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HSE turns to IPAF to help deliver work at height regs



Ian Greenwood of HSE.

IPAF gladly accepted a challenge to help industry work safely at height set by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at the recent IPAF Access Summit, held at Heathrow last month. The challenge was presented by the head of HSE's falls from height team, Ian Greenwood, who, during his speech at the event, called on

IPAF appoints new president

IPAF has named Pinguely Haulotte president, Pierre Saubot, as its new president, following the resignation of Peter Bennett who, after serving one year of his two-year term, has departed from the access industry. Saubot, who moves from the vice-president position at IPAF, was originally due to take over as president next year.



IPAF's new president, Pierre Saubot.

Speaking at the Summit, Saubot said that he looked forward to developing an even stronger international influence for IPAF, and to working towards world-wide harmonisation of regulations and standards. Indeed, a key focus of the speakers at this year's IPAF Access Summit was UK Work at Height Regulations and the regulatory developments in North America and Germany. ■

IPAF and its members to use its expertise and experience to help all industries improve safety for those who work at height.

This cornerstone message set much of the detail of other presentations at the Summit, which included those given by IPAF managing director, Tim Whiteman, Paul Adorian, PAC managing director, Denny Eckstine, executive vice president of AWPT Inc in the US, Neil Feben, divisional commander and brigade head of safety at the London Fire Brigade and group business development officer for Lavendon, Mike Evans, into context and offered a good indicator of the route that the HSE is taking as part of its overall strategy to reduce deaths and injuries caused by falls from height.

Greenwood was also keen to draw attention to HSE's 'goal-setting' approach with regards to the new Work at Height Regulations (WAHR), which reflected its stance that the detailed, prescriptive, rule-book route, will not be adhered to this time around. The new Regulations are intended as a 'high level' document that will need detailed interpretation, a role that Greenwood expects IPAF and its members to assist in implementing.

It is this detail in need of interpretation, however, that Adorian, in his own speech, referred to as a potential 'Achilles' heel of most legislation, regulation and standards in circulation today. Reinforcing his point, Adorian cited divergences between the EN280 standard and the draft Regulations on toe-board height and guard rail separation. But it was not the few millimetres discrepancy that was the issue, rather the potential of the inconsistency to undermine the fabric of the legislation.

Exactly what changes will be made to the draft document to form the final Regulations, expected to be put before ministers later in the year, remains to be seen, but Greenwood gave a clear signal that the HSE sees the Regulations as the 'high-level' framework.

An extreme example came from Feben, who is also responsible for the London Fire Brigade's

WAHR, who said that in some aspects the Brigade would simply not be able to comply with complicated legislation. He then went on to outline the exceptional steps that his specialist industry takes to ensure safety at height. "Never mind risk assessment," said Feben, "the Brigade cuts risk off at root level with a culture of risk management based on equipment, training, procedures and supervision."

Other industries of course do not have quite the same approach and IPAF said that along with its members, it is looking forward to helping them develop the safest and most effective approach to work at height.

The draft WAHR should have been implemented by on July 19 this year, but Greenwood highlighted that between Autumn time and the end of the year is a more realistic outlook. "There are still many issues that HSE does not have the answers to," he said. ■



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Record fund raising

GUEST speaker at this year's IPAF Luncheon, Sir Bobby Charlton, helped IPAF raise an impressive £8,007, by donating two signed footballs at this year's raffle

A further highlight was the surprise donation of a Skyjack 3219 micro scissor lift by Skyjack UK. Despite stiff competition and tough bidding from the UK access rental industry during the raffle, Geoff Till Access was pipped at the post at the last minute by a perfectly timed winning bid of £6000 from Harry McArdle of Height for Hire/Easi Up Lifts of Ireland.

Funds raised year will go to the charity, Dream Flight, which provides critically ill children with a 'holiday of a lifetime'. ■



Sir Bobby Charlton shares a toast with IPAF managing director, Tim Whiteman.

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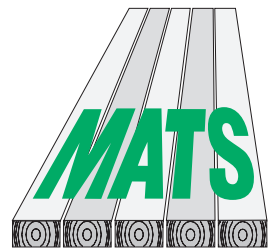
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