

National Irish Safety Organisation

Update!



*NISO is a not-for-profit voluntary body,
dedicated to the promotion of health
and safety in Irish workplaces*

AUTUMN 2011



CODE OF PRACTICE *for* SAFETY IN ROOFWORK

INSIDE

**HSA COMPLETE THIRD
YEAR OF E-LEARNING
FOR THE EDUCATION
SECTOR**

**INTERNATIONAL
FOCUS ON FARM
SAFETY AND HEALTH**

National Irish Safety Organisation

Update!

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NISO President Reports

For some time now uncertainty has remained over the destiny of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA).

It now looks clear that for the time being the HSA will remain a stand alone enforcement agency and will not be amalgamated with the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA), as was previously proposed by the McCarthy 'An Bord Snip Nua' report. In these changing times, health and safety needs to remain focused so that we do not slip back in time, thus undoing the achievements in health and safety standards in the workplace.

Despite the number of people in full time employment decreasing over the past two years, the number of fatal workplace accidents remains at a high level. As of 20 September 2011, there has been 42 fatalities in the Irish workplace, an increase on the same time last year (37). Agriculture, forestry and fishing account for 22 of these fatalities. I would urge everybody to be vigilant and act to prevent this increasing trend.

Taking Care Of Business

On the evening of Thursday 6 October, as part of the NISO annual conference programme, a free workshop entitled

'Taking Care of Business' will be hosted by the HSA at the Malton Hotel, Killarney, Co Kerry. Aimed at businesses employing less than 50 employees, the workshop will provide practical advice and demonstrate the tools required to create safer workplaces with the view to reduce accidents, reduce administrative burdens and generally help small business owners and managers understand how effective management of health and safety in their workplace contributes to the overall success of the business.

Friday 7 October is the date of the NISO National Health and Safety Conference and Safety Awards Dinner, which is being hosted by our southern region and taking place in the Malton Hotel, Killarney, Co Kerry. The theme of the conference is 'Health and Safety in Challenging Times'.

A panel of national and international speakers will share their own experiences and knowledge of: managing health and safety in challenging times; effective safety leadership and governance; safety of young persons in the



Pauric Corrigan, president, National Irish Safety Organisation

workplace; the legal implications of cutting safety costs and nano technology. The HSA will also present an overview of safety, health and welfare in the workplace.

Good governance in challenging times will contribute to a safe, healthy and productive workplace.

Safety Awards

On the evening of October 7, the All Ireland Safety Awards Gala Dinner will take place. Submissions for this years awards were of a very high standard and for the fourth consecutive year a high level of entries has been maintained. This is very satisfying to see and due credit will be given to those organisations when they receive their appropriate award.

I look forward to welcoming you at this year's 48th Annual Health and Safety Conference and Awards Presentation.



Visit www.niso.ie to download previous copies of the NISO Update!

NISO Update! is issued by the National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO).



Material printed in NISO Update! is not necessarily endorsed by the National Irish Safety Organisation.

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International Focus on Farm Safety and Health

The three day meeting on Agricultural Occupational Health and Safety, jointly organised by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and Teagasc, was attended by delegates from nine countries including the Nordic Countries, USA, Germany, Italy and the UK. Topics discussed by the international delegates included health and safety management, health of farmers, dairying sector, livestock safety and learning/knowledge transfer in health and safety.

Speaking at the meeting, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney, T.D., called for more international cooperation and knowledge sharing in order to improve the safety and health of farmers. "It is only right that we benchmark ourselves against the best in Europe and strive to achieve the high standards set in other countries. Judging by the number of countries represented at this meeting, it is clear that improving safety and health in agriculture is a challenge of international scale and importance".

The chief executive of the HSA, Martin O'Halloran, said that the major challenge in Ireland is to change the culture to a strong 'safety first' mindset. "Our farm safety visits and prevention activities are very much geared towards

influencing a positive change in attitudes. This year our 3,000 farm safety visits are focusing on the main danger areas; tractors and machinery and working with livestock. We are also prioritising efforts aimed at children and the elderly on farms, both of whom are particularly vulnerable".

Arising out of the international meeting, delegates dedicated themselves to the continuation of the sharing of knowledge and expertise in occupational health and safety in agriculture. They called for greater focus internationally on the specific behavioural issues that lead to the unacceptable high rate of serious injury and death evident in farming.

For further information on the Agricultural Occupational Health and Safety meeting, please view the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.



DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

NISO Introduction to Occupational Safety and Health,
26 September 2011, Athlone
Institute of Technology.

Taking Care of Business - free evening workshop hosted by the HSA,
6 October 2011, Malton Hotel,
Killarney, Co Kerry.

NISO Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition
7 October 2011, Malton Hotel,
Killarney, Co Kerry.

Safety Awards Presentation Dinner,
7 October 2011, Malton Hotel,
Killarney, Co Kerry.

Safety and Health at Work, D20165, FETAC Level 5,
11 October 2011, NISO Training
Centre, Ballymount, Dublin 12.

IBEC Launch Report on Absence Levels at Work

A report on absenteeism published by the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) found that a total of 11 million days are lost to absence every year. While the report shows a reduced rate of absenteeism since the last comprehensive survey in 2004, IBEC said there was significant scope to further reduce the rate. The report is based on data provided by 635 companies employing in excess of 110,000 employees. The survey was conducted in 2010 and based on full-year 2009 absentee levels.

The report, *Employee Absenteeism - A Guide to Managing Absence*, found that:

- 11 million days are lost to absence every year,
- absenteeism costs business €1.5 billion or €818 per employee,
- employees missed 5.98 days on average, an absence rate of 2.58%, compared to 3.38% in the last comprehensive survey in 2004,
- absence levels were higher in large organisations, 3.58% for companies employing over 500 employees, versus 2.17% for companies with less than 50 employees,
- the main cause of short-term absence cited for both males and females is minor illness, 4% of companies cited alcohol

and alcohol-related illness as being a leading cause of short-term absence for males, while the figure is 1% for females,

- call centres recorded the highest absence rate at 3.67% while software companies had the lowest rate at 1.56%.

