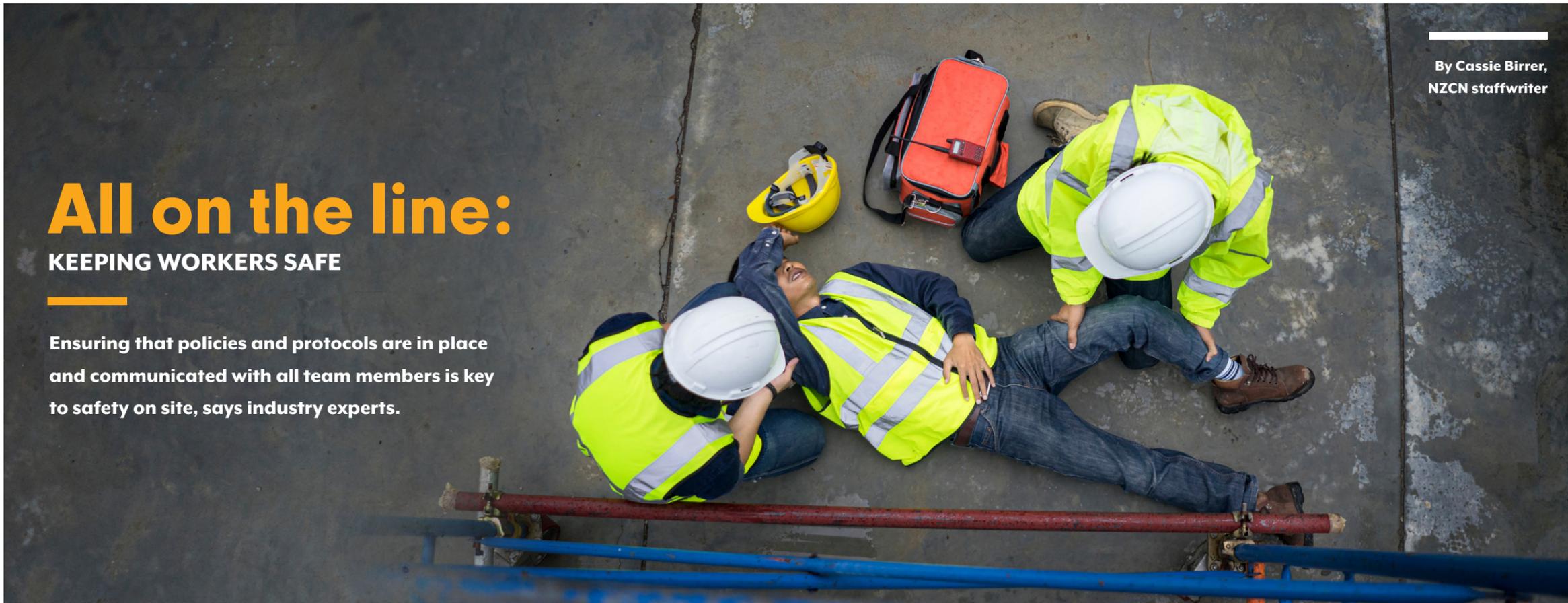


safety in construction



By Cassie Birrer, NZCN staffwriter

All on the line:

KEEPING WORKERS SAFE

Ensuring that policies and protocols are in place and communicated with all team members is key to safety on site, says industry experts.



Jackson Industries

Jackson Industries has a strong history in New Zealand. Founded by Jim Jackson in 1977, the company is multi-faceted providing expertise in electrical equipment, through to precision machining and tooling, as well as composite structures and the development of bespoke polymers. Jackson Industries' origins lie in electrical equipment, with an emphasis on safety.

"A good, strong, robust drug and alcohol testing regime starts with a strongly worded and robust policy," says Glenn Dobson, chief operating officer at The Drug Detection Agency (TDDA). This policy being the founding document the sets out for both the employer and the employee, the type of testing there will be, and the processes that will be followed. "And that needs to have a purpose – it needs to be reviewed, and you've got to make sure it is fit for purpose." Dobson says that this information also needs to be communicated as "staff need to be aware of the content of it and how it works, because the more the staff understand it the better it is for safety". TDDA has been around for almost 17 years, with national coverage in both Australia and New Zealand.

On-site drug use

The increase of prescription 'use and abuse' is a global trend that companies need to be aware of, says Dobson. "Also, the increasing strength of cannabis. There was a cannabis referendum recently and one thing that didn't come up

particularly well was the increase around the strength and potency of cannabis over the years.

