



101.1.2:

& CARPENTRY & JOINERY.

The roles of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

This book is designed to support your carpentry and joinery studies across the 6219-06 Construction Skills Qualification.



Information
at a glance



Small
incremental
learning



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further
resources



Test your
knowledge

James Rix



City &
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Before you get started.

Before You Start.

This book will help you learn about the **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** — the organisation that helps keep people safe at work. It uses short text, clear pictures, and simple examples to show what the HSE does in construction.

What This Book Will Help You Do.

- Understand **who the HSE are**.
- Learn **what the HSE does** to protect workers.
- See **how the HSE checks sites and investigates accidents**.
- Read **real examples** of HSE actions.
- Know **why the HSE is important** for everyone on site.

Learning Outcome Overview.

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

✓ State the role of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

You will learn what the HSE is, what it does, and how it helps keep construction workers safe.

What You Will Learn

- **Who the HSE are** and why they exist.
- **How the HSE checks construction sites** to make sure safety rules are followed.
- **What actions the HSE can take** when something is unsafe.
- **How the HSE investigates accidents** and gathers evidence.
- **Why the HSE is important** for protecting workers and preventing harm.

Who are the HSE?.

The **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** is the organisation that helps keep people safe at work in the UK. They make sure that workplaces — including construction sites — follow the law and protect workers from harm.

What the HSE Is

- A **government organisation**
- Independent from construction companies
- Focused on **keeping workers safe**
- Works across **all industries**, not just construction



What do they do?..

The HSE has an important job: they help keep people safe at work. They do this by checking workplaces, giving advice, and taking action when something is unsafe.

HSE Actions:

- **Visits construction sites** to check safety.
- **Talks to workers and employers** about how to stay safe.
- **Looks for hazards** that could hurt people.
- **Checks equipment and PPE** to make sure it is safe to use.
- **Investigates accidents** to find out what happened.
- **Gives safety advice** to help stop accidents in the future.
- **Takes action** when rules are broken.



How they keep construction workers safe?.

- Give **advice** on how to fix the problem.
- Issue an **Improvement Notice** (the company must make things safer).
- Issue a **Prohibition Notice** (the work must stop immediately).
- **Prosecute** a company or person in court if laws are broken.



HSE Case Study Files.

The next pages show **real examples** of how the **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** works to keep people safe on construction sites. Each case study tells a short story about what happened, what the HSE did, and what was learned.

Why Case Studies Are Important

Case studies help you:

- See how the HSE works in real life.
- Understand what can go wrong on site.
- Learn how accidents can be prevented.
- Discover what actions the HSE can take.
- Think about how you would stay safe in the same situation.

What You Will Do

For each case study:

- 1. Read the short story** about what happened.
- 2. Look at the picture** to see the situation.
- 3. Answer the questions** to show what you've learned.
- 4. Think about how the HSE helped** and what could be done differently next time.

Remember

The HSE doesn't just punish people — it helps everyone learn from mistakes and improve safety for the future.

Case Study 1.

Case Study 1 – Unsafe Scaffolding

What Happened.

A small construction team was replacing roof tiles on a two-storey building. When the HSE inspector arrived, they noticed several serious problems with the scaffolding:

- **No guardrails** to stop workers falling
- **No toe boards**, meaning tools could fall onto people below
- **Loose planks** that could shift under someone's feet
- **No safe access ladder**, so workers were climbing up the frame

These issues created an immediate risk of a fall from height — one of the biggest causes of injury in construction.

What the HSE Did

Because the situation was dangerous, the inspector issued a **Prohibition Notice**.



Why the HSE Took Action

The HSE acted because:

- Workers were at **serious risk of falling**
- The scaffolding did **not meet legal safety standards**
- There was **no safe access** to the work area
- Loose materials could have **injured people below**

Stopping the work prevented a potential life-changing accident.

What We Learn

- Falls from height are one of the **leading causes of injury** in construction.
- Scaffolding must always be **properly built, inspected, and recorded**.
- The HSE can **stop work immediately** when there is a danger to life.
- A competent person must check scaffolding **every 7 days** and after any changes.



Case Study 2.

Case Study 2 – PPE Failure.

What Happened.

A small team was cutting paving slabs using a petrol-powered saw. The HSE inspector noticed that one worker was **not wearing eye protection or a dust mask**, even though the saw was producing thick dust and flying debris.

Another worker had **ear defenders around his neck** instead of over his ears. The site had PPE available, but it wasn't being used properly.



