

Health & Safety Award for designers sharing safe solutions



The top prize in the Health & Safety Awards 2006 has been won by Design Best Practice (DBP), a not-for-profit network of leading consultancies which share information about design solutions that make construction safer. DBP won the Working Well Together health and safety organisation of the year as well as taking the award for Best safety innovation from a designer or engineer.

The team is now keen to widen awareness of DBP so that more people can share the benefits and contribute to the expanding portfolio of best practice case studies.

DBP was formed 2 years ago when the Health & Safety Executive challenged designers to do more to make construction safer. Ten firms with accountability for design and construction, working across a range of disciplines for client AstraZeneca, put aside any commercial rivalry to create the network dedicated to boosting designer competency and reducing hazards on site. The success of the initiative has resulted in more than 100 case studies being supplied by the member firms: Amec, Boultong, Cross, Green Contract Services, Jacobs, Lovelock Mitchell, Multi-Design Consultants, Peers Structural Solutions, The Austin Company and Thermal Transfer. The case studies, which are freely available from www.dbp.org.uk, give examples of where designers have added value by designing-out or mitigating hazards to construction or user teams.

The network's founders are now seeking participation from other like-minded firms committed to improving safety and promoting best practice. 'Winning this award has confirmed the wide interest in exchanging solutions and we would welcome involvement from other firms', said Chris Oakes of Multi Design Consultants. 'We don't want to keep these ideas to ourselves.

There are still too many deaths and injuries in construction and we believe that designers can do more to improve the situation. Coming together under the DBP framework gives a real opportunity to ensure that the best ideas take hold.'

In introducing the Health & Safety Awards 2006, Health & Safety Executive chief inspector of construction Stephen Williams pointed out that about a third of all workplace fatalities occur in construction, despite year-on-year improvements in injury rates. 'I urge all in the industry to follow the lead of the many companies and individuals we are celebrating this year'.

DBP enjoys strong support from key bodies such as the HSE, European Agency for Safety & Design at Work and Safety in Design. 'HSE welcomes the numerous examples of good and best practice compiled by Design Best Practice. These will assist designers in achieving safety through design,' said David Thomas, principal specialist inspection within HSE's Construction Division Technology Unit. 'The examples provide practical guidance on the designer's duty to identify and eliminate hazards, adapt their design to reduce the risk from residual hazards and provide clear and concise information'

The Health & Safety Awards recognise excellence, innovation and professionalism in all areas of construction safety, occupational health, site facilities and staff welfare. Prizes are awarded in 15 categories, with the category winners competing for the top accolade of Working Well Together health and safety organisation of the year which is awarded in collaboration with the HSE's Working Well Together scheme.

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