

The LA arm of the Health and Safety Law

The Health and Safety Commission is responsible for health and safety regulation in Great Britain. The Health and Safety Executive and local government are the enforcing authorities who work in support of the Commission. Their mission is to protect people's health and safety by ensuring risks in the changing workplace are properly controlled.

HSE formalised a panel of solicitors in March 2007 for which Lester Aldridge won a three year contract.

Michael Veal heads Lester Aldridge's Health and Safety team and is a partner within the firm's Dispute Resolution group. He has been with Lester Aldridge for over seven years and has vast experience in health and safety enforcement work, including that related to airports, asbestos, construction/demolition, factories, farming, hazardous installations plus much more.

The HSE cases in which LA is instructed are cases where a company or person(s) are allegedly in breach of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and related legislation. Michael and his team have recently been asked to deal with a number of major cases. These include:

- The prosecution of an industrial laundry following the death of a worker.
- The prosecution of a pet food company whose worker died whilst trying to unblock a production line problem. The case is of particular topical interest, since two directors face manslaughter as well as health and safety charges, and issues relating to the new Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act 2007 are engaged.
- A further case which attracts particular media interest involves a prosecution brought jointly by the HSE and a local authority following the death of a child on a new housing development.

All employers have legal responsibilities to safeguard the health and safety of their workers and others. Failure to do so can result in criminal sanctions being imposed. As well as undertaking work for the HSE, therefore, Lester Aldridge does also provide advice to employers who require guidance about their responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 or its subordinate legislation.

The HSE plays a dual sided role in that it is tasked with disseminating advice about, as well as upholding, the responsibilities set out in the health and safety legislation. The Lester Aldridge Health and Safety team has an extremely good relationship with the HSE and has years of experience in handling cases of this sort.

The HSE stated that the reasons why it chose LA over other fierce competition was because of the firm's depth and breadth of experience, its ability as a large organisation to provide excellent levels of service, and because LA's lawyers are down to earth with strong rapport with HSE inspectors. Barristers questioned also highly recommended LA as straight talking professionals.

Lester Aldridge's Health and Safety team is able to advise employers as well as enforcing authorities. Additionally, the HSE website is extremely informative with plenty of advice for every business industry. There are a number of FREE leaflets to help companies provide safe working environment and safeguard them from prosecution: visit <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/leaflets.htm> for more information.