

# HSE targets small sites in 2013 drive

Construction chief says annual inspection push will focus on R&M while defending fees scheme

## EXCLUSIVE

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The Health and Safety Executive is targeting approximately 3,000 construction sites for its annual inspection drive, focusing on smaller sites and problem sub-sectors.

Speaking to CN ahead of unveiling the initiative to the wider press, HSE construction chief Philip White said this year's effort would be "predominantly aimed at the refurbishment, repair and maintenance projects", as well as falls from height, fragile materials and head protection.

Half of all fatal accidents occur in these sectors, he added.

Mr White said the inspection push, which will last for a month, will look mainly at smaller projects but also larger refurbishment projects.

"We won't hesitate to take action if we find poor or unsafe practices that are endangering not just workers but also members of the public," he said.

The annual month-long site

inspection push has now been running for seven years and last year involved the inspection of 3,237 sites and 4,080 contractors.

Sites that were found to have practices that put workers at risk amounted to 581, with 870 enforcement notices issued and 603 sites being stopped altogether.

This will be the first such drive to take place under the new Fees for Intervention regime, which charges contractors found to be in breach of safety rules at a rate of £124 per hour for the costs of investigation.

Mr White stressed that inspectors did not have targets for cost recovery. "We're not going out generating money; we're dealing with the breaches in the law as we find them," he said.

"If they find there's material breach on that site, if it's very serious, an enforcement notice will be served and that's a matter that's chargeable."

Last year there were a total of



# 870

Enforcement notices issued in last year's inspection drive

49 construction fatalities, and Mr

White said the industry looked like following a similar trend this year.

"Over the years we've seen a very slow and incremental improvement," he said. "Hopefully we can see that again."

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## INSPECTION FOCUS

The HSE's month-long inspection push will predominantly focus on several types of work and a number of critical safety issues.

Those key areas are:

- Smaller construction sites
- Refurbishment projects
- Repair and maintenance work
- Workers operating at height
- The use of fragile materials
- The use of head protection

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