

Comment

The Installer

December 2018

Profinder Limited

The Installer traditionally offers a pre-Christmas message of good cheer – and health & safety. It's a time of year when the rushing around and the festive mood can lead to accidents – at height and on the road.

However, this December we have the opportunity to look forward in this matter. Thus, we are pleased to let Phil Pinnington of the Glass & Glazing Federation take over from here. Safety – is it time for a fresh approach? As we enter the festive season I'm reminded of the years of bad publicity Health and Safety professionals endured. We're 'party-poopers' and 'The Fun Police' are probably the less severe tags I've heard, yet behind all these there's normally an alternative agenda. Lack of funding or simply lack of interest often are the real reasons so why should we be bothered? As someone who believes that Health and Safety should help business work effectively and safely I do get extremely frustrated at some fellow professionals who allow themselves to be the scapegoats for other's agendas. That's not to say that if there's a genuine safety rationale of course certain activities should not take place if lives are at risk.

Suitable and sufficient

One crucial phrase that I often think is missed when people assess risk is 'suitable and sufficient'. As much as it's important to ensure assessments do consider all appropriate risks, it's also just as important to weigh up what's a real risk and what's unlikely. Likewise deciding the true severity of a risk needs to be measured against reality.

Catastrophic

Whilst at the HSE, Dame Judith Hackett would often publish blogs. Before she left she published one particular blog which struck a chord with me. She maintained that in her time at HSE she had come across many assessments that were clearly extreme where the risk had not been properly assessed. One common theme was assessors treating the severity of outcomes as 'catastrophic' when in reality there was little evidence that would support that opinion. We all know that death is the worst outcome but how many day to day activities that go wrong, result in death? It stands to reason that if a hazard is assessed as possibly resulting in someone's death then either the controls must be extensive and expensive or you simply ban the activity which, is regularly used as the justification. In no way would I condone massaging the facts but suitable and sufficient in these situations should, if the activity isn't new, be based on historical data.

Christmas

So, if we're not putting up Christmas lights because the risk of them falling and hitting someone resulting in major injury then, I would be keen to hear the rationale. I'm increasingly optimistic that more and more practitioners are changing their approach to risk assessment. Instead of writing the assessments in isolation they're starting to talk to workers, gaining valuable insight into what's happening and getting their buy-in.

In 2019 the GGF will be working to develop more training and awareness in the field of suitable and sufficient risk assessment. This will be aimed at supporting those small businesses who don't have direct access to Health and Safety professionals. So until then and on behalf of The Installer as well, have a very merry, happy and safe end to 2018 – Phil Pinnington.

Brian J. Shillibeer, Editor
[@theinstallermagazine](mailto:theinstallermagazine@profinder.eu) or installer@profinder.eu

Editor
Brian Shillibeer
[E. installer@profinder.eu](mailto:E.installer@profinder.eu)

Assistant Editor
Cathryn Ellis
[E. cathryn.ellis@profinder.eu](mailto:E.cathryn.ellis@profinder.eu)

Editorial Office
The Studio, 47 Hillside Avenue,
Elstree & Borehamwood,
Herts WD6 1HQ

Publisher
John Roper
[E. john.roper@profinder.eu](mailto:E.john.roper@profinder.eu)

Advertisement Account Manager:
Steve Anthony
T.07967 585475
[E. steve.anthony@profinder.eu](mailto:E.steve.anthony@profinder.eu)

Advertisement Account Manager:
Mehreen Haroon Ali
T.07814 209789
[E. mehreen.haroon@profinder.eu](mailto:E.mehreen.haroon@profinder.eu)

Head Office and Advertisement Production:
T.01255 860613
[E. chris.sims@profinder.eu](mailto:E.chris.sims@profinder.eu)

The Installer Vol 22 No 12
Published November 2018
Copyright © Profinder Ltd 2018

The Installer is the official journal of:

CERTASS

THE MASTER WINDOW & CONSERVATORY Installers Association

Opinions expressed in **The Installer** are those of the contributors and do not represent editorial policy. The publisher charges for the use of editorial pictures.