"We are not talking about the drug that our parents and our grandparents smoked a long time ago – it is a very potent drug now."

In fact, research suggests that the drug today is over 300% stronger than 25 years ago.

Dobson says that an interesting study on the impacts of cannabis in the workplace is the Yesavage study.

In the study, pilots flew in an aircraft simulator just before smoking.

"Those same pilots came back 24 hours later, they hadn't taken any more substances, they admitted they no longer felt any effects of the high," says Dobson. Seven out of nine pilots showed some degree of impairment 24 hours after smoking a social dose of cannabis, but only one reported any awareness of the drug's effects.

"They still made what could have been fatal errors in the flight simulation when they tried to repeat it," says Dobson, showing that the drug has carry-over effects,



TDDA

The Drug Detection Agency (TDDA) is Australasia's complete solution provider for all workplace drug policy, education and testing needs. Its urine, oral fluid and hair testing services are available across New Zealand and Australia at 40 branches, as well as via specialist on-site testing vehicles.

Image: TDDA hair follicle testing

even one day after smoking. This is one reason why TDDA says it is so important to perform drug and alcohol testing in the workplace, and to have a clear policy around it. "We take a lot of pride and put a lot of effort into research and development and ensuring that we've got expertise in the area of workplace drug testing."

Following protocol

Mark Jackson, general manager at Jackson Industries, agrees with Dobson that policies around safety should be set out clearly. Established just over 44 years ago, Jackson says that Jackson Industries has seen safety in construction come a long way since the company started operating. "There weren't rules in place as stringent as they are now 40 years ago, and I think with the development of safety standards for construction sites, they have developed a really good basis for the rules to come from," he says.

Jackson sits on the Australian/New Zealand Standard for 'Electrical installations – Construction and demolition sites' (AS/NZS 3012:20190) adding input where he can, along with "representatives from every walk of the industry with their best interests at heart". He says that one of the challenges currently facing the industry is getting the latest standards adapted, or sighted, as quickly as they could be. "It's making sure that everyone is reading from the same set of rules. Obviously you can go and buy anything from online or wherever, but you've got to make sure it is actually fit for purpose under the rules for construction and demolition." At Jackson Industries, products are of course manufactured "in accordance with and often exceeding" the safety standards. "We use a lot of feedback from the industry on how they're using them and the best way that they need to be able to use them within the rules

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safety in construction



TDDA outside Auckland waterview tunnel construction

and helping them achieve this," says Jackson.

Technology a helping hand

With today's reliance on technology, it is no surprise that it is also being used to keep workers safe.

Take SiteSoft for example, creating an ecosystem around the communication of risks and hazards, making it a lot easier for large companies or projects to communicate with their workforce.

Since purchasing the company from an Australian enterprise, the SiteSoft team has been working over the last four years to rewrite the code of its app, SiteConnect, to make it possible to scale and adapt to the New Zealand environment.

"The key difference in SiteConnect is we make our product available to all users," says Nicholas Yates, director at SiteSoft. "We don't charge by users; we charge by sites. We think it's essential that it doesn't matter if you're offering professional services or contracting services, or you're an employee, everyone who is around the workplace needs to be on the same ecosystem. And that's what we're enabling."

The Auckland-based company now has some 25,000 contracted users of SiteConnect across the country.

Yates says that this is important – for each user to have access, rather than just each site. This is because there is no differentiation between high risk and low risk.

"Any risk needs to be communicated in the workplace."

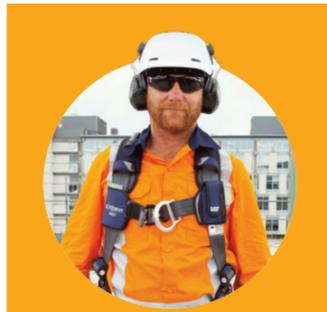
TDDA, in partnership with Health Tick, has also recently launched software to help companies keep on top of data – ultimately keeping team members safe with less room for error.

Built to streamline and increase the efficiency of TDDA's business, the Imperans software allows the move from time-consuming manual data entry, collection and reporting to a more productive, digital way of working.

It also allows users to access data log reporting, meaning they can start doing trend analysis.

"They can be proactive around being able to potentially predict their risk matrix around the workplace, again making it safer for them," says Dobson.

