

Regulation volumes too high

Dozens of new business regulations that were implemented on 1 October will add to the unnecessary hours employers already spend dealing with Government 'red tape', the Federation of Small Businesses (Tel: 01253 336000) has warned.

While the FSB supports the concept of Common Commencement Dates, it said there is concern that the volume of new legislation to be released will overwhelm small businesses. FSB research shows that, if firms had less administrative duties, they could then concentrate more on employee training.

Its national chairman, John Wright, said: "Businesses will be expected to tackle around 20 new regulations. This goes against Government pledges to cut back on the amount of regulation. Having a

Common Commencement Date goes some way to helping businesses prepare for new regulation, but the volume of legislation is just getting too much. In these tough times, it is important for small businesses to remain economically active rather than spending their time filling in forms to adapt to new rules. "The impact and costs of new regulations affecting small businesses should be properly analysed and adapted accordingly."

In reply, Business and Competitiveness Minister Shriti Vadera said: "Many of the important changes bring significant benefits for businesses. For example, abolishing the need to display insurance certificates and simplifying information requirements for firms will save them about £80 million."

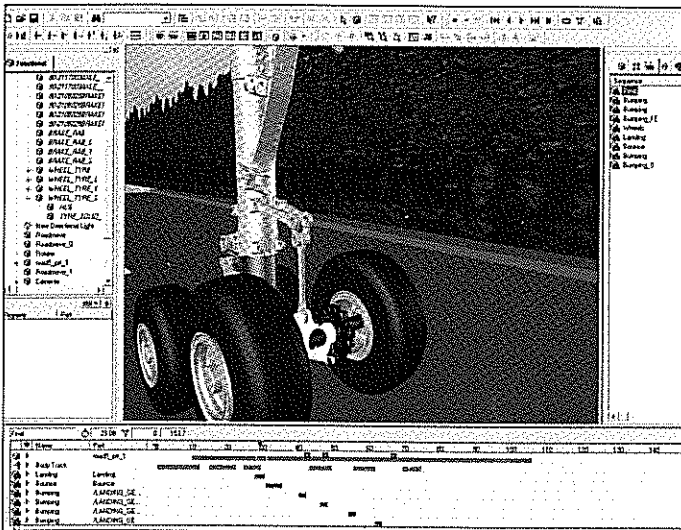
Virtual Reality system

A second Stereo Works Virtual Reality system from Sale-based Virtualis Ltd (Tel: 0161 969 1155) has been installed in a new £10 million 'Rolls-Royce Factory of the Future'. This facility — a collaboration between the University of Sheffield's Advanced

Manufacturing Research Centre and Boeing — is dedicated to developing new technology-driven solutions for materials forming, metal working and casting, in order to help UK manufacturers remain competitive. AMRC's first portable Stereo Works system, which allows people to see virtual objects and environments in 3-D, has been taken all over the world. The latest system is

bigger and can handle very large CAD files. Paul Scott, head of AMRC IT, says: "We have already developed a virtual model of our 'Rolls-Royce Factory of the Future', and this has helped us to plan layouts and ensure that the space is flexible. For example, we had 7,500 visitors in 4 1/2 years in our last building, and we anticipate much greater numbers coming here, so we have created a high-level walk-way around and over our experimental shop-floor, which will allow our engineers to work without disruption."

Researchers at AMRC try to find simple ways to reduce waste and cost and to speed up processes to give the businesses it works with a competitive advantage. They create different concept methodologies in CAD, and subsequently Virtual Reality, before using their Stereo Works systems to communicate their ideas. Like Virtualis, AMRC works with all the major CAD companies, so the resulting models can be easily integrated into the companies' current ways of working.



Success for Addison McKee

Addison McKee, the tube-bending and end-forming technology specialist which has its UK headquarters in Preston (Tel: 01772 334511), has said that considerable interest was shown in its product range at the recent MTA Vietnam 2008 exhibition, held in Ho Chi Minh City.

Exhibiting in association with Melchers Vietnam, Addison McKee presented a wide range of its tube-manipulation solutions, with a

particular focus on models created specifically for the automotive sector. Roger Dutton, general manager of Addison McKee-China, said: "As a result of the rapid growth of the automotive industry across the Asian economies, many visitors to our booth were naturally interested in our CNC tube benders, such as the all-electric DataBend DB75.

"Indeed, as a direct outcome of the show, Melchers Vietnam has secured appointments with numerous interested parties across the region."

Events

● For those unable to attend EuroBLECH later this month, Trumpf Ltd will be exhibiting several of the new machines to be shown in Hanover at an Open House at its Luton headquarters on 2-4 December. Anyone wishing to register for this event, should call the Trumpf sales office on 0844 482 0188.

● Parts 2 Clean, the international trade fair for cleaning within the production process, will take place 28-30 October at the Stuttgart Exhibition Centre in Germany. For more information, phone 0049 711 854085.

Agencies

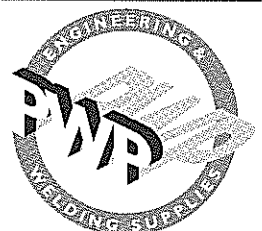
● Fastener specialist Northern Precision Ltd, Doncaster (Tel: 01302 836010) is now the exclusive UK and Republic of Ireland distributor of the Enigma series of hand-held air-operated riveting tools that are manufactured in Italy by rivet specialist MMA.

● Birmingham-based Leader Chuck Systems Ltd (Tel: 0121 771 4843) is the new exclusive UK agent for Lexair Inc's collet work-holding systems.

● Euro Press Services Ltd, of Cradley Heath (Tel: 01384 410000), has been appointed the exclusive UK and Republic of Ireland distributor for the Jiangsu Yangli Group, which is one of the largest manufacturers of metal-forming machinery in China.

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