

National Irish Safety Organisation

Update!



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

SPRING 2011



INSIDE

**IFA LAUNCH
NATIONWIDE
CAMPAIGN**

HELPLINE

**NISO WELCOMES
CHINESE
DELEGATION**

**OCCUPATIONAL
NOISE AND
MANAGEMENT**

National Irish Safety Organisation

Update!

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NISO President Reports

At this time, one should ask the question, will current health and safety legislation and standards be maintained? The National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO) will continue to support and work with the new Government to maintain standards of health and safety in the workplace.



Pauric Corrigan, president, National Irish Safety Organisation

NISO is in the process of developing a FETAC level 4 health and safety course aimed at newly recruited persons and those seeking employment. The course is awaiting final approval. The development has been supported by former Minister for Labour Affairs and Public Service Transformation, Dara Calleary, T.D., and his department officials. On behalf of NISO, I would like to thank Mr Calleary, T.D., and his officials for their continued support as NISO strives to support the national strategy on occupational health and safety.

On the 21st of January 2011, NISO welcomed a delegation of nine directors and divisional chiefs from China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security specialising in workplace safety at work and injury insurance. During their visit to NISO, the delegation learned about the Irish standards in occupational safety and health together with the activities and programmes that NISO are involved in. The visit demonstrates NISO's commitment to promote health and safety at an international level as well as at national level.

Safety Quiz

Regional heats of the annual NISO/NISG (Northern

Ireland Safety Group) Safety Quiz are due to commence over the coming days and will be completed by the end of March. The successful previous entrants and novice teams from the regional heats will go forward to represent their companies and regions in the All Ireland Safety Quiz final to be held in the Clayton Hotel, Galway, on Saturday 16th of April 2011. This year's quiz final will be hosted by the western region. Like last year, the final will consist of a table quiz format which will be less stressful on participants as there will be no individual questions.

AGM

Preparations for our annual general meeting (AGM) are under way. The AGM will take place on Saturday 16th of April 2011 at 12 noon in the Clayton Hotel, Galway, prior to the All Ireland Safety Quiz final. I look forward to seeing many NISO members at this year's AGM. This is an important meeting on the NISO calendar as it allows all NISO members to come together and listen to reports on the work of NISO over the preceding year and voice their views going forward.

Safety Awards

The launch of NISO's 'Annual Occupational

Safety Awards 2011' brochure took place on the 17th of February in the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone. This was followed by a safety awards workshop. Workshops were also held in Belfast, Dublin and Cork. These workshops are of great benefit to companies making submissions and were all very well attended. NISO's 'Annual Occupational Safety Awards 2011' brochure is available to download from the NISO website: www.niso.ie.

The NISO Annual Conference and Safety Awards will be hosted this year by the southern region. This will take place on Friday 30th of September 2011 in The Malton Hotel, Killarney, Co Kerry. The conference and trade exhibition will take place during the day followed that evening by the gala dinner and safety awards. The theme of this years conference will be 'Maintenance of Health and Safety'. It will be coinciding with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, healthy workplaces campaign on safe maintenance in 2011.

Pauric Corrigan, president, National Irish Safety Organisation.

Safety Alert

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) have issued an urgent warning to employers and employees of the dangers associated with working on or near fragile materials when carrying out work on roofs.

This warning follows five fatal accidents in the recent months due to falls from height, and in particular incidents involving falling through asbestos sheeting and falling through roof lights.

The incidents have occurred in farming, manufacturing and construction sector and have generally occurred whilst carrying out repair or maintenance work to roofs.

For further information, please view the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.



Dates for 2011

- **NISO AGM**
Saturday 16th of April, Clayton Hotel, Ballybrit, Co Galway.
- **All Ireland Safety Quiz Final**
Saturday 16th of April, Clayton Hotel, Ballybrit, Co Galway.
- **Closing date for entries to the NISO/NISG Annual Occupational Safety Awards 2011**
27th of May (Special early bird entries closing date, 29th of April).
- **National Safety Awards Ceremony and Annual Conference**
Friday 30th of September, The Malton Hotel, Killarney, Co Kerry.



HSA Workplace Wellbeing Profile

The 'Workplace Wellbeing Profile', a new initiative currently being launched by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), is an organisational stress audit tool that takes the form of an on-line short questionnaire.

The 'Workplace Wellbeing Profile' uses verified and validated indicators to determine the presence of work stressors, employee wellbeing and the main sources of workplace stress and ways these could potentially be reduced. The questionnaire only takes 10 minutes to complete and is aimed at the education and health sector, or any type of enterprise in the SME sector.