"It is an exciting new leaf for us in relation



NZ Safety Blackwoods

With 32 trade centres around the country, NZ Safety Blackwoods is on-hand to supply the industry with all the essential safety gear that is required. The company has over 70 years of experience in New Zealand, and it is the NZ Safety Blackwood team's mission to ensure that customers are able to find the correct gear they need to work safely.

to taking it into an electronic field, to have the workplace drug testing being more efficient."

Everyday safety

Simplifying things is also important when it comes to the selection of the required safety wear, says NZ Safety Blackwoods' national merchandise manager Kelly Geddes.

"We do a lot internally to ensure that our staff people and customer care team know the right product to offer depending on the hazard," says Geddes.

The company also uses systems such as colour coding of different types of safety gear, such as PPE, to help customers "pick the right one depending on their hazard".

"As a business, we take being a safety expert really seriously, and our key focus for the last 18 months has been simplifying it for the customer and taking the technical part out of it because they can't be experts," says Geddes.

"They don't know specifically what they need, so that's what we try to do every day. "I challenge my category team and marketing team to simplify it and think of it from the customer side. How do we easily help them pick the right product so they can get back to doing what they are experts at themselves?"



SiteSoft

SiteSoft's SiteConnect software is a whole-of-life site management and health and safety solution that can be used for site sign-in, site safety, SSSP management, on-boarding processes, account management, and more. The Auckland-based company now has around 25,000 contracted users of SiteConnect across the country. Nicholas Yates, SiteSoft director, says it is important for each user to have access, rather than just each site.

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Stress in construction:

INDUSTRY STUDY INVESTIGATES ORIGINS, STRATEGIES

An industry study conducted by Site Safe and Massey University's School of Built Environment has investigated the negative effects of work-related stress on productivity, and physical and emotional health of construction workers in New Zealand. The paper, which is the first collaboration under the research Memorandum of Understanding between both organisations, highlights several critical factors that create undue stress among construction workers. It identifies potential mitigation approaches to reducing stressors, as

suggested by workers participating in the study. Site Safe chief executive, Brett Murray, says that as well as serving as a confirmatory piece, the paper gives insight into the thought patterns and voices of frontline workers who are often unheard in an industry fraught with danger and unsafe practices. "We operate in a high-risk industry and trying to bring about a culture of change within health and safety isn't going to happen overnight. "By talking directly to workers who face these dangers every day, we can better understand what needs to be done to create safer construction sites." Research participants indicated

that lack of collaboration, poor communication, and unrealistic timeframes and budgets on the job were leading to corner-cutting, and health and safety practices being compromised. It isn't just young workers new to the industry either. There appears to be no increasing tolerance to stress over time, with experienced workers of 20-or-more years no more immune to workplace stress than their less experienced counterparts. A supportive working environment, greater empowerment of employees in decision-making processes on-site, and regular workload allocation reviews were common themes in the responses, cited by

many as ways to reduce stress. There is a strong upside to the industry effectively managing stressors in the workplace, according to Murray. "We believe that looking after our workers and creating a safer industry can improve productivity, profitability and the industry's long-term appeal as a career prospect. "The industry is already inherently stressful, so we need to do everything we can do ensure we're not adding to that," he says. "We want to get people home safe to their whanau every day, both physically and mentally and we will look at all avenues to work towards this."

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NZ Safety Blackwoods

SAFE WORK AT HEIGHT STARTS ON THE GROUND

Falls from height are one of the most common causes of work-related injuries and fatalities. From relatively straightforward tasks like inspecting structures, to complex construction tasks carried out in difficult to access locations – safety when working at height comes down to a few core considerations.

Although appropriate safety equipment is hugely important, NZ Safety Blackwoods' Janet Grosse, category manager Site Safety and Medical says: "Relevant legislation and standards place the emphasis on firstly identifying and controlling hazards and risk; then ensuring appropriate training for workers". The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 requires that if there is a potential for a person at work to fall from any height, reasonable and practicable steps must be taken to prevent harm resulting. "Legislation around industrial fall-arrest systems and devices – selection, use and maintenance, sets out recommendations for equipment like safety harnesses, horizontal life lines, fall-arrest devices and associated connectors and fittings, but makes it clear that equipment selection is just one small part of safe work at height."

The standard states that if you are required to perform any tasks at height, you must be competently trained in the following areas:

- Requirements of the standards and legislation
- Identification of relative hazards
- Application of the hierarchy of control
- Rescue plans and procedures
- The use, fit, inspection and maintenance of fall protection equipment

controls that are required for safe work "Once legislation and standards have been read and understood, and hazards identified, effective controls need to be put in place to minimise risk, like following hierarchy of control," says Grosse.

