



January 2009

**HSE Shattered Lives Campaign** – the campaign focuses on slips, trips and falls. A major cause of injuries in Guernsey workplaces. Something can be done about this problem. Go to [www.hse.gov.uk/shatteredlives/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/shatteredlives/index.htm) for more information.

**First Aid at Work** – are you up-to-date with your training? Check our [www.gosha.org.uk](http://www.gosha.org.uk) website links for training providers in Guernsey and read the practical guidance and information at [www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid](http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid). The UK regulations should be used as good practice in implementing the requirements of Guernsey law.

**Guernsey HSE Downloads/Videos** – lots of useful information is held by our local HSE and you can have access to some useful downloads and videos - details summarised at [www.hse.guernsey.gg](http://www.hse.guernsey.gg). You can phone for information or to borrow videos on 234567

**Agriculture – enough is enough campaign** – in the UK, many people are injured or killed whilst working on farms. We should continue to be proactive in avoiding similar incidents in Guernsey. [www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/assessment/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/assessment/index.htm) will help you.

**Vehicles at Work Checklist** – we have covered safety connected with the use of motor vehicles in previous newsletters. Here is a useful checklist you may find helpful in managing vehicles for which you are responsible - [www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/checklist/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/checklist/index.htm)

**Back pain** – it's a real problem in our workplaces - take a look at [www.hse.gov.uk/business/topics-backs.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/business/topics-backs.htm)

**Cleaning** – if you are responsible for employees who undertake cleaning tasks, please read the guidance at [www.hse.gov.uk/cleaning/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/cleaning/index.htm) and don't forget the range of leaflets and written guidance available for those whose first language is not English.

**Waste Disposal** - thankfully we are all becoming more environmentally aware and many workplace recycling initiatives are in place. Please take time to consider the suitability of all waste/recycling storage areas to keep risks associated with them to a minimum (consider those who could be affected by stored items, look at fire hazards, clear waste as soon as practicable and do not allow it to accumulate in large quantities unless in a suitable storage facility) and please spare a thought for those who collect the waste.

**Myth of the Month** – “if you call the HSE you'll end up with an unwanted inspection” – this is simply not the case. If you've got a query or a concern, just ask (tel 234567). You've got nothing to lose and it could help your business!

**Managing risks to skin** - Many materials used at work (even in offices) can affect the skin or can pass through the skin and cause diseases elsewhere in the body. This book provides practical advice to help you prevent these disabling diseases. It covers, the protective role of the skin, ill health arising from skin exposure, recognising potential skin exposure in your workplace and managing skin exposure to prevent disease – go to [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg262.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg262.htm)

**Dock Safety** – work for many people in Guernsey will involve an occasional visit to our docks and you may like to be aware of the dedicated dock safety guidance at [www.hse.gov.uk/docks/guidance.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/docks/guidance.htm)

**Diversity** – some guidance covering age, disability, migrant workers and gender has been issued. It can be found at [www.hse.gov.uk/diversity/vulnerable.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/diversity/vulnerable.htm)

**HSE Podcasts** – provide helpful guidance, easily accessed from your PC – they can be downloaded at [www.hse.gov.uk/podcasts/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/podcasts/)

## GOSHA news

- **Managing Health & Safety Briefing** – the briefing scheduled for 12 November 2008 had to be cancelled due to lack of support but we will offer the course again in March or April 2009.
- **Practical site visits** – if you have any suggestions, please let us know. We hope to visit the Guernsey Brewery in February. Details will be advertised.
- **Next Open Meeting – 29 January 2009** – our next meeting will consider the benefits of Employee Assistance Schemes. We are grateful to Felicity Quevatre for agreeing to talk about this important topic.
- **Website** – we hope you continue to find [www.gosha.org.uk](http://www.gosha.org.uk) helpful. It contains lots of practical help including the legally required Guernsey H&S law poster (see the links page) and please display a copy in your workplace. Our website is now managed by Simon Welch.
- **GOSHA window stickers** – are a great way to make others aware of our association and highlight your concern for workplace health and safety in Guernsey. Please ask any member of the committee for yours.
- **Committee Meeting Minutes** – are displayed on [www.gosha.org.uk](http://www.gosha.org.uk), so you can keep up to date with all we are doing.
- **Raising issues/training needs etc** - our next committee meeting takes place on 4<sup>th</sup> March – if you would like to raise any matter, please contact a member of the committee (details at [www.gosha.org.uk](http://www.gosha.org.uk)).
- **5th Anniversary Dinner** – GOSHA reaches the grand age of 5 this year and we are planning a dinner on 26 November, which will include presenting health & safety awards. Details will be sent later in the year but please put the date in your diary.
- **Motor Fleet Management** – we would like to thank Hannah Beacom, MD of Island Coachways for delivering an excellent presentation to our AGM last November. It was interesting, informative and inspiring.

