

Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum
Northern Ireland
MINUTES
Tuesday 9th June 2020 – 14:00
(Virtual Meeting via Zoom, hosted by Atlas World)

| Item | Topic | Action |
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| 1. | <u>Attendance</u> | |
| 1.1 | Present: Jim King, Pete Gibson, Ann Coyle, Aoife Hamill, Nicola Penman, David Donnelly, Colin Bell, Martin Rafferty, Gordon Boyd, Michelle McEvoy, Peter Kerr, Wendy Doherty, Neal Sharkey, Deborah Murray, Jennifer Stephens (Minutes). | |
| 1.2 | Apologies: Apologies: Rachel Hunter, Raymond Martin, Corin Goodall, Brian Price, Michael McLaughlin. | |
| 2. | <u>Welcome:</u> | |
| 2.1 | JK welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Peter Gibson from Atlas World for arranging the meeting through Zoom. | |
| 3. | <u>Notification of any other business</u> | |
| 3.1 | JK outlined the items on the draft Agenda and advised that MR would also be providing an update on behalf of HSENI. | |
| 4. | <u>Retaining Covid-19 Security</u> | |
| 4.1 | GB highlighted that the recent guidance produced for the construction industry. This 25 page extensive document covers Covid-19 related issues and safety for construction workers. | |
| 4.2 | There was a discussion around lobbying the NI Assembly to put something similar in place for the Waste Industry (over and above the WISHNI guidance) in order to protect workers and to ensure safety. | |
| 4.3 | Even as Lockdown eases, it was agreed that there would be many challenges to face in retaining Covid-19 security, particularly for many small businesses. | |
| 4.4 | JK referenced some of the lobbying approaches by other waste bodies, such as CIWM and IOSH and suggested that WISHNI could also influence government policy through this approach. | |
| 4.5 | JK to consider how best to progress with encouraging government to develop and adopt standardised policy across the waste industry. | JK |
| 5. | <u>Separation distances 2m vs 1m</u> | |
| 5.1 | AC outlined the measures that Recon had put in place to ensure social distancing within the workplace. She said that within some areas of work, where the 2m distance was difficult to operate in, masks and visors are provided. | |

