

PRESS RELEASE

4 August 2011



Construction Industry calls for Health and Safety Simplification

Leading bodies the Construction Industry Council (CIC) and the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) have today called for simplification of health and safety regulation to help improve productivity in the construction industry, which accounts for around 6% of Britain's economic output.

In a joint consultation response to the call for evidence from Professor Lofstedt's review of health and safety legislation, the bodies say that while they see no need for the abolishment of any legislation, some regulations could be merged or simplified to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and burdens on the construction industry.

A key concern is the misinterpretation of the Approved Codes of Practice (ACoPs) - which provides more detail on the regulations. CIC and ICE say that uncertainty of how to apply the regulations has led to over-implementation of safety procedures within the industry, especially among smaller businesses that make up a significant proportion of the industry and for whom the extra administration is an unwelcome burden.

Chair of the ICE health and safety expert panel and joint ICE / CIC working panel Mike Battman said: "The construction industry has one of the highest accident and fatality rates in the UK; however the current guidance does not sufficiently take into account its unique requirements. We strongly believe that a simplified, more tailored approach – with clarification around specific requirements for our industry – would help this crucial industry be more productive, and ultimately be of more value to our long-term economic growth."

The group also calls for clarity around the principle of what is 'reasonably practicable' which was introduced to guide duty holders as to what level of risk assessment and prevention they must implement. However gross uncertainty of how this principle applies, especially to construction designers, is undermining the efficiency and productivity of the industry.

Peter Caplehorn, Chairman of the CIC Health and Safety Committee and working panel member said: "In a time when industry should be looking for efficiency and added value this uncertainty is an unacceptable and wasteful use of resource, hampering progress on vital infrastructure projects. The legislation urgently needs to be re-assessed to enable industry to execute its legal responsibilities effectively, better preventing accidents and ill-health but also freeing up significant

resource and time which can then be focused on improving project outcomes and driving down costs.”

Full list of CIC and ICE recommendations:

1. All regulations and ACoPs need to be regularly reviewed with input from professionals working in that field
2. In places, Regulations and, more generally, ACOPs need to be simplified and/or their requirements clarified to reduce opportunities for misinterpretation - with input from professionals working in that field.
3. Benefit could be obtained by consolidating a number of regulations and in avoiding ‘amendment’ regulations.
4. An urgent review is required to bring improved definition to ‘reasonable practicability’
5. A specific review is required to consider the application of ‘reasonable practicability’ as applied to construction designers
6. We do not believe that inappropriate litigation or compensation is related to the current regulations.

Please download the full consultation response here: <http://www.ice.org.uk/Information-resources/Document-Library/ICE-and-CIC-Response-to-Lofstedt-Review-of-Health->

Ends

Notes to the editor

1. CIC is the representative forum for the professional bodies, research organisations and specialist trade associations in the construction industry. It provides a single voice for professionals in all sectors of the built environment through its collective membership of 500,000 individual professionals and 25,000 firms of construction consultants.
2. Media contacts:
CIC: Rita Courtney, Marketing & Communications Manager,
t: 020 7399 7407, e: rcourtney@cic.org.uk
ICE: Emily Beadon, Media Relations Manager,
T: 020 7665 2261 or 07917 215 955, e: Emily.beadon@ice.org.uk