For further information on the Workplace Wellbeing Profile, please visit the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

Guidance on Manual Handling Training System

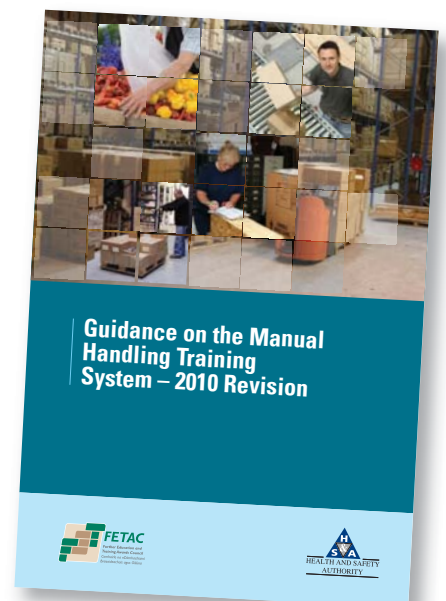
The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) have updated the guide on the new manual handling training system. The key message from the 'Guidance on the Manual Handling Training System – 2010 Revision', is that 2011 will see the roll out of recognition of prior learning (RPL) courses for current manual handling instructors.

When RPL is available, current instructors must contact a company who is registered with FETAC to provide RPL. The company will then provide the information, documentation and assessment required for the instructor to achieve a FETAC level 6 award through RPL.

There is a phasing-in period of two years for the new training system, from the publication of the new FETAC standards last March. This will allow time for training organisations to become registered with FETAC and for existing manual handling instructors to decide if they would like to attend a new FETAC

Level 6 instructor training programme or go through the RPL process.

'Guidance on the Manual Handling Training System – 2010 Revision' can be downloaded from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.



BeSMART – Free Online Tool

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) have launched a new free online tool called 'BeSMART, Business electronic Safety Management And Risk assessment Tool'. The tool has been designed to



help small businesses manage workplace health and safety in a very straightforward way and without the need for any specialist knowledge or major investment.

Martin O'Halloran, chief executive of the HSA, says that this is part of a commitment to promote effective management of health and safety in small businesses. "We want to take the mystery out of workplace health and safety, the new online tool and all of the advice available today is part of an overall strategy to help business proactively manage worker health and safety standards and save money".

The free online tool is available from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

International Meeting on Farm Health and Safety

Teagasc and the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) have announced that they will co-host an International meeting on agricultural occupational safety and health during 2011. The event will take place in Dublin in August and includes visits to farms and Teagasc centres.

The event will be attended by health and safety officers, advisers, farm leaders and researchers from participating countries. Delegates will be attending from North America and from many European countries including Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

John McNamara, Teagasc health and safety officer and co-organiser of the event, said, "The event has been organised because of considerable interest in the Irish approach to farm health and safety which involves the use of a legal code of practice approach backed up by training, advice and applied research. The Irish approach has been developed through partnership between state and farming organisations".

For further information on the International meeting on agricultural occupational safety and health, please visit the Teagasc website: www.teagasc.ie.

World Day for Safety and Health at Work

World Day for Safety and Health at Work takes place on the 28th of April. This year's theme is: 'OSH management system: A tool for continual improvement'.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has been observing the World Day for Safety and Health at Work since 2003. This global awareness-raising campaign is intended to focus international

attention on emerging trends in the field of occupational safety and health and raise consciousness on the magnitude of work-related injuries, diseases and fatalities worldwide.

Promotional material for the World Day can be downloaded from the ILO website: www.ilo.org/safeday.



Your Steps to Chemical Safety

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) have published a chemical safety booklet that shows a



three step approach whereby a small business can safely manage its chemicals. 'Your Steps to Chemical Safety – A Guide for Small Business' booklet shows how to carry out a chemical risk assessment and sets out the different types of chemicals that might be found in the workplace. The booklet also shows how different chemicals can affect the body and how a small business can safely manage the chemicals in their workplace.

'Your Steps to Chemical Safety – A Guide for Small Business' booklet can be downloaded from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

IFA Launch 'Think Safety – Farm Safely' Campaign

The Irish Farmers Association (IFA) has launched a new farm safety awareness campaign called 'Think Safety – Farm Safely'.

The new campaign aims to encourage individual farmers and their families to maintain the highest safety standards on their farms and thereby reduce the number of injuries and deaths.