For further information or to purchase the *Employee Absenteeism - A Guide to Managing Absence* report, please visit the IBEC website: www.ibec.ie.



HSA Annual Report and Statistics Summary

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) have launched their 2010 Annual Report and Statistics Summary. Speaking at the launch, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton, T.D., said: "I am extremely concerned at the increase in workplace fatalities. Although 2009 represented a record low,

every workplace fatality is avoidable and is a terrible tragedy for a family. Combating workplace fatalities represents a huge challenge both for the HSA and employers across the country and I will assist them in any way I can".

Falls from height were the most common cause of workplace deaths in 2010, while manual handling related injuries continue to account for approximately one third of non-fatal injuries.

Brian O'Connor, health and safety specialist at NISO, writes in further detail about the HSA Annual Report and Statistics Summary on page six of this edition of the NISO Update.

Irish Safety



OBITUARY

Michael Buckley R.I.P.

Michael Buckley, who passed away on 2 September, was a member of the eastern regional committee of NISO for almost 15 years before illness forced him to withdraw from active participation in the region. Notwithstanding this, Michael kept in constant contact with the region and would attend the regional seminars and annual quiz. Michael also served as the regional representative on the executive committee for five years.

Michael worked as a sheet metal worker in Guinness before becoming their safety manager. As their safety manager he encouraged his colleagues to participate in the NISO Safety Quiz and to enter the NISO Safety Awards.

As a member of the eastern regional committee, Michael was very proactive and was always working in the background getting all the details in place both for the seminars and quizzes. He would delight the committee members by turning up to the January meeting and announcing that he had all the question papers, answer sheets and marking sheets ready for the quiz.

Michael was the perfect gentleman who made friendships very easily and was very generous with advice, information and assistance to all he came into contact. Throughout his long illness he never complained, just faced up to the situation and lived his life to the fullest.

Michael will be greatly missed by the organisation, especially the members of the eastern regional committee. His passing leaves an enormous gap in the lives of his wife Anne, daughters Caroline, Louise, Mairéad and Micaela, his sons-in-law and his grandchildren. To all of them we pass our condolences.

Harry Galvin, NISO Secretary

Safe Driving for Work Seminars

An Garda Síochána, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the Road Safety Authority (RSA) have announced that they will be running a series of free seminars in October to promote awareness of the importance of having safe driving for work practices.

The information provided at each seminar will assist employers, managers and supervisors to identify the risks associated with driving for work. Participants will receive assistance on how to develop an effective driving for work management plan and will be updated on the issues that impact on their safety management and operational decisions. Free resources will also be provided to help manage the risk involved with driving for work.

For further information on the safe driving for work seminars, please view the HSA website: www.hsa.ie. Registration can be made for the

seminars online at www.drivingforwork.ie.



EU-OSHA Online Risk Assessment

Launched at the 19th World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Istanbul, the 'online interactive risk assessment' project marks the first initiative at EU level to facilitate workplace risk assessment. Developed by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), the innovative tool will help Europe's 20 million micro and small enterprises to improve safety and health for their workers by assessing risks through an easy-to-use and cost-free web application.

The vision of EU-OSHA's landmark project is to assist small enterprises in

putting in place a step-by-step risk assessment process – starting with the identification and evaluation of workplace risks, through to the decision making on preventive action, identification of adequate measures, to continued monitoring and reporting. The aim is to reduce the burden for small enterprises of carrying out and documenting their risk assessments easily and quickly while maintaining accuracy.

For further information on the 'online interactive risk assessment' project, please visit the EU-OSHA website: <http://osha.europa.eu/en>

Code of Practice for Safety in Roofwork



Des Brandon, managing director,
T Brandon Agencies Ltd.

The launch of the Health and Safety Authority's (HSA) *Code of Practice for Safety in Roofwork* provides a timely reminder for all those involved to reflect on the issues surrounding safety when working at height.

Statistics show that falls from height account for half of all fatalities in construction and construction related activity (construction related activity covers a wide range of works in a wide range of industries including maintenance and repairs).

Not everyone working on a roof is a trained roofer. Many people access a roof for other purposes such as maintenance of plant and equipment, cleaning gutters or for carrying out surveys, so it is essential to ensure that all those accessing a roof are fully trained and competent. The code of practice addresses the main problems associated with falls from height including falls through fragile materials and from unprotected roof edges. The code is aimed at anyone planning, arranging or supervising roof work or work on roofs and covers new buildings, repair, maintenance, cleaning work and demolition. The aim of the code of practice is to promote safety on roofs by helping to identify the main cause of accidents and ill health and explaining how to eliminate the risks associated with roof work.

Guidance

The *Code of Practice for Safety in Roofwork* gives recommendations and practical guidance on issues such as:

- roles and responsibilities,
- role of the project supervisor design process (PSDP),
- role of the designer,
- role of the project supervisor construction stage (PSCS),
- role of the contractor and others,
- role of the supplier,
- standard domestic roofs,
- commercial, industrial and agricultural buildings,
- working safely,
- controlling health hazards,
- types of roof work,
- training.

Hierarchy of control

The hierarchy of fall protection methods as set out in the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007* must be followed with those in control of the work, considering collective protection systems before the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as safety harnesses.

Examples of solutions following the hierarchy for work at height include the following:

- **Avoid** by using a telescopic pole with camera attachment to carry out roof surveys.
- **Prevent** by using roof edge protection, scaffold with guardrails and nettings, mobile elevated work platforms (MEWPs) or restraint system such as harness and short lanyard to prevent the user reaching the roof edge.
- **Minimise** by using beanbags or inflatable air bags under the working area and ensuring all those working at height are properly trained. Personal fall arrest systems should only be used as a last resort.

