

Contacting the HSE

HSE local offices and telephone numbers.

Is this part of "How to Regulate in the 21st Century"? (The title of a paper by Ragnar Lofstedt, published in the European Journal of Risk Regulation Vol: 2/2011. As you know Lofstedt has been commissioned by the Govt to review H&S regulation)

The information in this document took the best part of an afternoon's work. The regulatory regime for the 21st century appears to be that the HSE hide from people who need or want them to do their job of enforcing health and safety law in the workplace. They certainly don't make it easy to contact them.

You will remember that the HSE removed all its local office telephone numbers from its website some years ago, and despite many attempts by trade unions and others to get them reinstated, they remained censored. You could get them by asking the HSE InfoLine, but that will no longer be possible after the 30th September 2011, when InfoLine is due to close; another effect of the HSE budget cuts.

It is the case that some of the offices listed below will close as the HSE cuts bite even deeper – one part of their strategy to deal with the cuts is to reduce their "estate costs" – i.e. close local offices. So, for example, in the North West region the Preston office closed in June 2011, and the Manchester office will close in the middle of 2012 – so from then most of the HSE Inspectors that cover the majority of the region will be based in Bootle, or perhaps, their car boot. It means that local knowledge and jobs will be lost, inspectors will need to drive much further, use more fuel and pollute more, spend longer hours on the job, be more remote from their resource base, and have less personal contact with colleagues. These are all factors that will reduce the quality of an inspector's job and working life, so well done HSE, the agency supposed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees.

In some regions, there is now a central switchboard. If you telephone the local office number, that call will be diverted. In Yorkshire and North East, telephone the Newcastle or Sheffield office numbers and your call will be answered in Leeds. I have indicated which regions use this system; it may extend to the remaining regions later. For the time being, this is a list of those offices and telephone numbers for them that we know are still working at July 21st 2011.

Yorkshire and North East

Covers the counties of Cleveland, Durham, North Yorkshire, Northumberland, West Yorkshire, Tyne & Wear, Humberside and South Yorkshire.

All calls go to a central switchboard at Leeds, there is no direct contact with local offices unless you know the person you want to contact and their direct extension number.

Leeds

The Lateral
8 City Walk
Leeds LS11 9AT
Tel No: 0113 283 4200
Covers: West and North Yorkshire

Sheffield

Health and Safety Executive
Foundry House
3 Millsands
Riverside Exchange
Sheffield S3 8NH
Tel No: 0113 283 4200
Covers: East Yorkshire, North & NE Lincolnshire, South Yorkshire, Hull

Newcastle

Alnwick House
Benton Park View
Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE98 1YX
Tel No: 0113 283 4200
Covers: Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham, Cleveland

Wales & South West

Covers Wales, Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire, Bristol, Dorset, Swindon and Wiltshire

All calls go to a central switchboard at Cardiff, there is no direct contact with local offices unless you know the person you want to contact and their direct extension number.

Cardiff

Government Buildings,
Phase 1,
Ty Glas,
Llanishen,
Cardiff CF14 5SH
Tel: 029 2026 3000

Covers: Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Vale of Glamorgan, Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Powys, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen and part of Powys

Bristol

4th Floor, The Pithay
All Saints Street
Bristol BS1 2ND
Tel: 029 2026 3000

Covers: Bristol, Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire, Dorset (public services only), Devon & Cornwall (public services and quarrying) Swindon and Wiltshire; Agriculture in North, Mid and East Devon

Clwyd

Unit 7 & 8 Edison Court
Ellice Way
Wrexham Technology Park
Wrexham LL13 7YT
Tel: 029 2026 3000

Covers: Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham, Gwynedd and part of Powys

Dyfed

Tŷ Myrddin,
Old Station Road,
Carmarthen
Carmarthenshire. SA31 1LP
Tel: 029 2026 3000

Covers: Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Swansea

Dorset

14 New Fields
Stinsford Road
Nuffield Industrial Estate
Poole
DORSET BH17 0NF
Tel: 029 2026 3000

Covers: Dorset (except public services, which is covered by Bristol)

Plymouth

North Quay House
Sutton Harbour
Plymouth PL4 0RA
Tel: 029 2026 3000

Covers: Devon, Cornwall (all industries except public services and quarries – for which see Bristol) Agriculture except in North, Mid and East Devon – also see Bristol.

Scotland

Covers all the Scottish unitary authorities and island councils

All calls go to a central switchboard in Edinburgh, there is no direct contact with local offices unless you know the person you want to contact and their direct extension number.

Edinburgh

Belford House
59 Belford Road
Edinburgh EH4 3UE
Tel: 0131 247 2000

Covers: Borders, Lothian, Central Perth, Kinross, Fife and Dundee

Glasgow

1st Floor Mercantile Chambers
53 Bothwell Street
Glasgow G2 6TS
Tel: 0131 247 2000

Covers: West Scotland

Aberdeen

Lord Cullen House
Fraser Place
Aberdeen AB25 3UB
Tel: 0131 247 2000

Covers: Angus, Aberdeenshire, Moray and Shetland

Inverness

Longman House
28 Longman Road
Longman Industrial Estate
Inverness IV1 1SF
Tel: 0131 247 2000

Covers: Highlands and Orkney

North West

Covers the counties of Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside

Bootle Headquarters & North West Region

Redgrave Court
Merton Road
Bootle
Merseyside L20 7HS
Tel: 0151 951 4000

The HSE has a knowledge centre at Bootle HQ for personal callers who want to consult H&S publications.

