

May 2018

SHE Safety Health Environment

Quality & compliance

Welcome to the Aston Services Group Monthly Bulletin.

For further details on any of the newsletter content - please do not hesitate to contact me.



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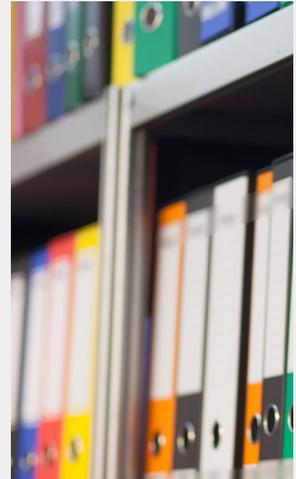
ISO 45001 standard published

The long-awaited ISO 45001 standard has been published.

The publishing of the standard marks the beginning of the migration period from OH SAS 18001 to the ISO replacement. Organisations that hold OHSAS 18001 have three years to comply with the new standard.

Aston Services Group will be working towards the standard and we hope to undertake the audit towards the end of the year.

The International Labour Organisation calculated that there are approximately 2.78 million fatal accidents in the workplace every year. This is in addition to the 374 million non-fatal accidents and illnesses occurring from the workplace or work-related activities. Such statistics only serve as a strong reminder as to why health and safety at work is so important, and why it should be considered an integral part of any organisation.



Aston Services Group SHE Committee

January saw the inaugural meeting of the Aston Services Group Safety, Health and Environment Committee. The purpose of the SHE Committee will be to ensure we cover all relevant issue within the business.

The committee has agreed some standing items for the agenda and allow for other items to be added as necessary. The main agenda points will be:

- Statistics on accident records, ill health, sickness absence.
- Accident investigations and subsequent action.
- Inspections of the workplace by enforcing authorities, management or employee health and safety representatives.
- Risk assessments.
- Health and safety training.
- Emergency procedures.
- Changes in the workplace affecting the health, safety and welfare of employees.
- Recycling and Energy Performance.
- Documentation Review.

The members of the Committee are all enthusiastic and looking forward to working together to make a difference. The members are Sally Taylor, Operations Director, Jacquie Davies, Head of Health Safety Quality and Compliance. Gavin Armitage, Cath Mangan, Ann Marie Thompson and Phil Todd, Industrial and Maintenance Director. Going forward the committee will review, consult and agree with the implementation of any new policies and procedures.

The minutes and action points will be distributed to you for circulation and display on all notice boards. Please ensure that you share the minutes with our brand partners and do not hesitate to contact any of the committee members with any queries you have. Remember that Health and Safety is not a chore, it's just the way we do business.

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When summer means hay fever, here's how to help

Whilst we all long for those beautiful long summer days and the smell of freshly cut grass, hay fever sufferers dread the high pollen counts, and the itchy, sneezy, wheezy symptoms that are associated with it.

A 2013 study showed that anywhere between 10-30% of adults suffer with hay fever, and research from the Met Office suggested that UK employees who suffer from severe hay fever need an average of 8.4 days away from their desk.

Many people believe that hay fever simply manifests as itchy eyes and sneezing that can be managed with a cocktail of antihistamines, eye drops and nasal sprays. Whilst this may be true in some cases, we know that as many as 57% of adults will have sleep disturbance as a result of their hay fever.

Poor sleep results in daytime fatigue and problems with alertness and concentration. Many hay fever sufferers describe this as "brain fog". There is therefore no surprise that productivity is significantly reduced in perennial hay fever sufferers.

Pollen has three waves, with the result that staff can be affected by hay fever from January right through to the end of summer, but there are things that employers can do to create a pollen free work environment throughout hay fever season.

SPILLAGES: Three vital steps to take

Just like fire, a spill can cause major damage to workers and a site, even more so if the wrong chemical is used to begin with. Three critical steps in order to handle a site spillage swiftly.

-  **Communicate the hazard** – no matter how large or small;
-  **Clear up the spill** – ensure it does not get any worse; and
-  **Recovery** – ensure spill kits are maintained on a regular basis so that they are fit for purpose and the appropriate measures are in place next time around.



1. KEEP THE WINDOWS CLOSED

Good quality air conditioning is much better than having the windows open during the summer period. Opening windows allow the minuscule pollen particles to find their way in and settle around the office.

2. CONSIDER FLOORING

Plush carpets tend to harbour both dust and pollen, which creates a problematic environment for hay fever and dust allergy sufferers alike. Sweepable and moppable floors are better for pollen free working conditions. If there are carpets, ensure they are thoroughly vacuumed on a daily basis by the cleaning staff.

3. REMOVE PLANTS AND FLOWERS

Whilst they can make an office look nicer, these should be removed from working areas, as people seemingly forget that flowers create pollen.

4. REMOVE SOFT FURNISHINGS

In the age of the trendy office, cushions and beanbags have become common. It may be beneficial to remove these during the hay fever months, or at least ensure they are vacuumed daily.

5. STORE COATS AND JACKET SEPARATELY

It would be great to have a separate cloakroom for coats and jackets. Clothes pick up small pieces of pollen each time you go outside, these small particles are then deposited into the working space, especially if your staff are in the habit of hanging their coats on the back of their chair.

6. ALLOW FLEXIBLE WORKING

If these measures have not helped, consider offering flexible working on high pollen days, allowing staff to work from home or starting/finishing early. Pollen counts are different throughout the day. If the 9am pollen is high, an 8am or 10am start may be preferable when levels are lower. The Met Office website is an excellent source of information, and offers a pollen count map to help you to plan.

7. HELP YOUR STAFF TO SEE A DOCTOR

Allow your staff to see their doctor to discuss hay fever treatments. If the standard over the counter medications have not been helping, there are a range of prescribable medications that can be offered, including tablets, nasal sprays, and even a hay fever injection, which is used to help the most severe sufferers.