Competency

When employing a company to carry out any form of roof work it is essential that the company and its workers are competent. Competency includes:

- knowledge of the work being undertaken,
- experience of the latest techniques, standards and materials so that the work can be carried out safely. This would ideally be through membership of a relevant trade organisation so that they are updated regularly on changes to legislation and standards,
- training or accreditation by a recognised training body.

Training should include safe working practices as well as health and safety issues relating to their work such as asbestos, manual handling, risk assessments, work at height and work at height rescue.

All those working on a roof need to have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to carry out the work safely and competently. Those who are undergoing training or are less experienced will require supervision by a competent person.

Competency is an ongoing process that is developed through work experience and regular training. Workers must be trained in all health and safety issues specific to their trade, including the risks they might encounter such as asbestos or fragile materials.

Training for roof workers should ideally include the relevant health and safety disciplines including work at height (covering the regulations, risk assessments, selection of work equipment and rescue training), PPE, ladders and MEWPs. In addition to this training, more specialist areas such as first aid, asbestos

awareness, risk assessor and fire safety should be included.

Method statements

A competent person should prepare a method statement before any form of work commences. This method statement should identify the risks, include control measures required in addition to working positions, state access routes to and on the roof and necessary training.

Safe access to the roof

Safe access to the roof area must be carefully planned in order to select the correct access equipment. Access equipment includes:

- General access scaffolds: must be designed, erected, altered and dismantled by competent people.
- Tower scaffolds and stair towers: the manufacturer or hirer must provide an instruction manual explaining how to erect the equipment safely. Anyone erecting the scaffold or tower must be trained and competent.
- MEWPs: All equipment must be maintained in a safe condition. If being used as a means of access to the roof, safe access from the MEWP to the roof must be an integral part of the equipment's design.
- Ladders must be appropriate for the task and maintained so that they are safe to use.

Anyone using a ladder must be trained in correct selection and usage.

This article is an overview of certain areas within the *Code of Practice for Safety in Roofwork* and does not cover all subjects addressed in the publication. A full copy of the code of practice can be obtained from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

HSA Annual Report and Statistics Summary



Brian O'Connor, health and safety specialist, National Irish Safety Organisation

Brian O'Connor, health and safety specialist at NISO, summarises the Health and Safety Authority's (HSA) Annual Report 2010 and Summary of Workplace Injury, Illness and Fatality Statistics 2009-2010.

Last year the HSA carried out 16,714 workplace inspections and investigations (a reduction of 9.5% compared to the previous year), issued 914 Improvement Notices and 599 Prohibition Notices and brought 27 prosecutions to a conclusion. Sentences in successful prosecutions resulted in total fines of €571,900. In addition, two 12 month suspended custodial sentences were handed down.

In the same year, 48 people were killed in workplace accidents, an increase of five on the record low of 43 reported in 2009. 750,000 workdays were lost due to occupational injuries and illnesses in 2010. This is almost half the number of days lost in 2009 and is the lowest recorded number of days lost in the last decade.

The HSA reduced administrative costs by over €2m in 2010. Despite this saving, the HSA's operating surplus reduced to €237,122, a reduction of

€620,011 from the 2009 surplus of €857,133. The Authority also saw its Oireachtas grants reduced by over €2.5m in 2010.

Agriculture

Despite employing only 6% of the working population; the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector reported the highest number of worker fatalities for the third consecutive year. With 29 fatalities, the sector accounted for 60% of the 48 fatalities in 2010. Agriculture itself accounted for 22 fatalities with the age bracket ranging from 1 to 82 years of age.

Farm inspections increased by 40% in 2010. This increase will continue in 2011 with a planned programme of 3000 inspections. Despite the tragic outcomes for the sector, the HSA ended the year with increased confidence, the key stakeholders in the farming community having pledged their increased participation and called for action on the reduction of deaths and accidents.

The construction sector recorded 6 fatalities in 2010, the lowest number recorded in the sector since the Authority's records began in 1989. This saw a reduction in the fatality rate to 4.5 fatalities per 100,000 workers in the sector, the lowest rate since the 2006 figure of 4.3 fatalities per 100,000 workers.

Self-employed

Of the 48 fatalities in 2010, six involved non-workers. Of the 42 worker fatalities, 22 involved self-employed persons and 21 of these were working in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector. This is the highest percentage of fatalities involving the self-employed ever recorded by the HSA. The remaining 20 worker fatalities in 2010 were made up by family workers (2) and employees (18).

Another unique statistic that arose in 2010 is that all workplace fatalities involved male victims.

Falls from height were the most common cause of workplace deaths in 2010, with 10 such fatal accidents recorded. The majority of these occurred in farming and construction. Elderly workers continue to figure highly in workplace fatalities, particularly those involved in farming, with all seven fatalities involving persons aged 65 years and over occurring in this sector. Also, just over 41% of the 48 workplace fatalities were over the age of 55 years.

Non-fatal injury and illness

The number of persons suffering injury or illness in 2009 fell by 25% from the numbers in 2008. The HSA noted a large reduction in the numbers and rates of persons suffering injury causing 4+ days absence in 2009 (6.2 workers out of every 1000 workers), the lowest rate ever recorded by the CSO. A similar trend was noted in 4+ days absence due to illness, a rate of 6.6

per 1000 workers.

Male workers continue to have higher injury and illness rates than female workers, while workers aged between 20 and 24 years continue to display some of the highest injury rates. However, this age group continue to display the lowest rate of illness while the 65+ year age group recorded the highest rate of illness.