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| 5.2 | Other members agreed that whilst, in the short term, 2m was being maintained, this could pose difficulties in the future, particularly moving towards full scale operations and full staffing levels. | |
| 5.3 | GB highlighted that the practice of task and finish for bin collection staff could actually help alleviate gatherings of staff clocking out at the same time. | |
| 5.4 | DD stressed that even if the social distancing zone was to be reduced by government, industry should still be maintaining as high a safety standard as possible. | |
| 5.5 | JS asked if any other local authorities had been experiencing any issues with the new rules being introduced at Household Recycling Centres. PK said that there were no major issues at CC&G Borough Council and that they were operating on an appointment booking system. | |
| 5.6 | DD reported that there is noticeably more unauthorised waste coming through the Council waste streams – e.g. gas canisters, tyres and WEEE and this could be due to less handling of waste by council staff (e.g. unassisted lifts). PK said that he would raise this with other councils at the next LASAN meeting. | |
| 5.7 | JK – enquired about the waste streams coming through Bryson. CB noted that there was up to 30% more material coming through but that there are now only two staff per collection vehicle, rather than 3 because of the social distancing restrictions. | |
| 5.7 | PK noted no members being aware of any major concerns at LASAN meeting on 16th. | |
| 6. | <u>Covid-19 and HR issues</u> | |
| 6.1 | AC raised the scenario of members of staff who had been shielding / in the vulnerable category who were returning to work and what specific measures would need to be in place for them. | |
| 6.2 | JK said that it was reasonable for such members of staff to request tailored working conditions, e.g. that person being allocated to a specific work station or equipment such as a forklift. | |
| 6.3 | NP highlighted the importance of good hygiene measures, such as frequent cleaning of work stations for those staff members using them. | |
| 6.4 | CB explained that at Bryson, every member of staff is responsible for their own work station, including cleaning them. | |
| 6.5 | MR stressed that every employer has a legal responsibility under the H&S at Work Order to protect their employees and that each role should be Risk Assessed and looked at on a case by case basis. It should definitely not be a one cap fits all approach. He also stressed that employees also have a legal responsibility and should work with their employers to assess and agree a safe approach. | |
| 6.6 | DD has developed a Return to Work Policy and will share it with the group. The document has three categories: (1) staff who are at risk and need to work from home (2) staff who can't work from home and want to return to work and (3) staff who can continue to work from home. He stressed that the Policy is about getting the right solution for each member of staff. | |
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| <p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p> <p>7.4</p> <p>7.5</p> | <p><u>Update from HSENI – MR</u></p> <p>MR explained that the HSENI had conducted a number of inspections of waste premises as well as the wider industry to assess the control measures for Covid- 19. He said that in general, workplaces are observing social distancing and have staff welfare measures in place, such as staggered start and finish times and lunch breaks as well as 2m markings on walls (using e.g. tape) and floors (using e.g. spray paint).</p> <p>MR outline a number of additional measures that employers could consider including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing additional canteens and changing facilities - Installing Perspex type screening down the centres of tables (making sure there are no gaps) - Temporarily removing mobile chairs and seats so only a limited number can be in use at any one time - Putting markings on the floor for where chairs should be placed (at least 2m apart from each other) - Installing screens at shared hand washing facilities, e.g. troughs - Displaying clocks with second hands near hand washing facilities (to self-time 20 seconds) - Replacing electric hand dryers with a supply of paper towels (as hand dryers can promote the production of air borne droplets) - Clean areas thoroughly after every use, including divider screens - Making sure clothes are placed in lockers rather than left exposed in open areas - Allowing staff to take their lunches individually in their cars - Encouraging the use of disposable cups at water fountains rather than drinking water straight from the fountain - Providing hand sanitisers and making sure that everyone uses them as good practice - Offering barrier cream, particularly to staff who suffer from Dermatitis - Compiling a check list of all frequently touched surfaces (e.g. handles, bin lids, door knobs and microwaves) and ensuring that these are all cleaned frequently - Ensuring that all safety screens are the correct size and height and also that they do not obstruct access or regress - Ensure that all in-cab screens comply with DVA standards (including the Motor Vehicle Construction and Use Regulations 1989) Regulation 37 states that such screens they should not splinter, should not impair a drivers view, should not cause glare. Also that their framing should not obscure windows or mirrors or interfere with any safety feature such as airbags. They should not be modified and should be installed by professional trade-people. <p>JS enquired about the use of air conditioning in vehicles fitted with such screens and MR indicated that the advice was still to keep windows open for air conditioning and cooling of inside the cab.</p> <p>AC enquired about staff having to share vehicles in very rare instances (e.g. dropping off a company vehicle to the mechanics and getting a lift back to the workplace). MR advised that if the vehicle allowed, the 2m distancing zone should be adhered to and where this couldn't occur, then face masks must be worn by both members of staff in the vehicle.</p> <p>MR highlighted a recent safety alert from Highways England (on 27 April 2020) around the alcohol content in hand sanitisers – where someone had touched a metal surface</p> | |
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| <p>7.6</p> <p>7.7</p> <p>7.8</p> <p>7.9</p> <p>7.10</p> <p>7.11</p> | <p>after cleaning their hands with alcohol based sanitiser and that they suffered first and second degree burns as a result. (Due to static electricity, the vapour from the hand sanitiser ignited with an almost invisible flame on both hands). He stressed the importance of ensuring hands were dried properly.</p> <p>MR recommended putting measures in place, should a member of staff display Covid-19 symptoms. This could include designating an isolation room for testing staff and bagging equipment and holding it for 72 hours. The person taking temperature measurements should be wearing all necessary PPE, such as a face mask, visor, apron and gloves.</p> <p>MR advised caution with taking basic temperature checks as they could display a false positive or false negative. If a high temperature reading is displayed, this could be used as a trigger to take further temperature measurements from the ear.</p> <p>WD highlighted that a fellow employee had failed a temperature check because they had been waiting in a warm vehicle beforehand.</p> <p>JK also raised the issue that people could take paracetamol in order to lower their temperatures themselves. MF advised that employers should be mindful of this.</p> <p>MR also advised that employers should be careful about encouraging face coverings for their staff, as they do not offer the same protection as face masks, particularly for the wearer. The HSENI are not currently advising the use of face coverings within the workplace.</p> <p>On a final note, MR advised that a number of organisations were stockpiling waste. And that this has the potential to generate heat and start a fire. He recommended that everyone should keep an eye on this and consider conducting temperature checks.</p> | |
| <p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p> <p>8.4</p> <p>8.5</p> | <p><u>Any other business</u></p> <p><u>Toilets</u> JS sought advice from the HSENI on the use of toilets within the workplace, particularly if they were shared facilities. MR advises that sites could be marshalled to make sure staff were washing their hands before entering toilet. Also that frequently touched surfaces such as door handles and cubicle doors should be cleaned often.</p> <p>AC said that Recon have a nominated staff member responsible for frequent cleaning of the toilet facilities as part of their day-to-day work duties. They have a knapsack containing appropriate cleaning products and use these to clean the toilet facilities several times throughout the day.</p> <p>GB also highlighted that there are some good companies in operation who could come in and conduct deep cleans of toilet facilities.</p> <p><u>Pod Working</u> DD sought views from the group on pod working. It was highlighted that if 2m social distancing was in force with all of the staff members involved, then this reduced the risk of transmission of Covid-19 and that it could work well, rather than keeping staff in isolation from one another.</p> <p>WD highlighted the importance of pod working for staff members' mental health and well-being and also for the transition back to the workplace from homeworking.</p> | |

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| 8.6 | PG said that in Atlas World, they have around 75% of the office staff back into the workplace and that they had found that shared workspaces were important for social interaction and staff welfare. They have put a number of measures in place to accommodate this, such as screens, partitions and staggered breaks etc. | |
| 8.7 | <p><u>Face coverings</u></p> <p>GB highlighted that USEL (a local social enterprise) is producing face masks for £2.50 each. He showed a sample to the group and said that they have plenty in stock should anyone want to contact their sales team. The contact for USEL is Karen at info@usel.co.uk. They can make the masks into packs of whatever number is required. BACS transfer is their preferred method of payment, but cash is also accepted. PG asked if a filter could be inserted in them. GB advised that there was no filter insert but that the masks were reusable and washable. DD said that they issue each of their staff with two such masks so that they can be used in rotation.</p> | |
| 8.8 | <p><u>MS Teams</u></p> <p>DD has set up a MS Teams group with Rachel and Jim for the WISHNI group. He has added useful documents, including WISH Minutes and good practice guides. If any members would like to be added to the group, they should contact RH.</p> | |
| 8.9 | JK thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their valuable input and support for WISHNI. | |
| 9. | Date of next meeting: To be confirmed. | |
| Signed | <i>J Stephens</i> | |
| Date | 23 rd June 2020 | |