It is an educational, training and promotional campaign that intends to work together with other agencies and organisations to increase farmers' awareness of best practice in farm safety and strengthen farmers' commitment to health and safety, by proactively addressing unsafe practices on the farm.

For further information on the 'Think Safety – Farm Safely' campaign, please see page eight of this magazine.

NISO Launch Safety Awards Brochure

The NISO (National Irish Safety Organisation) / NISG (Northern Ireland Safety Group) twentieth 'Annual Occupational Safety Awards 2011' brochure was launched in Athlone on the 17th of February.



Masonite Ireland; Supreme Award winners 2010

This year's NISO/NISG awards include a number of new business categories, including education and training, facilities management and services, financial / insurance, sport / leisure, waste management and road finishing contractors. The 2011 awards scheme also sees the introduction of a new award category called the 'Commended Award'. Organisations achieving this new award category must demonstrate the existence

of a health and safety management system that meets the needs of the organisation.

The closing date for entries is the 27th of May 2011. Companies who wish to avail of the special early bird entry, the closing date is the 29th of April 2011.

The NISO/NISG 'Annual Occupational Safety Awards 2011' brochure can be downloaded from the NISO website: www.niso.ie.

Workplace Violence and Harassment: a European Picture

A report by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) shows that violence, bullying and harassment are becoming increasingly common features of European workplaces.

Third party violence and harassment affect from 5% to 20% of European workers, depending on the country, sector, and methodology employed. The report 'Workplace Violence and Harassment: a European Picture' includes international statistics collected by the European Risk Observatory, part of EU-OSHA. Its recent pan-European workplace survey ESENER shows that 40% of European managers are concerned by workplace violence and harassment, but only around 25% have implemented procedures to deal with it - in many EU countries not more than 10%. The problem is even more acute in health

and social work and in education with more than 50% of managers identifying it as a health and safety problem.

In Ireland, the highest risks of bullying have been found in public administration/defence (12.6%), education (12.1%) and health and social work (10.5%). Lower levels of bullying at work are reported in the agricultural (2.0%) and construction (3.4%) sectors. Also, higher than average levels of workers subjected to violence or threats of violence, were reported in the Netherlands (10%), France and the United Kingdom (both 9%) and Ireland (8%).

The report also reveals that in many European countries there is still not enough recognition of workplace violence, with few specific initiatives dealing with the issue. At national level and among individual



organisations there is a need to raise awareness, and put in place policies and procedures to tackle and prevent violence and harassment at work.

For further information on the report, 'Workplace Violence and Harassment: a European Picture', please view the EU-OSHA website: www.osha.europa.eu.

Occupational Noise and Management

According to the World Health Organisation, occupational noise is an underestimated occupational health issue that leads to hearing impairment.



Trevor Montgomery, environmental, health and safety consultant, Bio-Logix Environmental

There are a variety of metrics for quantifying noise levels. In general, these metrics are based on physical quantities, which are 'corrected' to account for the sensitivity of people to noise. These corrections depend on the noise frequency, characteristics (e.g. impulse, intermittent or continuous noise levels) and the source of the noise. The following measures are most relevant for assessing occupational noise levels:

- Sound pressure level.
- Sound level.
- Equivalent sound levels.

Legal requirements

The 'Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 1 of Part 5: Control of Noise at Work', covers the control of noise in the workplace. These regulations establish the minimum requirements for the protection of workers from the health risks associated with noise in the workplace. Every employer is obliged to assess the risks to employees from noise at work, and in doing so are required to:

- take action to reduce the noise exposure that produces those risks,
- provide employees with hearing protection if it is not possible to adequately reduce the noise exposure by use of other methods,
- make sure the legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded,
- provide employees with information, instruction and training, and,
- carry out health surveillance where there is a risk to health.

Noise control programme

The key elements to be contained in a noise control programme are outlined in legislation and are summarised in this report.

The programme should establish noise criteria. The criteria will often be determined by legislation but there are usually some areas where this is not the case (e.g. noise nuisance and buying standards for new equipment which will vary from industry to industry). Criteria should be linked with appropriate standard measurement procedures.

Training

Education should be provided to personnel required to work in noise areas and inform them of the risks to hearing as a result of the occupational noise levels. There should also be someone within the company with sufficient training in noise measurement and control who would take responsibility for

implementing the noise programme (often with specialist assistance in some areas). Ideally, this training should be disseminated as widely as possible.

Assessments

Noise at work assessments should be carried out both inside and (where necessary) outside the premises on a regular basis (usually annually). Results should be recorded in a format that can be compared with the standards and should form an authoritative record of likely employee exposure over the years.