## Some thoughts from Paul Craig of Guernsey Electricity

### Noise

We all recognise that noise at work has the potential to be an issue, employers have certain legal responsibilities, to inform and protect all employees from over exposure to a noisy environment, however ultimately a business has no control over what we as individuals do in our spare time, and noise induced hearing loss is an accumulation of over exposure to noise over time, so clearly as individuals we need to be aware of protecting our ears from noise both at work and in our spare time.

How many of us ride motorcycles? How many realise the need for wearing ear protection. It is well recognised (journal of the Royal Society of Medicine) that excessive noise caused by both motorcycles engines and excessive wind noise from helmets, will cause noise induced hearing loss, and recommends the use of ear protection.

Although the incidence of noise induced hearing loss (NHIL) has noticeably increased for us 'baby boomers' due to the loud rock music we apparently listened to in our teens and early twenties. Bands like Motorhead, Thin Lizzy, Deep Purple and the likes were competing to have the loudest set. And at the end of the evening you emerged from the venue with ears still ringing, this was tinnitus, an early indicator that your ears have suffered. Now, being one of these older (and grumpier) people I recognise the damage that can be caused.

Over recent times development in the music industry has been huge and the availability of personal music has progressed from tapes to CDs to MP3s. The prevalence of MP3 players amongst young people is a real concern for me.

These “toys” sported by most teenagers are capable of providing up to 120dB directly into the ear canal, at these levels significant damage can occur. Although walkmans or other portable CDs have been around for a while now, with the MP3 player it is different. The batteries last much longer, and the device can hold almost what seems like an infinite playlist, these combined; allow the user to be able to listen uninterrupted for hours on end.



According to a recent study of teenagers, only 8% stated that they thought loss of hearing was ‘a very big problem’. This was in comparison to 50% for sexually transmitted disease and 47% for drug and alcohol abuse. And although 61% had indicated that they had experienced some sort of hearing problem after attending a rock concert, none seemed terribly interested in the possible side effects. Apparently listening to loud music can become addictive and is recognised as LMDD (loud music dependency disorder), this was borne out of a study by an American audiologist at Northeastern University, it showed that 9% of teenagers had similar scores to substance abusers in a test which would normally be used to identify alcohol dependency

Further research has shown that 12.5% of 6-19 yr old has NHIL, and this number is increasing.

What can be done? Obviously turning down the volume to level 6 on an ipod will reduce the intensity of the signal, indeed many European countries are pressing for a limit on the devices of 90dB. As parents you can limit the volume of the ipod (with parental control), instructions available at <http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=303414>.

Limit the amount of time listening to no more than 1 hour per day. Don't increase the volume to drown out surrounding background noise. And lastly if anyone else can hear the sound from your ipod, then it is probably too loud. If your ears have been exposed to 2hrs of loud music (100dB) then allow them at least 16 hours or more to recover.

Getting this message across to teenagers is difficult, preaching to them does “fall on deaf ears” usually they are resistant to warnings about loud music, however protecting their hearing is every bit as important as protecting them from drug and alcohol abuse.

Teenagers are truly optimistic and when pushed to answer why they ‘aren't bothered’ by potentially losing their hearing, their answer is that they have faith in the medical profession to provide a cure. This blind faith may have some value as much research is being done and scientists for Deafness Research UK are optimistic that it may be possible to reverse the damage done to hearing, however this remains some way off. So it may be prudent to remind teenagers that this hearing damage done by listening to loud music especially via an ipod is irreversible and will only get worse as they get older.

Paul Craig, Health and Safety Manager, Guernsey Electricity