

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- **We are not Board Bashers**
- **What were they thinking – MoBIE?**
- **Preventing Falls in the workplace. A big hype - but is it just a change in enforcement?**
- **The Government's mixed message**
- **Inmates undergo training in Plumbing and Drainlaying.**

**IN OTHER NEWS**

**Is there any benefit in being in a regulated industry?**

It seems our time and skills don't count for much with this government.

They expect us to take responsibility for our industry and they hold us accountable but what protection do they provide for us?

People can walk in off the street and purchase whatever material they want to do sanitary plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying without question (especially at places like Bunnings, Placemakers and Mitre 10 to name a few, but also our at our reputable merchants too), but can we get a blood transfer kit or drugs so we can operate on ourselves?

We note that some retailers even hire out the

**We are not Board Bashers**

It's not just about decisions made by the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board, but it's about all decisions made by government and government departments that affect the Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying Industry. Remember it's about fairness and equality in plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying regulations and legislation!

This week is dedicated to other issues that are on the go at the moment which have a direct affect on the industry and how we operate.

**What were they thinking – MoBIE?**



"The so-called due diligence for the new Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment is a farce designed to legitimise a purely political decision," says Labour's Economic Development Spokesperson David Cunliffe.

It's amazing how these politicians grandstand to score political points but when it comes to real issues, such as the Impact Statement for the implementation of the Plumbers Gasafitters and Drainlayers Act 2006m where the plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers pay for everything and end up with an average wage below the national average, they say nothing!

"Once again, ordinary New Zealand taxpayers will be left picking up the tab for this farce," David Cunliffe said.

Hey David remember talking to Wal Gordon when he protested outside parliament on his toilet pan- you said you "had us on your radar", well you had better get your radar checked as plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers are ordinary New Zealanders and you haven't done anything to assist us with the tab we pick up annually.

And they need to do something about their name MoBIE (the dicks)!!!

**Preventing Falls in the workplace. A big hype - but is it just a change in enforcement?**

A few members have attended the Department of Labour (DOL)

specialist tools of our trades to the un-registered public, fully aware that people must be intending to carry out the work for themselves or others in breach of the Act.

We can't wait to see what will happen when prisoners start coming out of jail as doctors and surgeons because remember plumbers have done more in the world for the health of people than doctors have every done but because we are referred to as "trades people" our skills are deemed inferior to others.

### Don't let the information get caught in SPAM

Here is some useful information that was sent to us about computer systems

Why are Yahoo! and Hotmail moving my email to the Spam folder? With many of today's email services like Yahoo mail and Hotmail, customers can configure their email account to more efficiently process their incoming mail.

Typically, a person is able to create a list of "known senders", or a "friends list", and email that comes from the people on the list goes straight through to the inbox.

If you are sending mail to someone who has not put you on these "known" lists, your mail is still being delivered. The downside to not being on these safe lists, though, is that your mail is likely going into a bulk folder or will be subject to email filters.

Although there is not much you can do about

seminar on prevention of falls in the workplace and have come out feeling the world of roof work has collapsed and poverty will set in after buying new equipment.

What the DOL is trying to do is prevent falls which they claim is costing the country 28 million dollars annually. Roofers are saying it will cost an additional \$3,000 for a domestic re-roof. Plumbers and gasfitters have looked at what the DOL is saying and have said a lot of one man jobs will become two man jobs with additional costs for scaffolding, or safety harness jobs.

We felt we needed more information on what was actually happening so we asked the DOL.

**Question:** Could you please point me in the right direction for what legislation is being implemented for this campaign or what legislation supports what we are being told we must do.

**Their response:** *Your question below has been forwarded to me for action. The Health and Safety in Employments Act 1992 (HSE Act) underpins our falls from heights campaign. Different sections of this Act relate to the taking of all practicable steps to prevent falls, depending on whether the person is an employer, a principal, a self-employed person or an employee. If you need any specific guidance relating to your industry, please feel free to contact Mr ....., an inspector from our office who specialises in construction industry matters.*

We put a call through to their contact earlier in the week but we haven't yet received a response from him.

It looks like not much has really changed apart from how the DOL will enforce the actions of tradespeople working at heights. It seems it is as it was before, where you must take "all practicable steps" to ensure no one is harmed. This campaign is targeting people while undertaking work. You need to note that the legislation does not apply to the home owner so they can do what they want, but we must abide by the legislation.

It seems all working at heights, including working off ladders, is deemed a significant hazard. Most of us have always worked that if the height was under three meters it was under different rules, well that is a misconception where the same rule has always applied, but has been enforced differently. Now it seems all heights must be dealt with the same.

1. Eliminate the hazard of working at height: use long-handled tools from ground level, build structures at ground level and lift them into place.
2. Isolate people from the hazard of working at height: use edge protection, use a guard railed platform (e.g., scaffold or elevating work platforms).
3. Minimise the distance and impact of the fall: Only take this step when you've exhausted both elimination and isolation as controls, use a total restraint system to prevent people being near height hazard, use fall arrest or work positioning systems i.e. personal fall

landing in the bulk folder at this time, there are some steps you can take to minimize it.