Manual handling related injuries continue to account for one third of all reported injuries, followed by slip, trip and fall incidents (21%). In terms of work environment, the highest proportion (16%) of reported non-fatal injuries occurred in the production area, factories or workshops.

For further information and to download the *Annual Report 2010* and *Summary of Workplace Injury, Illness and Fatality Statistics 2009-2010*, please visit the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.



National Irish Safety Organisation



48th Annual Health & Safety Conference & Awards Presentation

Health and Safety in Challenging Times

SPEAKERS:

Edel Niland, Aisling Butler, Martin O'Halloran, Frank Barry, Keith Scott, Brendan Butler, Jerry Kennelly, Siobhan Donnelly.

Site Safety Visit & Workshop: Thursday, 6 October 2011

Conference & Awards Dinner: Friday, 7 October 2011

The Malton Hotel, Killarney, Co Kerry



Supported by:



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Health and Safety Authority completes its third year of e-learning for the education sector.

Educating workers is a key goal of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). Joanne Harmon, education manager with the HSA, writes about the Authority's development of on-line e-learning courses.



Joanne Harmon, education manager, HSA

The HSA has just completed its third year of providing an on-line e-learning summer course for primary school teachers, as one of a number of Department of Education and Science approved courses. With almost 1,200 teachers and principals completing the course over three summers, it has proved to be a highly successful way of raising awareness of health and safety issues in schools, and covering the essentials that all boards of management and employees within the school need to be aware of.

ALISON

It is one of a series of e-learning modules for the education sector that the Authority has developed, through www.alison.com.

ALISON is a Galway based global e-learning organisation, that develops and hosts e-learning, whose aim it is to provide courses free of charge to the end-user. A learning management system is built into the software which allows for the registration and monitoring of groups. The Authority has concentrated on developing very high quality content with high levels of interactivity, attractive visuals, on-screen text and audio commentary to maximize the learning potential and to reflect the variety of ways in which people learn.

Teachers jumped at the chance of completing the on-line course which was free of charge, and could be accessed anytime of the day or night at home or away. The courseware allows you to pick up where you left off so it does not have to be completed at one sitting. In a post-course evaluation survey, 76.4% of respondents rated the quality of content as excellent and 99.3% of learners said they would use elements of the course in the classroom. A very

high percentage of respondents at 98.7% said they would recommend the course to a colleague which gives it a very definite thumbs up from teachers. The on-line element of the course is available free of charge 24/7 at www.alison.com/hsa and is entitled, 'An Introduction to Managing Safety in Schools'. It is applicable to primary and post-primary schools.

Lessons

The courseware was divided into five lessons to include the following:

Lesson 1: Legislation to include duties and responsibilities under the 2005 Act and the safety statement.

Lesson 2: An introduction to risk assessment and detailed content on hazards, measuring risk and control measures.

Lesson 3: An introduction to emergency planning, accident reporting and dangerous occurrences.

Lesson 4: Health and safety management systems.

Lesson 5: Manual handling.

End of lesson assessments recorded learners' progress through the courseware.

Teachers were further required to participate in discussion forums moderated by the education team at the HSA. This allowed them to raise issues for discussion with their peers, come up with and share solutions to common problems and also served to provide vital information to the Authority around the safety culture in schools and how systems operate and indeed vary from school to school. Under-reporting of accidents in schools has been significant over the years which can make it difficult to get an accurate profile of the sector. As well as addressing the reporting of accidents as part of the courseware, the kind of information shared by scores of teachers in a discussion forum gives you a great 'fly on the wall' insight into the challenges facing schools in budget-stretched times.

The off-line work associated with the course included completing an assignment on approaches

to managing safety in schools as well as a reflective learning log which were all submitted by uploading files to the ALISON website. They were corrected by the HSA education team and results posted to the learner's profile on-line.

E-Learning

So what is it about e-learning that makes it such an attractive option for learners? E-learning supports real-time access and in today's world of busy lives combined with the mantra of life-long learning, it has become a meaningful and real way of going about the business of learning for many people. Traditional face to face classes require that those who participate must adhere to a training schedule and turn up on time and alongside other learners. E-learning eliminates this because courses can be accessed anytime, anywhere. E-learning is under-estimated in that it gives you the freedom to fail. There is no pressure on the individual; no one gets shown up in front of their peers. It encourages exploration and if you do not pass the lesson, you can try it again, in private!

The combination of multimedia and instructional design can result in improved retention and because it's repeatable, it reinforces the learning. How many of us have done expensive courses and indeed refresher training in something that we don't use on a daily basis and then can't remember the skills or learning when we need it? E-learning has a huge advantage here. Ideally, you can continue to access on-line content and resources to brush up your skills and reinforce your learning.

Benefits

The benefits for organisations to engage in e-learning are tangible. E-learning includes all kinds of on-line technologies which can be used to capture organisational knowledge that is available for future learners. Why re-invent the wheel when you can encourage employee effectiveness by sharing of resources and insights gained through discussion forums for example.

The costs of providing traditional face-to-face training are a huge challenge for many organisations. If you are developing your own e-learning, each time a course is accessed and re-accessed, the return on your investment improves. For employers, setting up venues and meeting the travel and subsistence costs involved in training large volumes of employees face to face, are proving prohibitive for many. In the current economic climate, e-

learning may have a positive effect on minimizing interruptions to production schedules by keeping training levels high but timed to coincide with down times.

E-learning may not be the panacea that will cure all of the educational needs of our times but it is a growing global phenomenon that will not slow down any time soon. The brightest minds in the U.S. are currently debating the role of e-learning for Harvard University in achieving its mission to offer the best education to the best minds in the world. It is best summed up by a Harvard alumnus, Professor Eli Noam when he remarked: "In the past, students came to Harvard. In the future, Harvard will come to the students, wherever they are".

