

Safety First

Glendinning receive British Aggregates Association (BAA) Site Assessment Certificate for the highest standards in health and safety



At Hillhead 2010 Judith Hackitt, chair of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), commended the quarrying industry for renewing its commitment to improving health and safety. Since 2000, reportable injuries in the sector have dropped by 76% and there is now a continuing effort to bring down accident rates by a further 15% year on year by 2015 through the Target Zero initiative.

With quarry firms fully committed to safety improvements, the BAA has developed a Site Assessment Scheme for its members, which provides an independent assessment of their operations in the workplace and demonstrates that member companies are operating in a safe and competent manner.

The assessment scheme was introduced in 2007 and is designed to ensure that an entire site meets all of the legislative requirements affecting quarry firms. The process is managed by a specialist panel headed by Eric Darlow, former HM Principal Inspector of Quarries, who reviews the findings of the independent health and safety assessor before a final certificate is awarded.

Where no significant problems are identified, a certificate of compliance will be issued to individual quarry sites that have been independently assessed as meeting the highest standards in health and safety. However, the compliance certificate only lasts for three

years because the BAA Site Assessment Scheme has been designed as a 'moving' document that is constantly updated in line with new legislation and standards.

The BAA scheme has already been endorsed by the Quarries National Joint Advisory Committee (QNJAC) as a means of achieving continuous improvement in health and safety performance by BAA members, and Eric Darlow has described the site assessment certificate as 'the quarrying industry's version of an Oscar in safety management'.

According to the BAA, a large number of member companies have expressed an interest in the scheme and as many as 13 operators are preparing for assessment by the end of 2010. Among the firms that have taken already part in the audit scheme are Glendinning, who were recently awarded the BAA Site Assessment Certificate for their operations at Linhay Hill Quarry, near Ashburton.

Commenting on their award, quarry manager Neil Gibbs, said: 'We are absolutely delighted to have gained the BAA safety certificate, as we believe the assessment scheme is an essential management tool for quarry operators, like ourselves, striving for continuous improvement by identifying and rectifying hazardous situations.'

'The assessment is very detailed and one of the key objectives of the scheme is to ensure

that a process of ongoing improvement is established. Health and safety flaws can be found even in the best-managed quarries, and the BAA scheme provides the operator with reassurance that the management of health, safety and the environment meets the acceptable standard.'

As the aggregates industry aims to achieve zero incidents and injuries, the BAA hopes more quarry operators in the UK will recognize the benefits of its site assessment scheme in relation to Target Zero. The safety audit not only promotes the elimination of accidents within the sector, but it is also an important tool to assist BAA members deliver a safer, more visible and healthier workplace for employees.

Presenting the BAA Site Assessment Certificate to Mr Gibbs, Eric Darlow praised Glendinning's recent singular mark of achievement and said he believes more member companies will be encouraged to take part in the scheme and, hopefully, enjoy the same success as their West Country counterpart.

'The scale of Linhay Hill and its fine reputation and tourist route position on the edge of Dartmoor helps keep the quarry in the public eye,' he commented. 'Therefore, achieving the BBA safety certificate is seen as a flagship both for the BAA and the industry at large.'

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