Place a reminder in every email you send asking the recipient to add you to their address book. Place a note on your subscribe confirmation pages asking the subscriber to add you to their address book now to make sure they get the next issue.

## Official Information Act Request

Following on from the issues of inmates undergoing plumbing training we thought we needed more information so we sent the following request to the Department of Corrections:

Under the Official Information Act we requested the following information pertaining to the training of inmates in Plumbing:

*What is the content of the training they are being provided with?*

*What is the duration of the training?*

*Who is providing the training?*

*What qualifications do inmates receive upon successful completion of the training?*

*What is the split of training practical vs theory?*

*What is the placement strategy for obtaining work in the plumbing industry for inmates upon release?*

*Why has plumbing been a targeted trade for this type of training?*

minimisation method, use safety nets or soft landing systems.

The DOL has put out “Best Practice Guideline for Working at Heights in New Zealand”. We suggest you get a copy of this. This is another law where if you don’t follow their recommendations you will need a lawyer to prove what you have done meets their requirements.

The idea of what they are proposing is great – great if EVERYONE in the industry takes it in to account – but we all know that there will be cowboys out there who won’t and who steal the work away from those that try to do everything correctly.

## The Government’s mixed message

We have a Government sending some very mixed messages at the moment.

Maurice Williamson, at the recent Master Plumbers Conference in Queenstown, described how he would like to see a NZ where anyone from Kaitaia to Bluff could log on to a computer and apply for a building consent, using a common format and then have an answer on that consent in 48 hours. It would be a consistent and transparent operation. He said this is what he is working towards and what worked in some other countries in the world.

On the other hand MED are looking at abandoning a consistent and transparent operation in the form of gas certification, which we all know is already on line, and moving towards every certifying gasfitter making up their own method of certification, moving it off line to paper invoices and the like and perhaps getting rid of the existing on line, 24/7 availability that the public and practitioners alike have to check addresses and see if work is certified. The existing system benefits home owners, real estate agents, practitioners, the insurance council etc. The reason all this was proposed – to save the public the cost of the certification fee – MED and DBH presented it to consultation groups as a consumer cost saving measure.

DoL now introduce a campaign – “Prevention from Falls” where plumbers number so insignificantly that they don’t feature at all in the statistics and yet what was once a one man one hour job of putting a flue through a roof – will now be either a two man job with a safety harness, or else scaffolding and one man etc. The cost to the consumer goes from perhaps \$200 – to several hundred, even thousands.

What is this government trying to do to practitioners – on one hand they are ditching something to allegedly save the consumer money (we are yet to be convinced this will actually happen) and on the other hand they are introducing ideas that will cost the consumer a fortune and in our view, have not yet been proved necessary. They are inconsistent in their approach – and from a voters point of view – it’s just a bloody minefield trying to negotiate what they are trying to achieve with all of this.

We couldn’t help but think these people never talk to each other and send out screwed up messages that we as the plebs and taxpayers keeping them all in jobs, then have to disseminate and try to work with. The attitude of DOL and everyone else like them is that it

We'll let you know what the reply is in about a months time when they respond to us.

## Donations

The Federation operates on your generosity and every little bit counts so if you want to make a donation you can either send a cheque made out to the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation,

or

make a direct deposit at any National Bank, deposit on line through internet banking or set up a month direct credit.

Account: National Bank  
06 0773 0319398 00

Cheques can be posted to:

Plumbers Gasfitters and  
Drainlayers Federation, 3  
Jupiter Grove,  
Trentham,  
Upper Hutt 5018

doesn't matter what it costs, because they sit in their taxpayer funded jobs with an almost unlimited income stream to dream up schemes to implement without fully checking them against a wider picture.

Working from heights is a prime example, but don't get us wrong – we like the idea of protection for workers and such like, but where is the common sense allowance for a trade trained person, who is NOT like an untrained home owner, or a do it yourselfer?

The fact that plumbers don't even feature in statistics tells you that they are not falling from rooves, chimneys etc, but are using their training to access the risk, and then implementing strategies around this – and sometimes that means they step off a ladder on to a roof without \$3000 worth of protection because they are confident IT IS SAFE and they CAN DO IT.

Perhaps John Key should be calling a few Ministers in to his office and bash their heads together until Mr Common Sense visits.

## Inmates undergo training in Plumbing and Drainlaying.

We have had quite a few members write to us about inmates undertaking training in Plumbing and Drainlaying and that the first prisoners undertaking qualifications in plumbing and drainlaying, automotive engineering, and painting and plastering are due to finish their 17-week courses next month.

This is what the Press said back in February: Trades-trained prisoners would be needed to work on Christchurch's rebuild because of a nationwide skills shortage, Corrigan said. *"We're going to have shortages in lots of areas."*

We feel for the young guys who have paid thousands of dollars to do a pre-trade and can't get jobs because now, in the name of rehabilitation, they have more people in the market going for the few jobs there are available but the ex convicts will have the support and assistance of the so called Justice department to get jobs.

They will no doubt pay employers to give ex convicts a job. Where is the justice in that? And again, the good old tax payer of NZ will pay for this, and ordinary youth who have attended pre-trades will have a student loan for their courses, while the ex-cons will undoubtedly have received their training for free!

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