



Contractors Mechanical Plant Engineers

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the latest CMPE National Newsletter. With the current easing of restrictions it appears some sort of normality is now being implemented, as most of us are now allowed to move about the country with the biggest easing of lockdown recently announced by the Prime Minister which has taken place from Saturday 4th July. The changes we have been experiencing as a nation, and more importantly as a community, over recent months are unprecedented.

Stay safe everyone.

Certificate of Competence

Due to the surprise resignation last month of Ian Johnson, our National Registrar, temporary arrangements have since been made for David Holden to take over the issuing of new and renewal CoC's. With immediate effect, all applications are to be forwarded to:-

**David Holden, CMPE National Registrar,
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6 Poplar Drive,
Longridge,
PR3 3HS.**

Tel: 07813 895875

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Memory Lane - from Bob Nugent

I'm in charge!

I first wrote this piece in 2006. At the time I was Plant Manager at Bierrum and Partners based at their plant yard near Peterborough. Bierrum was one of a number of civil engineering companies resulting from a group of Danish engineers coming to work in the UK, Peter Lind, Ove Arup, Neilson amongst them. Bierrum specialised in high quality concrete. They went on to develop a climbing access system which when used in the construction of hyperbolic cooling towers did away with access scaffolding, saving time and money. Bierrum had built or repaired most of the towers owned by the CEGB. I joined the company when Bierrum were awarded the contract to build the last six towers at Drax Power Station. The largest coal fired power station in Europe at that time.

Those of you who remember "Brucie" will recall his first catchphrase from "Sunday Night at the London Palladium" shouting at the hapless contestants "I'm in charge" always to hoots of laughter. But unlike Bruce Forsyth being in charge brings responsibility which should never be claimed too quickly.

So, this is the tale. We had been given some cooling towers to survey in the Yorkshire power belt and subsequently the contract to do some crack sealing. If you don't know, these towers stand some 385 feet high with a wall thickness of about 5" and with age and settlement there can be some cracks. After the survey which can entail some core drilling and some surface work we set to work. The guys who do this are mostly steeplejacks and cradle hands. We were using 9m Tirak aluminium modular cradles with Tirak rope climbing winches. The 'jacks had fixed the headgear to the tower corbels and the two working ropes and two safety ropes to the headgear. The ropes hung down on the outside of the tower to the cradle, the working ropes to the winches and the safety ropes to the blocstops. The cradle carries the two cradle hands and their wet weather gear and the crack sealing pumps.

I should point out that Bierrum had invested quite heavily in Tirak equipment and lifting equipment. We made all the wire rope slings for the Bierrum Group and tested all lifting gear in house.

Back to the story, we had two cradles working on one tower and this is mid November late afternoon. The lads had just finished and started to bring the cradle down, when it stopped! "maybe the levelling switch" normal thing is to raise the cradle, nothing doing! Check the circuit breakers, still nothing. They contact the groundman, who checks the electrical supply, looks OK. Then they remember that my mobile fitter had been on site all day checking lifting tackle. Give a call on the mobile phone. He hasn't left site and will be there in minutes. Ernie checks the supply and comes to the conclusion that the fault is in the cradle. But the cradle is at the tower throat, about 300 feet up. So this is what we will do. Bring the other cradle down to the floor, release the ropes, bring cradle 2 to cradle 1 position and feed the

ropes through the winches and blocstops, raise cradle2 to underneath cradle 1, transfer very cold cradle hands to cradle 2, job done!

That is the plan, problem? How do we get cradle 2 round to cradle1 position? Get the forklift! Problem? Forklift won't start, flat battery.

We'll borrow the station's forklift, off to the maintenance workshop. Ask the workshop foreman. Yes, of course, what's the problem? We explain and the back covering starts, I'd better tell the Station Manager. Station Manager hearing the words "Men trapped at height" says I'd better take charge! He phones the police, who arrive with blue lights flashing. The SM explains the situation and the police say "not really our job, you need the Fire Brigade. They arrive with the turntable although probably 200 feet short, but the Fire Chief takes charge and decides that for that height we need a helicopter. Which the Coastguard calls up. Before it lands we have a canteen van and a television crew with floodlights. The helicopter pilot says he cant get near because of the overhang

Stalemate, it is now pitch black and freezing cold with light rain falling. The Station Manager, Chief Fire Officer, Police Inspector and the Tea Lady hold a planning meeting and eventually ask for ideas. My lowly fitter, who is hungry, tired and p***** off, says if he could borrow a forklift he could collect cradle 2 and use it to bring the two men down. This idea met with the approval of all concerned. 30 minutes later the two lads are on their way home.