What the HSE Did.

The inspector issued an **Improvement Notice** requiring the employer to:

- Provide a **PPE training session** for all staff.
- Ensure PPE is **worn correctly** at all times.
- Keep a **record of PPE checks** and replacements.

Work was allowed to continue, but only after the training and checks were completed.

Why the HSE Took Action.

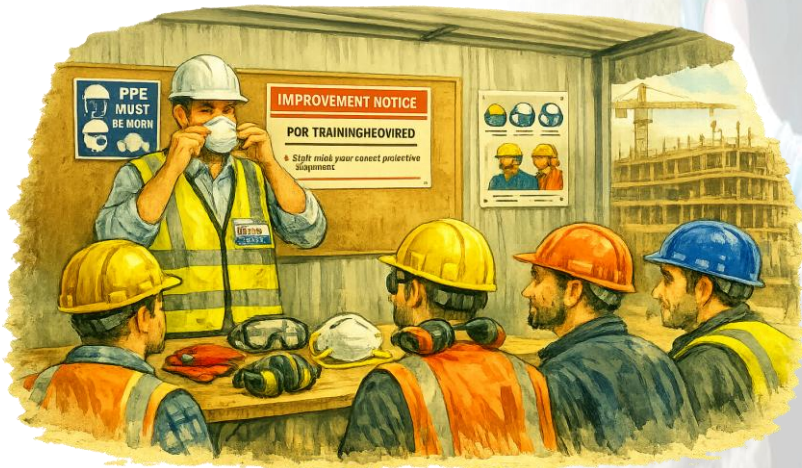
The HSE acted because:

- Workers were **at risk of eye injury and lung damage**.
- PPE was **available but ignored**.
- Employers must make sure PPE is **used properly and maintained**.

The goal was to **improve safety behaviour**, not stop work completely.

What We Learn.

- PPE must be **worn correctly** every time.
- Employers must **train and supervise** workers in PPE use.
- The HSE can issue an **Improvement Notice** when safety standards need raising.
- PPE protects against **long-term health problems** like hearing loss and lung disease.

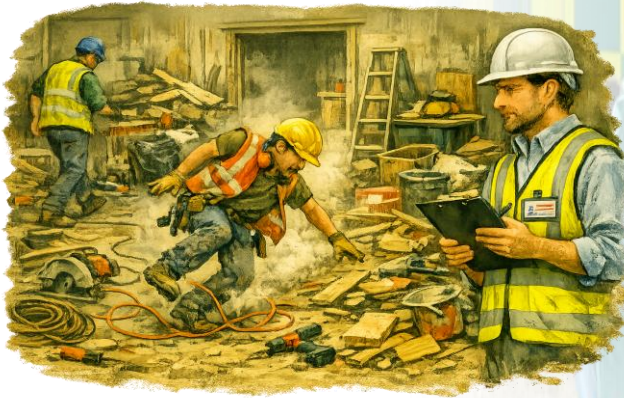


Case Study 3.

Case Study 3 – Poor Housekeeping

What Happened

During a routine inspection, the HSE inspector visited a small refurbishment site.



- They found that the work area was **cluttered with off-cuts, cables, and tools** scattered across the floor.
- A worker had already **tripped over a loose extension lead**, narrowly avoiding a fall from a low platform.
- There were **no clear walkways**, and waste materials were piling up near the exit.

What the HSE Did

The inspector issued an **Improvement Notice** requiring the site manager to:

- Clear all walkways and keep them **free from obstruction**.
- Provide **designated waste bins** and tidy areas for tools.
- Introduce a **daily site clean-up routine**.
- Train workers on **good housekeeping practices**.
- Work continued, but only after the site was reorganised and made safe.

