



AMP 5 Excellence in Health & Safety Awards 2011

# Health and Safety Initiative of the Year (Quick Hitch)

**GBM**

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## ***Introduction***

GBM is a joint venture working for Thames Water as a framework design and build contractor.

A critical part of the GBM culture is its focus on Health and Safety: it will be a priority at every stage of the delivery process from design through to commissioning and handover.

Our Health and Safety vision is to achieve a zero incident target based on continuous improvement in behaviours encouraged by consistent leadership, high performance targets and the promotion of best practice with all stakeholders.

A robust safety management system, comprising of a Health and Safety Policy, together with Standards, Procedures, Checklists and ProFormas, provides guidance on how GBM and its sub contractors will undertake their work in accordance with all relevant statutes. This is supported by a behavioural based Safety Training Programme aimed at producing a thorough and shared understanding of the health and safety risks. This has proven to increase awareness of health and safety responsibilities and lead to better performance.

GBM's commitment to improved Health & Safety is led by a team of Safety Advisers, supported by Senior Managers, who form the Safety Advisory team. They review audits, implement training and develop initiatives which are endorsed by the Senior Leadership Team and Board Members. Comments and feedback are encouraged from all quarters and we are pleased that so many employees are keen to input best practice from their own background in order to enhance the procedures we have set down.

GBM believe that one of the greatest initiatives to be adopted by themselves in the past 12 months is the implementation of the quick hitch control measures which prevent buckets detaching from excavators whilst been operated. In line with HSE recommendations and prevention of incidents, GBM do not permit the use of semi-automatic quick hitches and have adopted a series of control measures to help prevent human error occurring during the change of attachments to excavators.

## ***1. Tangible Benefits to Health and Safety, Including cost and Risk Reduction.***

### ***2. Originality***

GBM have developed for their Quick Hitches initiative a booklet, poster and recommendations in house as other controls within the industry did not appear to be effective. GBM use these controls in conjunction with other controls such as alarms and warning systems in the cab of excavators.

GBM rolled the booklet out across their sites. Machine operators have to complete the booklet every time they change the bucket/attachment. Slinger/signallers/ banksman have to countersign the sheet to verify that the relevant checks have been completed. GBM have created posters to promote the safe use of excavators, and have devised a sheet of recommendations which is briefed out to all operators of excavators, Site Managers and Supervisors and slinger/signallers/banksman. On starting work at site operators have to prove their competence through visual assessment as well as having a CPCS card of competence and log of experience. GBM also work to the HSE recommendations made following several incidents throughout the industry and do not allow the use of semi-automatic quick hitches on any of their sites.

### ***3. Health & Safety***

The booklet, signage and recommendations have a minimal print cost, negligible against the cost of a fatality or major injury.

The Health & Safety Executive has expressed concerns over semi-automatic quick hitches and these are not employed by GBMJV. However, automatic quick hitches are not failsafe as the detachment of a bucket from an automatic quick hitch occurred in the past 12 months and was down to human error.

The changing of buckets can be carried out up to 30 times a day in order to maximise a machines productivity. However, 13% of all accidents involving excavators are attributed to the bucket detaching from a quick hitch and injuring ground workers, leading to mostly fatal and major injuries. Many more near misses are not even being reported, meaning quick hitch failures are more common than first thought.

#### **4. Employee Engagement**

Machine operators and banksman have been compliant in the completing of the booklet, ensuring the right control measures and safe working practices have been implemented. Operators are all aware of the fatalities and major injuries which have been caused through the operation of excavators and realise that control measures are a necessity in the safe operation of excavators. Site Managers have effectively implemented the control measures.

#### **5 Leadership Commitment**

The GBM Safety Leadership Team produced the booklet, recommendations and the posters, the GBM Health and Safety Forum agreed for them to be rolled out and implemented on site as per section 3.

#### **6. Attachments**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Evidence of</b>
1.1 Quick Hitch Check	Form which is printed in a booklet where the operator has to sign to say a sequence of checks has been completed and the banksman has to countersign.
1.2 Quick Hitch poster	Poster promotes safe working practices with quick hitches and no semi automatic quick hitches
1.3 Quick Hitch Recommendations	List of control measures for safe working, briefed to all excavator operators and banksman on site and forwarded to plant suppliers
2 Completed check	Completed quick hitch check sheet.