For further information on the education strategy of the HSA, contact Joanne Harmon at joanne_harmon@hsa.ie.



Safe maintenance essential amidst healthcare budget cuts



Health and safety experts will put safe maintenance on the agenda next month, as deep cuts to Ireland's healthcare budget begin to hit.

Health and safety experts will gather to discuss how standards of maintenance essential for the health and safety of staff and patients in hospitals and surgeries across Ireland can be preserved, in spite of reduced budgets.

Conference

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Ireland healthcare section will place this issue under the microscope at its annual conference in Dublin on Thursday, 27 October. Speakers will also discuss how to manage the increase in bariatric - obese - patients, as well as the EU Sharps Directive, introduced to reduce the

number of injuries from sharp medical objects such as needlesticks.

Tom Madden, chair of IOSH Ireland healthcare section, said: "The safety of our healthcare organisations will be put at risk if there aren't adequate funds to make sure that facilities and equipment used by staff and patients is not fit for purpose.

"At this conference we'll be discussing how health and safety practitioners can maintain standards even in a tough economic climate. This is especially relevant as Ireland's healthcare system struggles to find €2 billion worth of savings, which will impact the work of the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Health and Safety Authority (HSA)".

European Safety Week

The event coincides with European Safety Week

2011 and fittingly, is being held in the final year of the European Union Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2010-2011 on Safe Maintenance. Speakers will also cover topics to do with bariatric patient handling and how the HSE can maintain its facilities in a time of austerity. The conference will also tackle safe maintenance issues to do with managing contractors, maintenance management systems and the legal obligations behind all of this, while highlighting some of the accidents caused by poor maintenance.

"Managers need to remember that inadequate funding could lead to them being prosecuted under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act. And the additional costs organisations have to fork out in these situations often far exceed the amount they saved by making the cutbacks in the first place.

"We want people to leave with a better understanding of how important safe maintenance is. After all, if the equipment and facilities that our healthcare organisations use don't properly function, the levels of service will suffer, as will the end goal of helping people to get better quickly," Mr Madden added.

The conference is held at Dublin's Regency Hotel and is open to members and non-members of IOSH. It is particularly relevant to fire, health and safety, or risk managers, and those responsible for maintenance of infrastructure, equipment and machinery. For more information, contact Tom Madden on 01 4085475 or email tmadden@coombe.ie

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For further information, please contact Ted O'Keeffe.

tokeeffe@niso.ie

or

phone 01 465 9760

Carl Anders, health and safety executive at IBEC, highlights the positives before the negatives when measuring OSH performance.



Carl Anders, health and safety executive, IBEC

Carl Anders, health and safety executive at IBEC, highlights the positives before the negatives when measuring OSH performance.

If you are the individual managing and coordinating your employer's health and safety management system, you are probably able to answer the following questions without too much research:

- How many accidents did you have in 2010 and what is your accident frequency rate?
- How many incidents did you have in 2010 and what is your incident frequency rate?

These are pretty standard measures of occupational safety and health (OSH) performance for employers and many use them as key performance indicators (KPIs). In addition,

internationally, they are used as KPIs to measure national performance or industrial benchmarks. A key question though is why?

OSH is the only critical business issue that judges itself on its 'failings' and actively measures itself on 'failure' and sometimes 'failure' alone. Financial performance is never solely published as losses even when there are losses. HR performance is never measured purely in time lost to industrial relations issues. Security is never just measured in amount of units lost or stolen. IT is never measured only on the basis of the amount of times the network crashed.

Many employers use KPIs to measure performance across a range of operations and they are essential to not only evaluating the efficacy of any system, but to also find aspects that can form part of continuous improvement. However, it is too common that with OSH KPIs companies are not only measuring 'failure' but also the wrong areas.

Risk Reduction

OSH legislation and management is about risk reduction and risk management. That should be the starting point for

any performance measurement. Common KPIs are number of risk assessments completed, number of inspections and audits completed, etc. These measurements are fine, but more suited to an internal auditing mechanism, knowing that every department completed their quota of risk assessments does not tell you much beyond a volume of paperwork has been completed.

Look at the risk assessments themselves. In many cases employers use a specific mechanism to try to quantify risk. As subjective a tool as these may be, this should be the focus of an employer's measurement. As well as identifying potential hazards, risk assessments document how an employer is managing the hazards. Therefore the risk rating is a representation of how well a hazard is currently being managed by the employer.

Positive KPI

One positive KPI should be to set a target of having all risk ratings to within a certain tolerance. This will mean that not only will the assessments have to be completed, but that the corrective actions will have to be implemented and managed. Only then will the risk rating be reduced.

Only then will a manager meet their targets.

It also provides for an area of continual improvement as once all risk ratings are within a defined tolerance, the continual improvement can be to identify reasonably practicable techniques to reduce the risk further. The critical point on this is that all too often OSH comes across as a fault finding mechanism. Your company will have made significant strides to reducing its risk and this fact needs to be brought to the fore and highlighted. People need to be praised for the hard work and commitment they have put into OSH. Accident rates is a poor means of demonstrating this.

It is important to remember that OSH legislation is based on managing risk, i.e. reducing risk and that while there are specific requirements to complete certain activities such as risk assessments, the greatest judgement of compliance is how you manage those risks.

Additionally and probably a more practical concern for employers is insurance and insurance costs. Again, insurance is judged on the risk your work presents. Demonstrating that you have the required documentation and

training in place should be reflected in premiums, but to be able to actively engage with insurers and discuss insurance costs, having the only measure of your performance as the amount of accidents you had that year is counter-productive. Being able to quantify and demonstrate legal compliance and, more importantly, risk reduction gives you a much stronger case for revisiting your premiums.

Measure management

As mentioned above, OSH legislation is based upon a corporate governance and management of operations rather than just completing

documentation. Using the KPIs of numbers of documents completed is a relatively weak measurement of overall OSH management.

