?

This is a question the Health and Safety Executive are now asking, says Phil Pinnington, the resident H&S expert at the GGF



Most installers who've pitched for work on any sort of construction project will be familiar with SSIP, CHAS or Construction line – but now we are seeing increasingly these standards being imposed in local authority and housing association contracts, writes the GGF's Phil Pinnington.

So, is it necessary? Well, the HSE have commissioned a listening project which we at GGF have been part of. The aim was to find out what level of burden this blue tape has on business and where it comes from.

At a recent IOSH (Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) event, the Project lead, Jeremy Bevan, reported on the findings to date and it was very evident and no surprise that much of this blue tape has come

from the insurance industry, health and safety consultants and large principle contractors.

Most of these findings are not a surprise to us in the glazing industry – many trades can attest to similar problems. The unanswered question is going to be how can the HSE influence when many of these are driven by defending a financial position?

Change

If we are to affect change, I believe that this should start from the beginning. Many SME's do rely on 'experts' to advise them. Using their accountants as the source of knowledge is surprisingly quite common even when most of us would agree that accountants aren't the people we would naturally think would be the best place to start.

Another starting point is our

trusted friend Google. It's a fantastic resource and one I would certainly recommend, if you know where to start. When you search for Health and Safety you'll get a huge number of hits and most of the results will give you consultants or systems that can make the job easier – at a cost.

Do I need a Health and Safety Manager?

Our Health and Safety team here at GGF has been working hard to listen to what member companies struggle with on Health & Safety. It's not uncommon to be asked 'Do I need a Health and Safety Manager?' and our response is always, 'Do You think you need one?'

Appropriate to your business

There are many consultants in the market who, for a fee, will provide SME's with high quality Health and Safety Management Systems. The trick is to make sure what you've been offered is appropriate to your business. A recent example was a care home who paid handsomely for a management system. An HSE Inspector reviewed it and asked where the fork lift truck was stored? Clearly the home had not checked what was offered, so the tip is to check that what you've been offered is appropriate to your business. [i](#)