Later that evening there is a mention of men trapped up a chimney on Yorkshire Television. The cradle was checked the next morning and a waterproof jacket was found to have fouled the safety rope, stopping the winch from working.

Never be too quick to be in charge!! **Written by CMPE member Bob Nugent of Mid Shires Branch**





Coronavirus updates and advice

HSE urges businesses to become COVID-secure

HSE is calling for businesses in Great Britain to [make sure they're COVID-secure](#) as more sectors get back to work. As part of the call to action, employers are reminded of their duty to protect workers and others from harm, including taking reasonable steps to control the risk and protect people from coronavirus.

This is called a [COVID-19 risk assessment](#) and will help you manage risk and protect people.

Find out [what to include](#) in your COVID-19 risk assessment.

Social distancing

To reflect the latest Government guidance following the easing of lockdown measures in England, the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) 'Site Operating Procedures (SOP) – Protecting Your Workforce During Coronavirus (Covid-19)' have been updated.

Published on 1 July, [Version 5 of the SOP procedures](#) include the 'one metre plus' social distancing guidelines requiring workers to stay two metres apart, or one metre with risk mitigation where two metres is not viable, with the expectation that sites will maintain the social distancing measures in place.

CLC's SOP are based on [government guidance on](#) working safely during coronavirus - construction and other outdoor work; other restrictions and advice may apply in [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

HSE's website also has specific guidance on [social distancing in the workplace](#).



Construction industry pushes for red diesel extension



A coalition of construction trade bodies has written to chancellor Rishi Sunak asking for a delay in the forthcoming cut to the tax rebate on red diesel.

The March 2020 budget statement included the abolition of tax relief on red diesel for construction plant machinery in 2022. But construction organisations say that industry finances are now so fragile that they need more time.

The Construction Plant-hire Association (CPA), along with Hire Association Europe (HAE), International Powered Access Federation (IPAF), Scottish Plant Owners Association (SPOA), National Federation of Demolition Contractors (NFDC) and the Scottish Building Federation (SBF) have asked chancellor Rishi Sunak to extend the deadline to at least 2023 to allow more time for economic recovery.

In a letter to the chancellor, they say: “Since the March Budget, the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on our members has caused a sudden and continuous decline in their business outlook and future investment plans. For many businesses, cash flow remains critical and capital expenditure has been frozen or cancelled.

“As the latest ONS figures show, in the three months to May, construction output fell by 40%. The Office of Budget Responsibility has estimated that construction output will fall by 70% in quarter two of 2020 relative to a decline of 35% in the whole economy because of Covid-19. Although our members have actively taken steps to adapt to remain in business, their future and investment intentions are being put on hold. The outlook is highly uncertain and will remain so for some time ahead.”

They say that adding to the financial burden on plant owners would reduce their ability to invest in new, less polluting machinery. They also point out that alternatives to diesel power for most types of heavy machinery are not yet viable.

According to the Civil Engineering Contractors Association, scrapping the red diesel rebate could cost construction as much as £490m.

Users of off-highway construction machinery currently pay tax of just 11.14 pence per litre on diesel instead of the standard tax rate of 57.95 pence per litre. The subsidised diesel is dyed red purely to distinguish it from the standard rate fuel.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak described the rebate in March as “a £2.4bn tax break for pollution that's also hindered the development of cleaner alternatives”.



Treasury agrees to delay reverse charge VAT again



HM Treasury has succumbed to construction industry lobbying and agreed to a further delay to the introduction of reverse charge VAT.

The introduction of the domestic reverse charge for construction services was originally meant to be introduced in October 2019 but was put back to October 2020 after the construction industry persuaded the government that, amid Brexit uncertainty, it was not ready for the cashflow hit that the reform brings with it.

In the wake of the Covid-19 crisis, construction industry concerns about the imminent change were heightened again and the Construction Leadership Council and several trade associations pushed for another year's delay.

The Treasury has not conceded, at least partially, putting it back five months to 1st March 2021.

There will also be an amendment to the original legislation, which was laid in April 2019, to make it a requirement that for businesses to be excluded from the reverse charge because they are end users or intermediary suppliers, they must inform their sub-contractors in writing that they are end users or intermediary suppliers.