Surveys should be repeated at least every two years, more often if there are changes that may affect noise levels. Wherever noise levels have been reduced to below the recommended figure, the noise area designation should be removed. This can provide considerable motivation for other exposed personnel as it shows that hearing protectors can often be regarded as a temporary measure.

Hearing Protection

Where 80 dB(A) LEP,d is likely to be exceeded, the area should be designated a noise area wherein hearing protection should be worn. A hearing conservation programme should be developed that includes education, selection of a choice of suitable hearing protectors, an agreement about sanctions for non-use and associated record keeping. The running costs

of the programme should not be overlooked, companies commonly spend €12,000 per 100 employees every year.

Noise control

Noise should be reduced as far as reasonably practicable. The techniques that can be used are very varied, although the traditional approach has centred on palliative measures rather than engineering methods. Modern engineering techniques are producing source control solutions that often avoid many of the operational and direct costs usually associated with noise control.

Purchasing policy

New plant and equipment should be purchased to a 'buy quiet noise standard' to avoid importing fresh noise problems. It is probably the single most cost effective long term noise control measure that a company can take. Buying standards exert pressure on manufacturers to improve equipment and eliminate the problem at source.

Audiometry

Employees who may be required to work in noisy areas should have their hearing checked before employment or every two years. This avoids problems if hearing damage claims are submitted at a later date.

Review

The effectiveness of each programme criteria must be assessed regularly. A review

of the programme should be implemented to check the benefits obtained in practice from the money and resources spent on noise control.

In workplaces or areas where the risks are low, the actions taken can be simple

and inexpensive. However, where the risks are high, a defined noise control programme with prioritised actions should be implemented.

Noise legislation applies now to all workplaces including the entertainment

sector (pubs, clubs, hotels, etc.). Action in this sector has been slow as a whole.

There are a variety of noise training programmes available in Ireland with specific emphasis to training employees on the requirements of the

legalisation, noise reduction measures and monitoring of noise. The National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO) will be running such a course in April 2011 entitled, 'Certificate of Competence in Workplace Noise Assessment'.

New: NISO Certificate in Workplace Noise Assessment



Safety professionals call us on a regular basis enquiring about:

- Noise exposure,
- How to comply with noise legislation,
- How to measure and control noise.

Now you can find out and learn the skills to deal with noise exposure with our 4 day course, scheduled on 11, 12, 18 and 19 April at NISO Training Centre, Dublin 12.

On completion of the course, you will:

- Understand the legislation and the role of the HSA,
- Find out what your organisation needs to do to comply with noise legislation and apply best practice,
- Learn about the ear and the mechanism of hearing,
- Understand how sound spreads,
- Understand how noise exposure affects the ear,



- Learn how to avoid the negative effects of noise (eliminate, reduce, control),
- Learn how to develop and implement an effective Noise Management Programme including assessing the risks,
- Practice how to operate different types of Noise Meters.
- Persons who require a good general understanding of issues relating to noise,
- Managers and supervisory staff of organisations where noise can be an issue.

This course is offered as an open programme and can be run in company.

Who can apply:

- Occupational health and safety practitioners,
- Persons who want to know how to measure noise,

For more information please email info@niso.ie stating 'Noise Assessment' in the subject line or call 01 465 9760.

Irish Farmers Association (IFA) Launch Nationwide Campaign: 'Think Safety – Farm Safely'



Mary McAleese, president of Ireland launching the IFA farm safety campaign, 'Think Safety – Farm Safely'.

2010 was the worst year for farm accidents in recorded history, 26 people lost their lives and approximately 1,500 people were injured on Irish farms. This compares with 11 farm deaths in 2009. Farming accounted for over 50% of the work related deaths reported to the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) in 2010. In addition, there was an increase in the number of fatalities in the active farmer bracket (i.e. farmers aged between 19 and 65 years).

The main risk on farms continues to be working with farm machinery, nearly 40% of farm fatalities in 2010 involved farm vehicles. The other main causes of death were due to tree felling

(20%), falling from a height (15%) and livestock (12%).

Safety risks

Farming is a hazardous occupation. Long working hours in all weather and conditions, dealing with powerful and complicated machinery and handling a variety of animals exposes farmers to a variety of risks. Farming is an increasingly stressful occupation, particularly in the current economy with limited finance available and the decline of off-farm employment. These factors have increased the pressures on the farm as well as the safety risks.

