



Working at height emergency rescue

CEMEX > Asphalt



Lowering the stretcher

DESCRIPTION

CEMEX's asphalt business has fifteen plants, on these sites there are many structures which reach heights of up to 20m. Accessing the various levels of these structures often requires the operator to navigate vertical cat ladders, stairs and narrow walkways. While maintenance and inspections are routine, CEMEX was aware that the physical layout of these plants would make the extraction of someone in an emergency far from straightforward.

CEMEX also recognised that with its ageing workforce and their differing levels of fitness, some individuals were becoming more susceptible to the risk of a heart or stroke related medical emergency. With the existing methods of rescue CEMEX knew that if an operator became incapacitated due to a medical condition or injury that occurred at height, it would be reliant on the support of the emergency services to conduct a rescue.

The asphalt division wanted a rescue system in place that would enable it to extract a person to a safe position, where paramedics could administer treatment, without relying on the support of the emergency services. In addition, as standard fire engine ladders only reach 12.5m, there was already a potential shortfall in the ability of the fire service to use a ladder-based access for a rescue.

CEMEX invited Mines Rescue Training Services (MRTS) to advise on new equipment that would facilitate both confined space

rescue and getting an injured person down to ground level. The existing equipment was old, and the rescue plans had not been regularly reviewed or practised. Managers were not confident with the existing equipment and were reluctant to use it for a casualty without assistance. A significant step change was required to enable effective rescue.

MRTS was asked to visit each type of plant and review both working at height and confined space rescue. The plants were closed for the day so that all staff members could be involved in the visit. Using MRTS's advice, new equipment was selected and ordered. MRTS also demonstrated a rescue using the new equipment from the top of a baghouse at CEMEX's plant in the Docklands.

Following on from the Docklands demonstration, CEMEX bought all the asphalt site managers together at its Sheffield plant. The day started with a presentation and then moved onto the plant to conduct practical demonstrations. The managers compared the functionality and ease of use of the old and new equipment; they then practised a rescue from the top of the baghouse using the new stretcher and a weighted dummy.

The training for the managers across all fifteen asphalt sites in advanced rope rescue ensured that they could use the equipment themselves and pass that confidence down to their teams.



View from the top

BENEFITS

- Removed reliance on emergency services to support a rescue from height.
- Rescue plans more effective and easier to implement.
- Improved the potential outcome for a casualty.
- Manager and staff confident in using the equipment.
- Equipment is reasonably priced.
- Equipment is more intuitive to use and less training required.
- Improved operational flexibility as the same rescue equipment is on all sites.
- Positive response from the workforce to the new equipment.
- More competent and confident workforce, keen to practice safety drills.
- Addresses concern that paramedics are not always willing to rescue above ground level.
- Helps CEMEX meet its legal and moral obligations for employee welfare.

DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFERABILITY

CEMEX's asphalt division has developed a more integrated working relationship with Mines Rescue Training Service. The multiple visits to the CEMEX sites have led to tailored training that goes way beyond the basic needs of legal requirement, it has ensured that practical working rescue plans are in place and have been drilled on each site. All the UK asphalt plants now have the equipment and appropriate plans and training in place.

The managers and staff at the plants are no longer fearful of undertaking a rescue. It has also led to an increased awareness of the hazards that may not have been fully appreciated before.

The rescue drills have attracted interest from other operations within Cemex UK, the learning points are now being shared with the aggregates, ready-mix and other businesses within the company.

This knowledge can also be applied and transferred to other businesses within the mineral products industry.



Stretcher safely on ground



Lowering the stretcher