International Labour Office
Occupational Safety & Health for the Construction Industry

ILO Construction OS&H
A free, comprehensive, international, digital training package in occupational safety and health for the construction industry

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TUTORS' GUIDE
Tutors' own photographs

In such a practical subject, it is obvious that the use of carefully planned and specifically relevant visual aids is crucial to effective explanation. This is especially the case with photographs because, according to the well-known adage, a picture is worth a thousand words. In the case of a training programme intended to be relevant to an international audience of educationalists and practitioners, the use of photographs presents a problem because any photograph will capture its subject in its own culture and time. It is surprising how specifically the detailed characteristics of photographs identify a place, person, culture, point in time and so on. Therefore, **Construction OS&H** encourages tutors to take their own photographs. The photographs provided in the Theme Summaries and Theme PowerPoint presentations indicate where the Tutor's own photographs can be used and the type required, but obviously these will be more effective if they portray local construction work and workers.

Example 1: City centre paving

The principal author of this Tutors' Guide went for a walk with his camera around the centre of the city in which he lives. There is nearly always some building work going on in city centres, and it is often possible to see examples of good or bad health and safety practices from the pavement. The camera used is shown below:

Photograph by Richard Neale

This is a mid-range compact digital camera. It takes very good photographs at a high level of detail (it has a maximum level of definition of 10 mega pixels) and is easy to use. It has a zoom lens, 'burst mode' which allows a succession of photographs to be taken in quick succession, and can take short video films. It is also weatherproof, which when used on construction sites has the advantage of keeping out dust as well as moisture. The capabilities of such cameras are improving rapidly, and mobile phones are also offering increasingly powerful photograph capabilities.

The photographs were imported from the camera into the computer simply by plugging in the cable provided and following the on-screen instructions.

The following photograph shows the use of a barrow for moving heavy paving slabs, which were being laid in the main street, which is for the use of pedestrians only.

Photograph by Richard Neale. Contractor: Skanska McNicholas plc, UK

The next picture, taken from the same spot, shows the operatives wearing good safety equipment: safety helmets, ear defenders, hi-visibility jackets, safety boots and gloves. The area is securely fenced off from pedestrians.

Photograph by Richard Neale. Contractor: Skanska McNicholas plc, UK

Example 2: Access scaffold for roof repairs

As in Example 1, the principal author of this guide went for a walk with his camera around the corner to the next street in the city in which he lives. On this occasion he had his Nikon D80 camera with him. This is a semi-professional digital single lens reflex (SLR) camera. SLR cameras allow the user to change the lens to suit the application, and in this case a Nikkor 18-200mm telescopic lens suits most applications. This lens also has a mechanism for reducing vibration. It takes excellent photographs at a high level of detail and although it has a very good 'point and shoot' mode, it also has more sophisticated features, such as very high speed 'burst mode', which takes a whole series of photographs of a moving subject in very quick succession, allowing the best photographs to be selected. However, this camera is rather more complex than the compact camera used in Example 1 and is bulkier and heavier.

The photographs were imported from the camera into the computer simply by plugging in the cable provided and following the on-screen instructions.

Permission to use the photographs was obtained orally from the scaffolders, but the photographs were taken after they had finished and left, to avoid personal images.

Figure 1 shows the general arrangement of the scaffold, which is supported from the pavement, and gives access to the roof. For security reasons, a lower ladder is only put in position when workers are on the site.

Figure 2 is a closer view of the base of the scaffold. The vertical stanchions rest on metal and yellow plastic base plates, which spread the load and protect the pavement. Red and white plastic sleeves are fitted to the base of the stanchions as a warning to pedestrians. The lower lift of scaffold is braced in both directions, which of course effectively blocks the pavement and may cause problems for the unwary or visually impaired.

Figure 3 shows the upper part of the scaffold. Note:
- Cross bracing
- Lateral bracing between window mullions
- Toe boards
- Second handrail between the top of the toe boards and the upper handrail
- Upper part of scaffold rests on scaffold boards on the roof, for stability and to protect the roof

Figure 4 shows a securely fixed ladder.

Figure 5 shows that the scaffold extends over the ridge to give lateral stability.

Photograph by Richard Neale
Figure 1: General arrangement

Photograph by Richard Neale
Figure 2: Base

Lateral bracing between window mullions

Photograph by Richard Neale
Figure 3: Upper part of scaffold

Ladder held by clips at top and bottom

Photograph by Richard Neale
Figure 4: Detail of ladder fixings

Photograph by Richard Neale
Figure 5: Scaffolding extending over ridge

Example 3: Road-making plant found parked in the same street as Example 2, some months later.

Unfortunately, the road was resurfaced in the middle of the night and the work was complete and all plant and equipment had gone when the principal author of **Construction OS&H** went to photograph it the next morning!

Photograph by Richard Neale

Photograph by Richard Neale

Photograph by Richard Neale

The workers gave their permission for these photographs to be taken.

Important note

When photographing individuals, it is important to ask their permission. This is an obvious courtesy, but in some countries it is also a legal necessity to seek permission before taking and using photographs of individuals. As a further precaution, the faces and other identifying features have been obscured, using the simple 're-touch' facility of Mac iPhoto.