Manchester (Due to close in mid-2012)

Grove House
Skerton Road
Manchester M16 0RB
Tel: 0161 952 8200

Covers: Merseyside, Cheshire, Greater Manchester

Carlisle

2 Victoria Place
Carlisle CA1 1ER
Tel: 01228 634100

Covers: Cumbria (except services, metals & minerals and fairgrounds)

Midlands

Covers the counties of West Midlands, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Hereford and Worcester

I've spoken to all these offices. No central switchboard in this region, so 'phone the local office number direct. When I asked, none of them knew if they would become a regional telephone contact centre

Birmingham

1 Hagley Road
Birmingham B16 8HS
Tel: 0121 607 6200
Covers: West Midlands

Northampton

900 Pavilion Drive
Northampton Business Park
Northampton NN4 7RG
Tel: 01604 738300
Covers: Leicestershire, Northampton, Rutland, Warwickshire

Nottingham

City Gate West
First Floor,
Toll House Hill
Nottingham NG1 5AT
Tel: 0115 971 2800
Covers: Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire (most) North Lincolnshire covered by Sheffield office

Stoke on Trent

Lyme Vale Court
Lyme Drive
Parklands Business Park
Newcastle Road
Trent Vale
Stoke on Trent ST4 6NW
Tel: 01782 602300
Covers: Staffordshire and Shropshire.

Worcester

Haswell House
St Nicholas Street
Worcester WR1 1UW
Tel: 01905 743600
Covers: Herefordshire and Worcestershire

London

Rose Court

2 Southwark Bridge
LONDON SE1 9HS
Tel: 020 7556 2100

Covers: London including the boroughs of Barking, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest (see Chelmsford below)

East & South East

Covers the counties of Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Suffolk, Oxfordshire, Kent, East & West Sussex and Surrey

All calls go to a central switchboard at Basingstoke, there is no direct contact with local offices unless you know the person you want to contact and their direct extension number.

Basingstoke

Priestley House
Priestley Road
Basingstoke RG24 9NW
Tel: 01256 404000

Covers: Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Isle of Wight.

Bedford

Woodlands
Manton Lane
Manton Lane Industrial Estate
Bedford MK41 7LW
Tel: 01256 404000

Covers: Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire.

Chelmsford

Wren House
Hedgerows Business Park
Colchester Road
Springfield
Chelmsford CM2 5PF
Tel: 01256 404000

Covers: Essex (except Barking, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest; these local authorities are covered from London), Norfolk and Suffolk

Excludes topics Agriculture, Food and Wood; contact Norwich for these

East Grinstead

Phoenix House
23-25 Cantelupe Road,
East Grinstead,
West Sussex RH19 3BE
Tel: 01256 404000

Covers: East & West Sussex, Surrey

Norwich

Lakeside 500
Old Chapel Way
Broadland Business Park
Norwich NR7 0WQ
Tel: 01256 404000

Covers: Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex

Covers topics Agriculture, Food and Wood (also see Chelmsford)

Kent (Will close but no date given)

International House
Dover Place
Ashford
Kent TN23 1HU
Tel: 01256 404000

Covers: Kent

What lessons emerge from this afternoon's work?

- It's not easy to contact the HSE, and it's not easy to contact an inspector. HSE management have acted in ways that make it appear that the Health & Safety police have gone into hiding. They have certainly made it more difficult than it need be, but it's not been easy for some time.
- If you call the regional switchboard, you will not be put through to an inspector unless you know their name (I tried that one). Under the old system, you could often persuade the switchboard operator to give you the name of an inspector, or put you through to a Principal Inspector the line manager. (I've done that one in the past as well) They knew the names and responsibilities of the inspector's teams in their offices. Regionalisation means that local knowledge has been lost.
- The office list for Wales and South West - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/maps/waleswest.htm> says that the Plymouth office doesn't deal with public services (the category colleges and universities come under), but doesn't say which office does deal with that. I phoned the regional contact line at Cardiff – they didn't know either! They put me through to the InfoLine – when I asked who they would put me through to after 30th September, she didn't know. That doesn't bode well.
- In most regions now, you will be connected to a Complaints Officer (CO) at the local office responsible for your college or university. CO's are not inspectors. They will evaluate your complaint before deciding what action to take. Their action in most cases is to telephone employers and say that an issue has been raised with them. If the employer says it's malicious, or they have already put it right, or will do so, the CO will tick the box. I'm sure some employers tell CO's fibs which HSE will accept in good faith. CO's almost never leave the office, or visit workplaces to confirm action has been taken. There is no information about how many complaints CO's refer to inspectors. Cynics amongst you may think that this is a very effective way of putting a gloss on HSE problem resolution rates. Others of you may think this is a good way of limiting the enforcement work the HSE has to undertake. There appears to be little evidence of any real assessment of how effective the Complaints Officer system is. For more detailed information about CO complaints see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/workplace-complaints.htm>
- You need to know who the HSE Inspector is who deals with your workplace otherwise you will be sent all around the houses as I have been. Avoid all this by ensuring you are in touch with your local inspector – contact them, get their card with direct line and e-mail address, build a working relationship so they know you don't raise matters with them unless you really need to. It really does work.
- If you haven't met your inspector, ask your college/university H&S officer, manager, director etc. for that contact detail; it's information you reasonably require and they have a duty to give it you. Insist if they refuse.
- When all else fails, you know where the HSE lives.