This includes eliminating the chance of a fall with safer design, alternative construction methods or by doing as much of the preparation work as possible on the ground. If elimination is not reasonably

practicable, then risks need to be minimised by taking one or more of the following actions: substituting the hazard giving rise to the risk with something that gives rise to a lesser risk; isolating the hazard giving rise to the risk to prevent any person coming into contact with it; implementing engineering controls; implementing administrative controls; and/or providing suitable personal protective equipment. When all other control combinations and options have been exhausted, and safety equipment is required to minimise the risk, the 'A, B, C, D' methodology of fall protection – outlining the fundamental elements of personal fall protection systems – can be referred to:

Anchorage (A): Anchorage provides a secure point of attachment for the fall arrest system, can be permanent or temporary, and vary to suit the type of structure being worked on.

Body Harness (B): Full body harnesses

connect the worker to the fall arrest system and are specifically designed to protect the worker against serious injury in the event of a fall, while remaining comfortable to wear.

Connector (C): Connectors are devices that connect the harness to the anchorage system and can be single products or multiple devices working together.

Descent and Rescue (D): Descent and rescue systems enable the retrieval of an injured or incapacitated worker, facilitating rapid recovery of the worker without endangering other workers in the process.

"Although using height safety equipment in some situations is essential, it's important to remember that the equipment alone is not a complete solution. Ensuring that all parties involved in working at height – from the site supervisor through to the end worker using PPE – are appropriately and regularly trained in height safety requirements, will help ensure work can be carried out with minimal risk or harm."

NZ Safety Blackwoods offers a range of NZQA accredited practical training courses covering the planning and preparatory stages of height work, through to fall prevention and rescue training.

"We will work with you to ensure you meet your legislative obligations; have compliant and well-maintained equipment available; and most importantly, are well trained and competent when it comes to working at height."

Worksafe Training is an independent Private Training Establishment (PTE) registered by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). For more information contact training@nzsafety-blackwoods.co.nz or to contact NZ Safety Blackwoods call 0800 967 572.



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Complete safety management

FROM THE MOMENT YOU ARRIVE

It is more important than ever for businesses to have a cost-effective platform to ensure health and safety compliance.

SiteConnect's app enables seamless functionality across an entire health and safety ecosystem. From, site sign-in, contractor management, inductions, communications, the swift reporting of incidents and hazards, all the way to compliance, training, pre-starts and inspections, a business's entire programme can exist within a single, seamlessly configured ecosystem. Implementing a health and safety app like SiteConnect gives employees an easy, convenient way to

stay engaged. Bigger enterprises, with personnel on several sites at once, can be confident knowing they have a unified health and safety platform that can be utilised efficiently. One such enterprise, Maugers Contracting Ltd, has been developing Canterbury for over 50 years, specialising in subdivision, earthmoving, green-waste, drainage, roading and construction. With a strong reputation as a specialist in its field, and with a lot of moving parts to its environmental, health and safety programme,

Maugers was keen to successfully implement an optimal digital health and safety solution. The company turned to SiteConnect to integrate all the aspects under the same platform for easier management, improving efficiency and lowering costs across the business. Maugers had the challenge that many businesses face: getting its teams excited and engaged in a basic level of buy-in towards health and safety. One of the biggest challenges the firm had to contend with pre-SiteConnect was getting the teams to fill out paper pre-starts or any paperwork in general. SiteConnect's Geo-fencing automated sign-in and

out feature was the biggest game-changer as it gave Maugers an accurate insight as to who was on which site. Before SiteConnect, this was an area that was often out of its control. SiteConnect has given the workers instant access to reporting incidents, near misses, risk and safety observations and even access documents on-site, all from the mobile app. Celebrating the positive impact and successful implementation of a digital health and safety solution, Maugers' team is now reporting safety observations, both negative and positive, which has been an integral part of the culture change.





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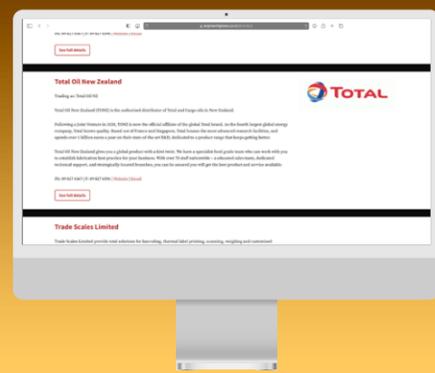
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