

Cameron u-turn on construction law

Conservative leader David Cameron last week did a u-turn on his opposition to regulations that could play a key role in improving health and safety in the construction industry ([Risks 299](#)). The move came after his Early Day Motion calling for the Construction (Design Management) (CDM) Regulations 2007 to be annulled attracted just 12 signatures from MPs. The motion had been criticised by unions and safety professionals' organisation IOSH. Tory health and safety spokesperson Andrew Selous MP told a Commons debate last week it was never in fact the intention of his party to seek the annulment of the regulations. "There is a set form of words for an early day motion and I personally think it unfortunate that it has to use the phrase 'annul' the regulations," he said. "My party and I are wholly committed to the highest possible standards of health and safety." The parliamentary under secretary of state for work and pensions, Anne McGuire MP, accused the Conservatives of "a feat of political athleticism". She added: "The Opposition give out the message that on health and safety issues they see regulation and burden, whereas we see the welfare of the construction worker. The message that has been given here to the construction industry, to clients and to cowboy builders is that the Conservatives want to annul regulations that are about improving the health and safety of workers in this country." Richard Jones, IOSH's director of technical affairs, commented: "Seeking an annulment was wholly inappropriate and sent out entirely the wrong message to business. This type of knee-jerk reaction to health and safety improvements must never be repeated. We hope that those in positions to make decisions and influence public opinion act in a more responsible and considered way in future." Provisional Health and Safety Executive (HSE) figures released in March suggest construction deaths in 2006/07 increased by over 30 per cent on the preceding year ([Risks 305](#)).

- [IOSH news release. Early Day Motion: EDM 1151, David Cameron.](#)