

IPAF keeps instructors up to date

IPAF instructors listen on as Martin Holder of the UK's HSE explains some of the factors that influence the life of harnesses and lanyards.



Concerns about the correct use of harnesses on Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPS) were an important and contentious issue tackled by this year's Professional Development Seminar (PDS) for IPAF's training instructors. Around 140 of them listened in on a range of presentations given at the event, including those by George Grundy of harness producer Spanset, and Martin Holder, a senior technical advisor with the UK's Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Mr Holder covered recent research on the degradation of safety harnesses and lanyards and explained how to spot telltale signs of damage from UV light, grit and dirt in time to prevent failure. His update on the developments in the new Work at Height Regulations, set to become law by early 2005, was also clearly of great interest. All instructors attending the PDS were also given

the chance to win a pair of Premiership match tickets as IPAF announced the launch of a major new campaign to promote awareness of correct operator training. The campaign offers construction site managers and industrial safety officers the chance of winning Premier League football match tickets when checking that platform operators hold valid PAL Cards.



Michael Haslam

After the speeches, the winning instructor, Michael Haslam from IPAF training centre, Charles Wilson, was presented with two football match tickets and said, "Actually, I'm not such a football fan as my dad, but his team, Bolton Wanderers id playing West Bromwich Albion at the Hawthorns in the next few weeks so I'm hoping we'll see the game."

CAP course dates issued

The dates of IPAF's next Competent Assessed Person (CAP) courses are 26 October and 8 December at Rapid Platforms in Bishops Strotford and 17 November at Uplift in Wakefield.

Course content and presentation are continually fine-tuned to meet changing needs.

Earlier in the year, the courses were made more interactive in

a switch from the previous instructional approach.

The sessions now include group activities, question papers and practical sessions.

The CAP courses contribute to improved maintenance and inspection techniques and bring a key benefit, namely the independent, third party assessment provided by IPAF. As a specialist in access equipment, IPAF's authoritative view that an individual is competent to undertake mandatory 'thorough examinations', carries considerable weight.

Full details are available from Eleanor Morrison on:-

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More PAL cards call for more staff

Sue Kitching (pictured) is the latest recruit to IPAF's 'behind the scenes' staff at Milnthorpe. Whilst the volume of



PAL cards issued grows relentlessly, the time between training and card issue has to be maintained at 48 hours. Also joining

the Milnthorpe team is Teresa Carlino from Switzerland who is on a six-month work experience project. Her fluency in German, French, Italian and Spanish, as well as English is proving invaluable with the increasing number of international enquiries.

An important part of Mrs Kitching's work

is to answer occasional urgent requests to replace lost cards. This is a potential disaster for the cardholder that may be barred from site until he/she can provide proof of training.

"When a card is reported lost, security is just as much an issue as is speed of replacement," says Mrs Kitching, stressing the importance of ensuring that the card has indeed been lost and that the caller is a genuine card holder. "IPAF's security and verification systems really help us in this by allowing us to complete the necessary checks and get the replacement process underway."

Even so, the message is still "keep your PAL Card safe; it is at least as valuable; if not more so than your credit cards!"

Hydraulic platform standard emerges

The standard EN 1777 'Hydraulic platforms (HPs) for fire fighting and rescue services. Safety requirements and testing' is finally about to emerge from the mists of time.

Following the formal vote last May, ratification will follow. Dennis Ashworth, secretary to the committee responsible (CEN TC 192 WG 4, Task Group 4.3), is confident that the standard will be published by the end of the year.

Development of EN 1777 has in many ways paralleled EN280. Load sensing has been an issue in EN 1777 and a second stage, which considers the methodology of EN954, covering the safety-related elements of the control systems, is recognised as necessary.

The second stage will also re-consider the need for load control on HPs with a single rated load.



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