To really measure management performance, the safety coordinator needs to look at developing an audit tool. This needs to be based on the specific duties imposed by the safety statement and also provide for a fair scoring system so that you can demonstrate a percentage of compliance.

This could then be used to breakdown how well each department manages its OSH concerns. Therefore,

areas with differing risks such as production and offices can be judged equally on their overall approach and management of OSH. Rather than an accident or inspection focus which would be biased towards the lower risk environments who would not be involved as much in those aspects.

As with the risk management measurement, this too would provide a benchmark, a target for continual improvement and a demonstration of the other critical compliance issue: management of operations to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees.

Conclusion

Only representing negative measures of performance within OSH does not make business sense. Two of the biggest incentives for managing OSH, legislation and Insurance costs, are based upon the two areas many employers fail to measure and highlight. In addition, to not highlight the positive and progressive work that is undertaken through the safety coordinator and the managers of the company, it acts as a disincentive if the only time people do hear about their performance is a negative one.



Looking for a professional OHS Qualification tailored to the needs of your business?



You may be a full-time safety professional, or perhaps health & safety co-ordination is only one of your business responsibilities. Either way, to be effective in your role, it is vital to develop and maintain the skills and expertise that enable you to promote best practice within your organisation.

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"...a must for those "Competent Persons" in an organisation who have responsibility for the Safety Function"

*John Cahill,
Human Resource and Safety Manager, Weener Plastics*

"The experience and knowledge brought by the IBEC H&S Executives instilled in me a real passion for the job we do. Attending the course has benefitted our business in many ways including reduction in insurance claims and good staff morale. Our teams know we take health and safety very seriously."

*Lorraine Bedford,
Group Health and Safety Manager, Brown Thomas Group*

Help on workstation assessment, night work and young workers.

Brian O'Connor answers members' queries.

Question 1

My occupation includes the role of health and safety in a small consultancy office. We have two administration staff that are permanently based in the office using computers for most of the day. We then have consultants that come and go from the office during the day so they would not be using computers for a long period of time. My question is the following: is there a certain length of time you need to be at your computer before you need an assessment of your workstation?

Answer 1

As per chapter 5 of part 2 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare (General Application) Regulations*

2007, an employer, when providing display screen equipment for use by an employee at a workstation, shall ensure that the general use of the equipment is not a source of risk for the employee.

The employer shall perform an analysis of the workstation in order to evaluate the safety and health conditions to which it gives rise for the employees, particularly as regards possible risks to eyesight, physical problems and problems of mental stress, and, on the basis of that evaluation, take appropriate measures to remedy any risks found.

An employee, in the context of the above regulation, is interpreted as a person who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant

part of his or her normal work.

This definition is explained in further depth on the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) website. According to the HSA, these regulations are applicable: if the employee has no choice but to use the display screen equipment to carry out his/her work; if the employee normally uses the display screen equipment for continuous periods of more than one hour; if the display screen equipment is generally used by the employee on a daily basis.

If employees at your workplace meet the criteria listed above then an analysis of the workstation should be carried out.

For further information on workstation assessments, please view the *Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 - Chapter 5 of Part 2: Display Screen Equipment*. This document is available from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

Question 2

I am a manager in a factory that operates 24 hours a day. I have noticed a drop in productivity by our night staff and am concerned that night work may be having an effect on their health. Are there any health and safety precautions we should



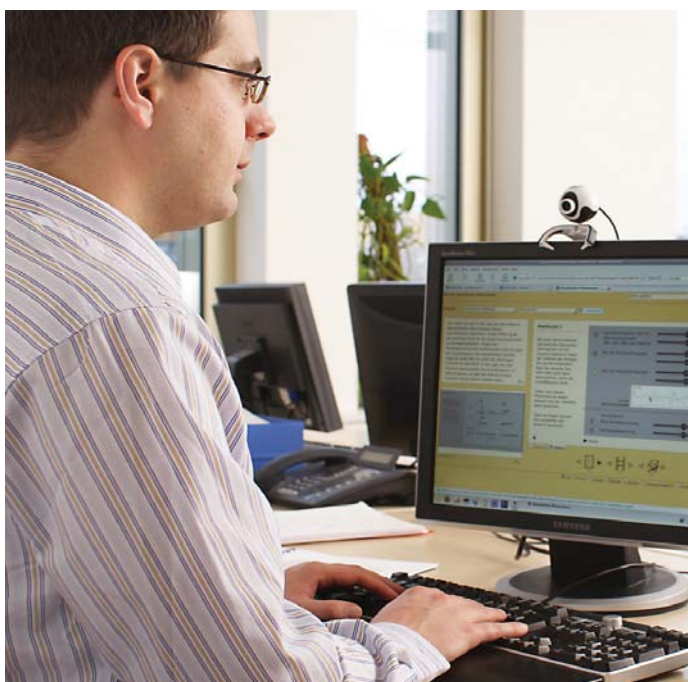
Brian O'Connor, health and safety specialist, National Irish Safety Organisation

take in relation to our night staff and is it possible for them to suffer any health problems due to night work?

Answer 2

Night work can have undesirable consequences such as disruption of the internal body clock, fatigue, sleeping difficulties, disturbed appetite and digestion, reliance on sedatives and/or stimulants and social and domestic problems. This in turn can affect performance, increase the likelihood of errors and accidents at work and might have a negative effect on health.

In accordance with section 19 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, the employer must carry out a risk assessment to determine if the night work has any specific effects or poses any particular hazards that



could affect the safety and health of night workers. Also, as per chapter 3 of part 6 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007*, before employing a person as a night worker and at regular intervals whilst working as a night worker, the employer must offer the employee, free of charge, an assessment by a registered medical practitioner, or a person under the medical practitioner's supervision, to determine any adverse effects of night working on the employee's health.

