



SAFETY CRITICAL WORK IN CONSTRUCTION: FACT SHEET

A. What is it?

HSE provides the following definition:

“Some jobs in the construction industry involve activities that can place workers at risk, unless the person has full, unimpaired control of their physical and mental capabilities. These jobs are called ‘safety critical’ and the people who do them are ‘safety-critical workers’.”

(<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/healthrisks/workers.htm>)

B. Which jobs on construction sites are likely to fall into this category?

- Tower crane driver
- People working at heights
- People who may have to enter confined spaces
- Drivers of plant and machinery
- Traffic management workers

C. Which are the particular medical conditions which may be of concern?

- sudden loss of consciousness (e.g. epilepsy, some heart conditions, diabetes (particularly insulin-dependent diabetes));
- impaired awareness or concentration;
- sudden incapacity;

- impaired balance or coordination;
- restricted mobility; and
- impaired vision or hearing.

D. Are pre-placement medical assessments/periodic fitness assessment statutorily required for these jobs?

- Medical fitness assessments for safety critical work are good practice and should be considered.
- The Health and Safety at Work Order (NI) 1978 refers to safe systems of work.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000 describe the principles of prevention to be applied.

E. Are there statutory fitness standards set for these roles?

No, the following describes some standards:

- BS 7121-1:2006 'Code of Practice for Safe Use of Cranes'. Provides guidance on a standard.
- The ACoP which accompanies the Confined Spaces Regulations (NI) 1999 refers to certain medical conditions in the section "suitability of workers" (paragraph 79) accessible at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l101.pdf>.
- Advice to doctors on fitness standards for driving 'At a Glance' can be accessed at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/medical/aag.aspx>

Specialist occupational physicians should be able to advise on appropriate standards.

Standards for diving and compressed air work can be obtained from EMAS.

F. Which regulations require a pre-employment assessment?

- Work in Compressed Air Regulations (NI) 2004
- Diving at Work Regulations (NI) 2005
- Control of Lead at Work Regulations (NI) 2003 (within 14 days of commencement)
- Ionising Radiation Regulations (NI) 2000
- Control of Asbestos Regulations (NI) 2012

G. How do I access an occupational health provider?

Information on purchasing occupational health services can be accessed at

http://www.hseni.gov.uk/purchasing_occupational_health_services.pdf