



## Construction Industry Under Fire for 'Unacceptable Performance' in Refurbishment Sector

During February 2008, the HSE carried out over 1000 spot checks on refurbishment sites across Great Britain as part of its rolling inspection programme targeting poor performing sectors in the construction industry.

Geoffrey Podger, the HSE's Chief Executive said: "Over one in three construction sites visited put the lives of workers at risk and operated so far below the acceptable standard that our inspectors served 395 enforcement notices and stopped work on 30% of the sites",

"We stopped work on site immediately during approximately 300 inspections because we felt there was a real possibility that life would be lost or ruined through serious injury," Podger added.

"Our inspectors were appalled at the blatant disregard for basic health and safety precautions on refurbishment sites across Great Britain.

"HSE will not tolerate negligence or poor safety standards on construction sites. It is totally unacceptable that so many lives have been put at risk and we will take all action necessary to protect workers, including closing sites and prosecuting those responsible.

"The construction industry should take ownership of this issue and do more to tackle poor standards on sites."

The HSE's construction division reported that basic safety precautions were being flouted and issues such as work at height remain a huge concern.

Over half of the enforcement action taken during this inspection initiative was against dangerous work at height, which last year led to the death of 23 workers.

Last year over half of the workers who died on construction sites worked in refurbishment, and the number of deaths on refurbishment sites rose by 61%.

During the spot checks, HSE inspectors looked at whether:

- Jobs that involved working at height had been identified and properly planned to ensure that appropriate precautions were in place.
- Equipment was correctly installed / assembled, inspected and maintained and used properly.
- Sites were well organised, to avoid trips and falls.
- Walkways and stairs were free from obstructions.
- Work areas were clear of unnecessary materials and waste.
- The work force was made aware of risk control measures.