Following the assessment, the person who carried out the assessment will inform the employer and employee whether the employee is fit or unfit to perform night work. If a night worker were to become unwell for reasons connected with night work then the employer shall, whenever possible, assign duties to the employee that do not involve performing any night work and to which the employee is suited.

For further information on night work and shift work, please view the *Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 – Chapter 3 of Part 6: Night Work and Shift Work*. This publication is available from the Health and Safety Authority website: www.hsa.ie.

Also, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have a document titled *Managing Shiftwork*. This document includes many practical solutions to deal with night work and shift work and can be downloaded from the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk.



Question 3

I employed a 16 year old during the summer and now that he is back at school he only works on a Friday evening and Saturday. Now that the school term has started again, is it okay to employ this person and are there any health and safety precautions I should take?

Answer 3

As per the *Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996*, an employer wishing to employ anyone under 18 years must first require them to produce their birth certificate. The act also sets limits to the working hours of young persons (i.e. 16 to 17 year olds) who may not work for more than eight hours in any one day or forty hours in any week.

Young persons must receive a thirty-minute break if working for more than a 4.5 hour period and they must receive two days off in every seven, which shall, as far as is practicable, be consecutive. The permitted hours of work for 16 and 17 year olds is between 6 am and 10 pm.

However, there is a *Code of Practice Concerning the Employment of Young Persons in Licensed Premises* that permits 16 and 17 year olds employed on general duties or as apprentices in licensed premises to work beyond 10 pm.

The *Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996* includes further provisions for children aged 14 and 15 years. For example, a 14 year old may only be employed in light, non-industrial work which is not harmful to their attendance at school.

In accordance with chapter 1 of part 6 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare (General Application) Regulations 2007*, an employer is required to carry out a risk assessment before employing a child (i.e. under 16 years) or young person and whenever there is a major change in the place of work which could affect the safety or health of the child or young person. The risk assessment must include any risks to the safety and health and development of a child or young person, taking into account the risk arising from the child's or young person's lack of maturity and experience in identifying risks

to their own safety and health and, specifically, that any exposure to physical, biological and chemical agents or certain processes is avoided as identified in schedule 7 of the *General Application Regulations 2007*.

The employer must not employ a child or young person where the risk assessment reveals that the safety and health of that child or young person would be put at risk because the work is overly physical, may psychologically affect them, exposes them to agents such as toxins, carcinogens or radiation, places them at undue risk of accidents because of their inexperience or presents a risk to health from exposure to extreme heat, cold, noise or vibration.

For further information on the protection of young persons at work, please view the *Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 – Chapter 1 of Part 6: Protection of Children and Young Persons*. This document can be download from the Health and Safety Authority website: www.hsa.ie.

New Irish legislation and information guides

June 2011 - September 2011



Ted O'Keeffe, operations manager,
National Irish Safety Organisation

Legislation

Road Traffic (Spray-Suppression) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 272 of 2011)

These regulations, which were signed by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport on 8 June 2011 and came into effect on 1 September 2011, provide for the compulsory fitting of spray-suppression systems to certain motor vehicles and their trailers.

European Communities (Road Transport) (Exemptions) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 386 of 2011)

The purpose of these regulations (S.I. 386 of 2011) is to exempt road transport vehicles engaged in certain categories of international transport activities between the State and Great Britain and Northern Ireland. These regulations were signed by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport on 19 July 2011 and came into operation on 1 September 2011.

Road Traffic (Driving Mirrors - Additional Requirements for Heavy Goods Vehicles) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 457 of 2011)

These regulations provide for the fitting of additional mirrors to reduce the lateral and forward blind spots on certain heavy goods vehicles registered since 1 January 2000 in the case of Class IV and V mirrors. Class VI Mirrors are required regardless of the date of first registration. These regulations were signed by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport on 8 September 2011 and come

into effect on 1 October 2012.

The legislation listed in this article can be downloaded from the NISO website: www.niso.ie.

Guides and Information

HSA Annual Report 2010

2010 saw an increase in workplace deaths from their all-time low of 43 in 2009 to 48 in 2010. 60% of these deaths occurred in the farming, logging and fishing sectors, sectors that account for about 6% of the working population. The *Annual Report 2010* outlines the key achievements and activities of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) for the year.

Summary of Workplace Injury Illness and Fatality Statistics 2009-2010

The annual summary of statistics aims to provide information on some of the most common queries on occupational injury, illness and workplace fatalities. Data from different sources is combined to facilitate the review and monitoring of trends across a range of factors related to workplace injury and illness.

Code of Practice for Safety in Roofwork

The code gives practical guidance to roofing companies, clients, designers, project supervisors (design and construction stages), safety representatives, safety consultants, advisors and anyone carrying out roofwork on the requirements and prohibitions set out in the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006* and the *Safety,*

Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007.

The code of practice came into operation on 1 September 2011 and replaces the previous code which was issued in August 2005.

Work Related Stress Information Sheet for Employees

Work related stress is stress caused by or made worse by work. This information sheet produced by the HSA aims to help employees understand and deal with their own stress, in order to better equip them to overcome and cope with work-related stress, where it arises.

Work Related Stress Information Sheet for Employers

Workplaces that have good communications, respectful relations and healthy systems of work can help people recognise and manage the type of stress which may have more than one cause; such workplaces tend to get the best results in achieving a healthy and productive workforce. A useful 24 page publication for employers.

Biological Monitoring Guidelines

Many workplace tasks involve using chemicals which can be harmful to health if they are not properly controlled. The employer must ensure that exposure to chemicals is either prevented or properly controlled. These guidelines published by the HSA are primarily aimed at employers who are managing a workplace biological monitoring programme.