Research has also shown that fatigue, trying to save time

and miscommunication are among the leading human factors that contribute to farm-related injuries.

A new safety risk emerging is the rising number of tree felling accidents and deaths. Farmers now own nearly 50% of the national forest estate and many are for the first time harvesting timber. Due to limited availability as well as the high cost of hiring a mechanised harvesting contractor, some farmers are choosing to thin the forest using a chainsaw, either themselves or hiring local chainsaw operators. Many are very competent in operating a chainsaw. However, they have limited, if any experience in felling trees particularly in restricted sites.

IFA is currently looking to secure funding to provide specialised small tree felling training to farmers and address the issue without delay.

Nationwide campaign

In response to the significant rise in fatalities, IFA launched a major nationwide campaign to encourage farmers to 'Think Safety – Farm Safely'. The farm safety campaign, which was launched by president Mary McAleese earlier this year, aims to strengthen the promotion and awareness of farm safety.

At the centre of the 'Think Safety – Farm Safely' campaign is the principle that constant awareness and

promotion will encourage extra vigilance, reduce the safety risks and bring about a real change in the safety culture on Irish farms.

As part of the campaign, IFA has produced a farm safety themed 2011 calendar that was distributed to over 90,000 farm homes. It is to act as an everyday reminder of the need to put safety first and encourage farmers to make farm safety their priority as they go about their work.

Machinery

Working with farm machinery remains the major cause of farm accidents. In response, IFA has produced a farm safety awareness pack including stickers to be prominently displayed on farm machinery. The aim is to remind farmers that a small amount of time dedicated to following safe machinery operations, such as always covering PTO shafts and turning off tractors before dismounting, could help prevent serious injury or fatality.

IFA have joined forces with FBD, HSA and Teagasc to provide training, information and support to farmers to help them identify risks on the farm and assist them to produce farm safety statements. An up-to-date farm safety statement gives a clear message to everyone working on or visiting the farm that safety is the priority.

This increased cooperation between farm families and agencies has been very positive and even at this early stage has resulted in a greater

awareness of safety best practice on the farm.

IFA believe increased promotion and awareness of farm safety, as well as training to support farmers to create a safer working environment is the best way to reduce farm accidents. It is also far more effective than inspections and enforcement at changing the working practices on farms.

Geraldine O'Sullivan, IFA farm family and social affairs executive secretary

NISO Welcomes Chinese Delegation



Delegation from China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security pictured with Paucic Corrigan, NISO president; Harry Galvin, NISO secretary and Ted O'Keeffe, NISO operations manager

A delegation of nine directors and divisional chiefs from China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security specialising in workplace safety at work and injury insurance visited the National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO) on the 21st of January 2011.

Welcomed by NISO president, Paucic Corrigan, the delegation spent their time at NISO learning about the Irish standards in occupational safety and health together with the activities and programmes that NISO are involved in.

NISO wish the delegation every success in promoting occupational health and safety and hope what they learned during their visit to Ireland will prove useful in the future.

Update from the Health and Safety Authority

Kieran Sludds, occupational health manager with the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), writes about the benefits of a positive approach to workplace health and well-being.

Work should and can be a positive experience, beyond pure monetary gain, giving a sense of meaning and self worth to the individual. Evidence based research proposes that work can be good for an individual's health and well-being for the following reasons:

- work is an important means of obtaining economic resources, essential for the individual's material well-being and participation in society,
- work has the ability to meet the individual's psychosocial needs contributing to positive mental health,
- work is viewed as essential to individual identity, social role and status,
- employment and socio economic status can be seen as key contributors to physical and mental health and mortality, and,
- overall the health of people at work is better than that of unemployed people.

It is important that work does not have a detrimental effect on either an employee's physical or mental health. This can be achieved by the employer having a positive approach to workplace health and well-being.

Workplace health and well-being

Workplace health and well-being enables each individual to reach their full

potential in the workplace by ensuring their ability to work. It includes the:

- prevention of all types of illness and disease at work,
- promotion of workplace health activities, and,
- rehabilitation of individuals back to work after experiencing an illness.

Workplace health and well-being is most effectively achieved through a combination of policies, programmes and interventions that address these three key dimensions.

In addition, workplace health and well-being must be addressed at three levels:

- societal,
- enterprise, and,
- individual.

Within these three levels various stakeholders operate in managing workplace health and well-being. On the basis of social partner consultation and consensus, the Government establishes a regulatory framework and develops policies to protect and promote the health of the working age population. Employers have a duty of care to comply with these requirements. In turn, employees have a responsibility to cooperate with their employer in these matters.