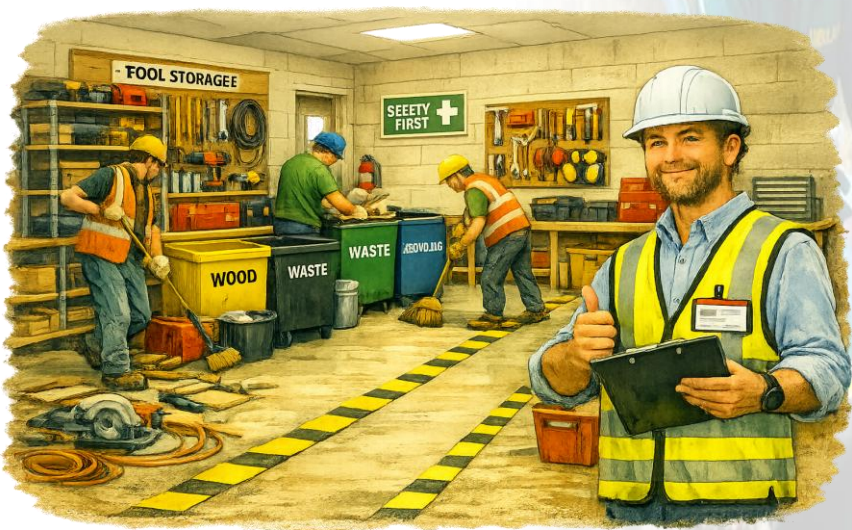
Why the HSE Took Action

The HSE acted because:

- Poor housekeeping is a **common cause of slips, trips, and falls**.
- Blocked routes can **delay evacuation** in an emergency.
- Good organisation helps **prevent accidents and improve efficiency**.

What We Learn

- Keep walkways **clear and tidy** at all times.
- Store tools and materials **in designated areas**.
- Dispose of waste **regularly and safely**.
- Good housekeeping shows **professionalism and care** for safety.



Practice Test.

Q1: What is the main role of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)?

- ☐ A. To punish workers who break rules
- ☐ B. To protect people by enforcing safety laws and promoting good practice
- ☐ C. To manage building projects for local councils
- ☐ D. To provide insurance for construction companies

Q2: Which type of notice stops work immediately when there is a serious risk to life?

- ☐ A. Improvement Notice
- ☐ B. Inspection Report
- ☐ C. Prohibition Notice
- ☐ D. Safety Certificate

Q3: In Case Study 2, what was the main issue the HSE inspector found?

- ☐ A. Unsafe scaffolding
- ☐ B. Poor housekeeping
- ☐ C. PPE not being worn correctly
- ☐ D. Electrical faults

Glossary of Terms.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

The national organisation that enforces health and safety law in the UK and helps prevent work-related injury and illness.

Inspector

A trained HSE officer who visits workplaces to check safety standards and investigate accidents or complaints.

Enforcement

The process of making sure health and safety laws are followed. Inspectors can issue notices or take legal action if rules are broken.

Improvement Notice

A legal document requiring an employer to fix safety problems within a set time. Work can continue while improvements are made.

Prohibition Notice

A legal order that stops work immediately when there is a serious risk of injury or death.

Investigation

An official inquiry carried out by the HSE after an accident, complaint, or report of unsafe conditions.

Compliance

Following health and safety laws, regulations, and guidance correctly.

Duty Holder

The person or organisation responsible for making sure work is carried out safely — often the employer or site manager.

Risk Assessment

A process used to identify hazards, decide who might be harmed, and put control measures in place.

Control Measures

Actions or equipment used to reduce risk, such as PPE, barriers, or safe systems of work.

Prosecution

Legal action taken by the HSE against individuals or companies who break health and safety law.

Workplace Inspection

A formal visit by an HSE inspector to check that safety standards are being met.

Legislation

The laws and regulations that set out how health and safety must be managed at work.

Safe System of Work

A planned and organised method of carrying out a task safely, based on risk assessment findings.

Compliance Officer

A person within a company who helps ensure that health and safety rules are followed.



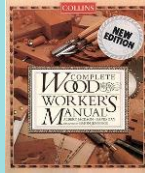
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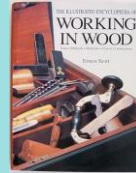
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/new-health-safety.html>

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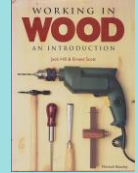
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbK8p1tKxYI>

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<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/BTEC-Specialist-Qualifications/Health-and-Safety-in-a-Construction-Environment/Specification-Issue-2.pdf>



<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/resources/law.docx>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/resources/toolboxtalks.docx>

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Other Books in the series.



This series of books accompanies the learning materials developed for the unit 101: Introduction to Health and Safety in Construction. They include:

- 101.1.1: The Importance of Health and Safety in Construction
- 101.1.2: The role of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- 101.1.3: Main Regulations
- 101.1.4: Roles and Responsibilities
- 101.2.1: Common Causes of Accidents in Construction
- 101.2.2: Risk
- 101.2.3: Hazard
- 101.2.4: Risk Assessments
- 101.3.1: Safety Sign Categories
- 101.3.2: Safety Signs
- 101.3.3: COSHH Safety Signs
- 101.4.1: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



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