A domestic reverse charge means the UK customer who gets supplies of construction services must account for the VAT due on these supplies on their VAT return, rather than the UK supplier. The motive for the Treasury is to remove the scope for fraudsters to steal the VAT due to HMRC.

A technical consultation on the draft legislation and its impact took place in summer 2018 and the final legislation and guidance were published in November 2018. However, awareness of the changes remains low across the construction sector. A cross-industry survey in February 2020 received more than 1,000 responses and found that 39% still did not know about the impending introduction of reverse charge VAT, where customers will pay VAT directly to HM Revenue & Customs instead of to the service supplier. And 46% of survey respondents said that their accountancy software was not ready for the change.



Edinburgh firm launches wrist-strap monitor for social distancing



Companies including Keltbray are trialling new technology developed by Edinburgh-based Reactec to alert workers if they stray within two metres of a colleague.

Reactec has repurposed its existing HAVwear wrist-worn safety device, which is used in tackling Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome. The addition of the new 'Safedistance' technology is designed to enable employers to manage the social distancing of their workforce within construction, rail, manufacturing and other workplaces.

More than 45,000 of Reactec's HAVwear monitors are already in circulation in the UK. Reactec is offering to enable these devices remotely by adding the safe distancing software free of charge.

One of the companies trialling Safedistance is Keltbray. Paul Deacy, managing director demolitions and civils, said: "Keltbray already uses HAVwear as it's a robust product and the analytics reporting with its automation and GDPR compliance are critical factors to Keltbray providing actionable intelligence. So when Reactec approached us to trial the new social distance functionality we already had confidence in the product. Keltbray is encouraged by this new offering. This could truly assist us in managing social distancing across our projects."

Development work that would normally take months was completed in 15 days, allowing Reactec to test and launch the product in record time. A number of leading companies within the construction and rail sector are now trialling the technology.

Safedistance is based on an industrial-grade wrist-worn device. As well as alerting workers if they stray too close to colleagues, it is designed to inform employers of the frequency and severity of breaches of social distancing protocols. The company said that it can also assist with contact tracing of those who have been close to employees subsequently displaying Covid-19 symptoms and can be used to facilitate contact tracing across employers on busy infrastructure projects. Another use is for 'ring fencing' of teams who need to work more closely together in controlled cohorts, it said. It can be used to enable real time intervention by a supervisor in the event of social distancing breaches

Reactec CEO Jacqui McLaughlin said: “Social distancing will clearly be with us for some time and it’s vital that when people get back to work they can do so safely.

Our team has moved quickly to repurpose our technology to help businesses to ensure that their teams are working safely.

Reactec, is already dedicated to helping reduce the damage to workers’ health from exposure to vibration, so developing our technology to include social distancing was a logical next step in response to Covid-19. We want to play our part in getting everyone back to work safely and with confidence.”

Reactec has discussed the capabilities of Safedistance at ministerial level with the Scottish government. Ivan McKee, minister for trade, investment and innovation, said: “In response to this pandemic, companies right across Scotland have been diversifying production lines, increasing capacity or exploring new distribution routes to help deliver what is needed, when it’s needed. Technology is going to play a crucial role in helping us overcome the long-term challenges presented by Covid-19 so it is great to see innovative, dynamic companies repurposing existing technology to help us protect workers from potential exposure in the future.”

The Safedistance technology works by using Bluetooth-enabled Reactec devices to detect other Reactec devices within a 2m range. Should users become closer than two metres apart, both device users are warned with both vibration and audio alerts.

The device is returned to its recharging docking station at the end of each shift, at which point details of any safe distancing breaches are uploaded to the cloud and combined with other data to produce employer reports to assist in the management of social distancing. All data use is entirely GDPR compliant, said the company. The system can be expanded to provide real-time transmission of distancing breaches to enable supervisors to act immediately in managing social distancing.

McLaughlin said: “Safedistance is based on a robust, tried and tested personal monitoring technology specifically designed for harsh environments and the strongest requirements of corporate ownership of GDPR compliant data. While the repurposing of the technology to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 is innovative, it is a software amendment to a well-used system. Like everyone else, we long to see the country get back to work and for the economy to be kickstarted once more. I’m confident that Safedistance can play an important part in helping to make this happen.”



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