Other bodies such as voluntary agencies operate

on a number of different levels by lobbying Government and delivering initiatives at the workplace to bring about improvements in the health of the working age population.

Prevention

The focus of prevention is on the management by the employer of health in the workplace, thereby reducing the risk of employees suffering an illness or injury. This requires an employer to undertake a risk assessment, prepare a safety statement and implement preventive measures including health surveillance to control the risk to individuals in the workplace. Some of the main responsibilities are to consult with employees, provide information and training and ensure competent people are available.

A common sense approach to complying with specific regulations relating to manual handling, display screen equipment, noise and chemicals will prevent illnesses such as musculoskeletal injuries (back pain and upper limb disorders), deafness, asthma and dermatitis respectively.

The provision of specific policies on issues like stress, bullying and intoxicants will also help prevent them becoming an issue and provide a framework to

manage and resolve them if they arise.

Musculoskeletal injuries and stress continue to be the two major occupational illnesses with a noticeable increase in sickness absence associated with the latter in recent years.

Promotion

Workplace health promotion goes beyond what is required under health and safety regulations. It is the combined effort by the employer and employees in implementing and supporting measures that can maintain and improve an individual's health and well-being.

Workplace health promotion has evolved from a focus on individual single risk factors such as obesity, which can contribute to heart disease, to a more holistic approach such as the provision of health screening and policies on work life balance which can be of benefit to all employees.

There are also benefits for employers who invest in workplace health promotion such as more motivated and productive employees and a reduction in absenteeism and its associated costs.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is a combined effort between the Government, insurance bodies, employers, the



medical profession and the employee to facilitate a return to work after an illness.

Research has shown that after 6 months absence, there is only a 50% likelihood of an employee returning to work. At 12 months this falls to 25% and very few individuals return to any form of work after 1 to 2 years absence, regardless of further treatment. This emphasises the importance of beginning the process of rehabilitation as soon as possible.

Traditionally in Ireland, absenteeism and rehabilitation have not been considered management's responsibility and it has been regarded as sufficient to ensure that an up-to-date sick certificate is available.

There is a lack of understanding and clarity as to where responsibility lies for rehabilitation amongst the various stakeholders. This is changing with an increased role by employers and line managers in the management of absence and an early return to

work. However, much more needs to be done to ensure a national system is in place to encourage and facilitate workers returning to work as soon as possible.

Summary

The workplace is a very important setting for addressing health and well-being. Individual employees, employers and society have much to gain from improved worker health. This is especially so in the current economic climate where the costs associated with illness and absence on the employee,

the employer and the Government are an unnecessary burden. In view of a recent Government decision to extend the retirement age to 68 years and the fact that people are living longer resulting in an ageing population, it will be important that employees' ability to work is maintained so that they can continue to work in good health to this age and beyond if they wish. Having a positive approach to workplace health and well-being will assist in this regard.

Declan Gibney, chair of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Ireland branch, writes on bariatric patient handling and legionella management.



Declan Gibney, chair, IOSH Ireland Branch

The issue of how seriously obese patients can be better cared for from home, rather than hospital, was discussed at an event hosted by the healthcare section of the IOSH Ireland branch on the 16th of February. The event took place at St Mary's Hospital in Dublin and focused on how seriously obese, or plus sized/bariatric patients have to be in order to be considered in healthcare.

Bariatric patient handling

Dr Sue Hignett, a senior lecturer in the Healthcare Ergonomics and Patient Safety Unit (HEPSU) at Loughborough University, spoke about how she designs

equipment to allow health or social care to properly look after these patients. As only 35% of organisations train for bariatric patient handling, the issue needs to become much more ingrained into organisations.

Tom Madden, chair of IOSH Ireland branch's healthcare section and the event's organiser, said, "Everyone has the right to rely on the fact they'll be safe and able to access everything they need whilst in hospital or in care. It's thanks to the work of people like Dr Sue Hignett, Breda Shankla and Lucy Canning, that healthcare organisations are able to better plan and care for bariatric patients they might receive. As this is also a health and safety issue, we in IOSH Ireland branch's healthcare section think it's important to deal with both the safety of the patient and the care provider".

Resources

According to Dr Hignett, "We've been developing resources for seriously obese patients for a long time. My

job is to look at the whole patient journey and how design can interact from the home, to health or social care and through to discharge. I work with designers and engineers to find out what's really needed from the human point of view, so that equipment works for both the people who operate the equipment and those that use it".