Guidance on Lone Working in the Healthcare Sector

Lone working has its own unique set of risks which need to be considered by both employers and employees as part of a risk management exercise. This guidance document produced by the HSA provides advice on how to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for lone workers in the healthcare sector.

The listed guides, information and codes of practice are available from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

Latest Statistics

The latest workplace fatality statistics as of 20 September show there were 42 fatalities so far this year compared with 48 for the whole of last year.

| Irish Occupational Fatality Statistics [20 September 2011] | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Employment Sector | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 |
| A-Agriculture,forestry and fishing | 22 | 29 | 13 | 22 |
| B-Mining and quarrying | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| C-Manufacturing | 2 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| D-Electricity; gas, steam and air conditioning supply | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| E-Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| F-Construction | 4 | 6 | 10 | 15 |
| G-Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and personal goods | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| H-Transportation and storage | 5 | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| I-Accommodation and food service activities | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| J-Information and communication | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| K-Financial and insurance activities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| L-Real estate activities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| M-Professional, scientific and technical activities | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| N-Administrative and support service activities | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| O-Public administration and defence; compulsory social security | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| P-Education | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Q-Human health and social work activities | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| R-Arts, entertainment and recreation | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| S-Other service activities | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Total fatalities | 42 | 48 | 43 | 57 |

Source: www.hsa.ie

National Irish Safety Organisation Events Diary



Please keep an eye on our website: www.niso.ie, for forthcoming courses in 2011.

1. Courses scheduled at NISO Training Centre, Ballymount, Dublin 12

Safety and Health at Work, D20165, FETAC Level 5
(Course Length: 10 weeks, Tuesdays from 2pm - 6pm, plus a 1.5 hrs exam)
Commences 11 October

Safe Pass Course
(Course Length: 1 day)
23 September / 30 September / 14 October

Health and Safety Representation Course, L22487, FETAC Level 5
(Course Length: 3 days)
7, 8, 9 November

Manual Handling Instructor Course, 6N0233, FETAC Level 6
(Course Length: 5 days)
7, 8, 9, 14, 15 November

VDU/DSE Assessors Course
(Course Length: 1 day)
26 September

Basic Manual Handling Course
(Course Length: Half day)
19 October

Occupational First Aid Course, FETAC Level 5
(Course Length: 3 days)
Date to be confirmed

Occupational First Aid Refresher/Re-Certification Course, FETAC Level 5
(Course Length: 1 day)
Date to be confirmed

2. Courses and events in the regions

EAST REGION

Seminar: Responsibilities of Directors and Employers under Section 80 and 81 of the SHWW Act 2005
Date to be confirmed

Safety and General Knowledge Quiz
1 March 2012

MIDLAND REGION

Course: NISO Introduction to Occupational Safety and Health
Venue: Athlone Institute of Technology
(Course Length: 13 wks, Mon for 2hrs)
26 September
Contact:
Dr Sean Reidy - 090 642 4400
midland@niso.ie

Safety and General Knowledge Quiz
22 March 2012

MIDWEST REGION

Course: NISO Introduction to Occupational Safety and Health
Venue: Limerick Institute of Technology
(Course Length: 13 wks, Tue for 2 hrs)
27 September
Contact:
Trevor Montgomery - 087 695 7362
www.lit.ie/LifelongLearning/Courses/

Course: Higher Certificate in Science in Occupational Health and Safety (level 6)
Venue: Limerick Institute of Technology
20 September
(Course Length: 4 years)
Contact:
Trevor Montgomery - 087 695 7362
midwest@niso.ie or
www.lit.ie/LifelongLearning/Courses/

Course: Certificate of Competence, Workplace Noise Assessment
Venue: Limerick Institute of Technology
28 September
(Course Length: 10 weeks, Wednesdays 2.5 hours per week)
Contact:
Trevor Montgomery - 087 695 7362
midwest@niso.ie or
www.lit.ie/LifelongLearning/Courses/

Course: Risk Assessment and Safety Statement Course
Venue: Limerick Institute of Technology
(Course Length: 5 wks, Thu 2 hrs per wk)
29 September
Contact:
Trevor Montgomery - 087 695 7362
midwest@niso.ie or
www.lit.ie/LifelongLearning/Courses/

Safety and General Knowledge Quiz
21 March 2012

NORTH EAST REGION

Course: NISO Introduction to Occupational Safety and Health
Venue: Dundalk Institute of Technology
(Course Length: 13 wks, Tue for 2 hrs)
Commencing date to be confirmed
Contact: emailnortheast@niso.ie

Course: NISO Health and Safety Representation Course, L22487, FETAC Level 5
Venue: Dundalk Institute of Technology
(Course Length: 13 wks, Tue for 2 hrs)
Commencing date to be confirmed
Contact: emailnortheast@niso.ie

Safety and General Knowledge Quiz
6 March 2012

SOUTH EAST REGION

Safety and General Knowledge Quiz
17 February 2012

WEST REGION

Safety and General Knowledge Quiz
23 February 2012

NORTH WEST REGION

Safety and General Knowledge Quiz
15 March 2012

SOUTHERN REGION

Safety and General Knowledge Quiz
30 March 2012

3. National Events

Taking Care of Business - A free Evening workshop hosted by the Health and Safety Authority
6 October 2011, Malton Hotel, Killarney, Co Kerry

NISO Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition
7 October 2011, Malton Hotel, Killarney, Co Kerry

NISO and NISG Health and Safety Awards Ceremony
7 October 2011, Malton Hotel, Killarney, Co Kerry

NISO/NISG All Ireland Safety Quiz Final
Venue: Radisson Blu, Athlone, Co Westmeath
21 April 2012



NISO, A11 Calmount Park, Calmount Avenue, Ballymount, Dublin 12.
Tel: 01 465 9760 Fax: 01 465 9765 Email: info@niso.ie Website: www.niso.ie