



NEWSLETTER

MATS Group – What’s it all about?

The Mast and Tower Safety Group is an industry forum for owners and operators of masts and towers in the UK used for broadcast and telecommunications.

Our aim is to create industry-specific guidance aimed at operators, contractors and suppliers who work in the industry.

Our main focus is on safe working at height on rooftops and structures and radio-frequency safety. Guidance on associated activities such as construction is also included.

We are not recreating or rewriting requirements already within legislation; we are ensuring that there is a common approach across all infrastructure owners in the UK.



MATS members include:

- Airwave Solutions
- Arqiva
- Babcock
- BT
- CTIL
- EE
- KCOM Group
- MoD
- NATS
- National Crime Agency
- Network Rail Telecom
- O2
- Shere Consulting
- Wireless Infrastructure Group
- Vodafone

This newsletter is intended to provide an update on recently published guidance, current issues, and what’s on the horizon.

CDM Regulations – are you up to speed?

We have all been trying to understand the best ways for our organisations to implement CDM 2015 over the last few months.

Without an ACOP and with much of the guidance written around traditional large single construction sites it has not been easy.

The MATS Group has focused on issues specific to our industry in relation to construction work on masts and towers. A new guidance note, GN-003, is now available on the MATS Group website.

Issues on which we have provided guidance include:

- What activities do we consider should be classified as construction
- Who is best placed to adopt the Client role
- Is someone who just unlocks the site considered a “Contractor”
- Can you outsource the principal designer role
- And what does cooperation and coordination really look like at site level.

We will be keeping abreast of what other industries do and additional advice that is issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

Use of lightweight blocks

We have seen a number of companies using light weight blocks. LOLER requires that lifting accessories are marked with a Safe Working Load. The terminology used to describe the ‘maximum load that can be lifted’ has evolved since the introduction of the regulations, and it is ‘Working Load Limit’ (WLL) expressed and marked on lifting accessories. Many lightweight aluminium pulley blocks are stamped with a minimum breaking load (MBL) in kN which presents two issues:

An MBL is not derived after applying a suitable factor of safety and a kN is a unit of force.

Users of equipment marked in this way need to ensure that they understand the calculation they need to do to convert force into load.

As a rough guide, kN/10=tonne (e.g. 10kN =1t).

Ensure your employees know how to read the markings on their kit.

Recent MATS Group publications

These and other documents are available on the publications page of the MATS Group website:

- CDM - GN-003
- Working at height in darkness - GN-010
- Climbing masts & towers - GN-012
- Drop Zones - GN-013
- Use of aluminium pulley blocks - SB-001

Documents marked GN are guidance notes and those marked SB are safety bulletins. All the documents are reviewed by the Group regularly and each carries an issue date and date for next review.

Website:
www.matsgroup.info

EMF Directive

The UK government is working on the transposition of the EU EMF Directive into UK legislation. It looks like this will happen out of sync with the normal healthy and safety legislative cycle and be implemented in July 2016.

The broadcast and telecommunications industry is being represented on the HSE working group.

The MATS Group will create industry specific guidance aimed at broadcasters, mobile operators and others who work on our sites.

Based on the Directive there will not be a fundamental need to change our approach to RF safety but there will be a number of areas we will have to consider that may require changes to our policies and training.



Useful links



HSE EMF information:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/radiation/nonionising/directive.htm>

National Register of RF Workers:

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/mds/projects/HaPS/IOEM/rf-register/index.aspx>



IOSH Communications and Media Group:

<http://www.iosh.co.uk/Membership/Our-membership-network/Our-Groups/Communications-and-Media-Group.aspx>

On the horizon...

The MATS Group has been discussing the need for a more consistent approach to climber medicals and hopes to publish some updated guidance in the coming months.

Next Newsletter

Look out for the next MATS Group newsletter in Spring 2016.