Dr Hignett has been involved in the design of stretchers, scales, lifters and standing aids, bathing aids, beds, theatre tables, walking aids, crutches, chairs and commodes. Dr Hignett says that although the UK and Ireland have pockets of excellence, other organisations are less well prepared with the necessary procedures and equipment. In fact, although 84% of ambulance trusts currently have risk assessments for the admission of seriously obese patients, only 40% of acute and primary care trusts have such risk assessments.

Equipment

Different providers such as fire

service, education, healthcare and police are sharing equipment to solve the problem of lack of resources. Dr Hignett believes this as a better way to cost effectively provide for these patients in the future.

Dr Hignett added, "The problem is that this is a relatively small group of the population. Because of that, it's difficult to get consistent funding for equipment at each outlet because these resources might only be needed infrequently. That's why we're really trying to encourage each service to pool equipment so that everyone is catered for".

Dr Hignett was joined in her bariatric patient handling presentation by Breda Shankla, a patient handling instructor from South East Training Services, and Lucy Canning, manual handling co-ordinator at Mater Misericordiae Hospital.

The event also saw a legionella management presentation from Colm Power, a microbiologist for Complete Laboratory Solutions in Co Galway.

Sponsorship and Advertising Opportunities are available

For further information, please contact Ted O'Keeffe.

tokeeffe@niso.ie

or

phone 01 465 9760

Help on manual handling, permit to work systems and safety representation

Brian O'Connor answers members' queries.

Question 1

I work in a warehouse along with five other employees. Manual handling is an everyday activity in the warehouse and there have been complaints of back pain from several staff. My employer has provided manual handling training but I feel it is the weight of the loads we are carrying rather than our lifting techniques that is causing this back pain amongst staff. Should our employer provide further controls to prevent injury from manual handling?

Answer 1

In Ireland there has traditionally been an over reliance on training being the only method of control in reducing the risk of injury from manual handling.

However, there are key steps an employer must take before the provision of training.

The four key steps that an employer must take in relation to manual handling are:

Avoidance of manual handling

The employer must take appropriate organisational measures to allow the use of mechanical or other means to avoid the need for the manual handling of loads by employees in the workplace. An organisational measure may include designing or automating a work activity to eliminate the need for manual handling.

Employers must consider whether manual handling may be eliminated or reduced in the design of systems of work.

At the outset the employer will need to carry out a full risk assessment of existing manual handling tasks before making an informed decision on what manual handling tasks need to be avoided or reduced. When carrying out a manual handling risk assessment one must take into account the risk factors for manual handling of loads. These risk factors are listed in schedule 3 of the Safety, Health and Welfare (General Application) Regulations 2007.

Where organisational measures alone cannot eliminate manual handling, the use of mechanical handling equipment must be considered (e.g. purchase an electric pallet truck to eliminate unnecessary manual handling).

Reduction of manual handling

When the manual handling of loads is unavoidable, steps must be taken, either by organisational or other means, to reduce the risk involved. Again as part of the risk assessment process, the emphasis will be on gaining an understanding of the tasks, collecting all relevant information and assessing the range of risk factors inherent in the task.

Well-organised systems of work can reduce much of the need for manual handling of loads (e.g. forklift trucks to bring loads to and from the workstation and using scissor lifts or tables to raise loads to a comfortable working level).

Risk assessment of manual handling tasks

Employers must assess their



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

manual handling operations and take steps to avoid or reduce the risk of injury. The risk assessment process should ideally be completed at the design stage of a project so that efforts can be made at that stage to put appropriate measures in place to eliminate potential risk factors.

Provision of instruction and training for relevant employees

Training should be specific to the work tasks involved. At the end of a training course, participants should have a clear understanding of the risks involved in manual handling and be able to apply the skills learnt to their specific work activities.

For further information on manual handling of loads, please view the 'Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 - Chapter 4 of Part 2: Manual Handling of Loads'. This document is available from the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) website: www.hsa.ie.



Question 2

I have recently started working in a chemical plant and there are certain tasks in the plant that require a permit to work (e.g. hot/cold work). I am worried that there is not sufficient information provided in our permit to work system. Can you please tell me what exactly a permit to work system should contain and how long they should be kept on file?

