

On one of the hottest days of the year, more than 50 delegates attended the PASMA Annual Meeting held for the first time at Moxhull Hall Hotel, Wishaw, West Midlands.



Brian Houston receives a PASMA lifetime achievement award

Preceded by meetings of the Executive Committee and full Council, delegates from all over the United Kingdom heard chairman Paul Gallacher report on another successful year for the association. Following unanimous approval of the association's accounts for the 12 months ended 31 December 2007, highlights of his report included:

- The continued growth of the PASMA training scheme and its acceptance as the industry standard for access tower training.

- Completion of the revised training scheme procedures.
- The appointment of PASMA's first training scheme manager.
- The association's successful participation in Safety & Health Expo 2008 at the National Exhibition Centre.

The search for suitable property to purchase as the association's administration centre continues, but the chairman explained that meanwhile a decision had been taken to acquire a short-term lease on a city centre property in Glasgow. This would provide an initial base for the new in-house secretariat and allow the recruitment of staff to begin. It is hoped that the new team will be in place by 1st January 2009. Once the meeting's formalities were concluded Gallacher, in his role as chairman, presented two awards on behalf of members.



Chairman Paul Gallacher addresses the AGM

The first, acknowledging three continuous decades of service to the association was made to Eric Abbey. The second, a PASMA lifetime achievement award was made to Brian Houston, a former chairman, marking his retirement from the association and acknowledging his award of an MBE for services to the construction industry.

The venue was so popular and proved such a success, the association has booked it again for next year's annual meeting on Tuesday, 14 July 2009.



## Access in Action

### Low level access guidance

With the use of low level access products becoming ever more widespread as alternative and, arguably, safer methods of low level working at height, it was inevitable that misuse through lack of product training on such products would occur in such a fast growing market.

The PASMA manufacturers' technical committee is currently formulating product standards to ensure a minimum acceptable specification is laid down for this type of equipment.

Whilst there has been speculation on its content, it is still in its formative stages. However, it is anticipated that a final draft will be completed by the latter part of the year, and interested parties will be invited to participate in the consultation process, prior to its publication.

Like everything else, the equipment has its limitations and agreeing a minimum acceptable standard is only part of the answer. Users must be trained and competent in the specific aspects of this versatile equipment, including the peculiar hazards and common misuse of the equipment.

PASMA low level access training, backed up by the now familiar certificate and photocard, is available from a network of some 300 approved training centres throughout the UK and Ireland.

## PASMA training scheme published

Following the consultation period and the regional instructor workshops, the review of the PASMA training scheme procedures is now complete. A copy of the revised training scheme procedures and all the relevant forms are now available for members to download. Essentially, the revised procedures and forms do nothing more than reflect current practice, but there are some points that demand special attention. These include:

- In order to prevent reported abuse of the scheme, it is now clearly stated that only approved training centres are allowed to purchase printed PASMA forms.
- All approved instructors now have to comply with mandatory continuing professional development (CPD requirements in order to maintain their approval status.

- Provisions in respect of the practical training element have been strengthened by the introduction of a new 'Practical Assessment Record' form.
- Unannounced, or unscheduled, audits of approved training centres are now formally included.

Peter Bennett, managing director said: "These changes and enhancements ensure that PASMA training remains the first choice for any organisation seeking the highest standards of knowledge, skills and best practice. The course assesses competence, the cornerstone of the Work at Height Regulations, which has to be proved before a PASMA card and certificate can be issued." The association is extremely grateful to all those who took the time and trouble to participate in the consultation and review process.

## New PocketCard includes checklist

'Start here, from the ground' is the instruction on the latest PocketCard from PASMA. Promoting competence in association with the HSE, it goes on to list nine things that must be checked before using a mobile access tower, including the adjustable legs, stabilisers, bracing and frame locking devices.

The reverse of the card gives specific advice on how to record an inspection in accordance with the requirements of the Work at Height Regulations. These require that 'Mobile access towers are inspected regularly by a competent person and that a report of the inspection must be provided within 24 hours to the person for

whom the inspection was carried out'. PASMA has agreed with the HSE that completion of a PASMA 'Tower Inspection Record' by a competent PASMA-trained operative and affixing it to a tower satisfies these requirements without the need for further documentation. More details at [www.pasma.co.uk](http://www.pasma.co.uk)





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