

Energy and Climate Change Directorate

Energy Division

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Mrs Lyndsey Ward

By email:

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Our ref: 2013/0013866

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Dear Mrs Ward

Thank you for your email of 28 May to Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism, about safety aspects of turbines in school playgrounds. I have been asked to respond.

The wind industry has an excellent health and safety record, and incidents are extremely rare. **They obviously have no idea how many failures occur or that many are not reported – time something was done about this. Renewables UK confirmed 1500 incidents in the UK alone in the 5 years to Dec.2011 but refuse to release details.** Installers are responsible for ensuring safe installation of wind turbines **but not subsequent supervision.** Any installer offering a system that can earn money from the UK Government's Feed-In Tariff must be certified by the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS). Specific standards and working practices must be met in order for an installer to become a member of the schemes thus safeguarding not only the consumer but also the actual turbines. Further information on the MCS scheme can be found here: <http://www.microgenerationcertification.org/> **We know that – see links in the Report.**

Windfarm developments undergo intense scrutiny by local planning authorities **it was perfectly obvious that Planning Officers and members of the Planning Committees know nothing about wind turbines (presumably other Councils are the same)** and environmental agencies (both SNH and SEPA) during planning application and construction stages **we are discussing single turbines, not windfarms.** Wind turbine developments in schools would be subject to exactly the same scrutiny, with health and safety assessments being considered by the local authority before planning permission is granted. **They were not – suggest he watches some webcasts of Planning Meetings and reads Planning and other reports linked from our Report. In some cases it appeared no site specific surveys had been carried out and safety was never considered. All in our Report.**

The health and safety aspect of a development can be factored into the risk assessment that wind farm operators may carry out. A report produced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 2006 (The Health And Safety Risks And Regulatory Strategy Related To Energy Developments) concluded that in general, wind turbines pose a low risk of injury both to workers and members of the public. The report stated that *“The main industry trade association, the BWEA, has established widely-used Guidelines for health and safety in the wind energy industry. These identify the hazards and provide guidance on their management. HSE has been actively involved in the production and revision of these guidelines”* (para 171) and *“The history of the industry indicates that the likelihood of occurrence of incidents from these hazards is low.”* (para 172). **The HSE is not involved post construction.**

The HSE has also undertaken a further study to assess the risk of injuries/fatalities associated with wind turbines of all scales of development which will be published in the near future. You can find out more about the HSE and its work in renewable technology here: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/eet/index.htm> See correspondence with HSE in our Report.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely

COLIN URQUHART
Renewables Routemap