Answer 2

The essential components of a permit to work system include:

- a written procedure that sets out how the system is to operate and clearly defines who may authorise particular jobs and who is responsible for specifying and implementing the necessary precautions,
- a permit to work form, which becomes a written and signed statement ensuring both the establishment of safe conditions for the work to commence and the maintenance of safe conditions for the duration of the work, including the provision of emergency arrangements,
- a method of informing the persons carrying out the work of the exact identity, location, nature and extent of the job, the hazards involved and the precautions to be taken, and,
- a system for ensuring the safe hand-back of the workplace after the job is completed and, in the case of confined space entry, after the space is vacated.

The term hot/cold work permit is not specifically used in Irish legislation and therefore no specific requirement is given for the



keeping of records. These terms are normally used internally within industry in reference to your developed safe system of work.

It is advisable to retain records for a period of time after the works are complete, as this would provide evidence of good work practices. I suggest that you discuss this issue with the person responsible for documentation in the workplace as there may be an internal procedure already in place for retaining such records.

For further information on the contents of a permit to work system and to view a sample permit to work form, please visit the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) website: www.hsa.ie.

Question 3

I was nominated by my fellow employees to be the safety representative in my company. I have attended safety representative training but wonder if I am required to attend training on a regular basis? If yes, how often should I attend

training? Also, how long should one remain the safety representative?

Answer 3

As per section 25 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005: 'An employer shall give to a safety representative such time off from his or her work as is reasonable having regard to all the circumstances, without loss of remuneration, to enable the safety representative to acquire, on an ongoing basis, the knowledge and training necessary to discharge his or her functions as a safety representative'.

This means a safety representative should receive training on an ongoing basis. However, how often a safety representative attends training will be a decision for the employer to make. The employer must consider factors such as updates in legislation, significant changes in the workplace, how often the safety representative exercises his/her role, the amount of employees the safety representative represents, the hazards present in the

workplace and the level of risk these hazards pose to employees. At all times, the employer must ensure that the safety representative has the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their function effectively.

In relation to how long one should hold the position of safety representative. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) specify on their website: www.hsa.ie, that to gain most benefit from knowledge acquired and training received during the period, a term of office of about three years seems appropriate for a safety representative. There should, however, be provision for review by the employees, perhaps on an annual basis.

For further information on safety representation and the role of the safety representative, please view the 'Safety Representatives and Safety Consultation Guidelines'. This document is available to download from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

Brian O'Connor
BSc OSH, MSc EHS

New Irish legislation and information guides

December 2010 - March 2011



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

LEGISLATION

Chemicals (Amendment) Act 2010 (No 32 of 2010)

The Chemicals (Amendment) Act 2010 came into operation on the 10th of December 2010 under the Chemicals Act 2010 (Commencement) Order 2010 (S.I. No. 591). This Act amends the Chemicals Act 2008 (No 13 of 2008) which came into operation on the 15th of July 2008 through the Chemicals Act 2008 (Commencement) Order 2008 (S.I. No. 273).

The main purpose of the 2008 and 2010 Acts is to facilitate the enforcement of certain EU regulations concerning chemicals.

These regulations include the:

- Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation (No. 1907/2006),
- Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures (CLP) Regulation (No. 1272/2008), and,
- Rotterdam Regulation (No. 689/2008) concerning the export and import of dangerous chemicals under the Rotterdam Convention and the Detergents Regulation (No. 648/2004).

The Chemicals (Amendment) Act 2010 also includes minor technical amendments to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Exposure to Asbestos) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 589 of 2010)

These regulations were signed by the Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation on the 8th of December 2010. The regulations amend the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Exposure to

Asbestos) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 386 of 2006).

The regulations apply to all work activities which transpose persons to risks arising from the inhalation of dust from asbestos or materials containing asbestos. The regulations provide a single exposure limit value for all work activities where exposure to asbestos dust in the air at a place of work may arise. The regulations also emphasise the need for adequate training. Those involved in demolition and asbestos removal activities must provide evidence of their ability to do this work in a safe way to ensure the protection of their employees.

Chemicals (Amendment) Act 2010 (Commencement) Order 2010 (S.I. No. 591 of 2010)

This regulation gives effect to the Chemicals (Amendment) Act 2010 which came into operation on the 10th of December 2010.

European Communities (Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act 1998)(Amendment) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 616 of 2010)

Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 617 of 2010)

Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act 1998 (Appointment of Competent Authorities) Order 2010 (S.I. No. 618 of 2010)

Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act 1998 (Fees) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 619 of 2010)

European Communities (Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road)(ADR Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 620 of 2010)

These regulations were signed by Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation on the 21st of December 2010 and came into operation from that date. Regulations S.I. 617 of 2010 apply to the carriage, in tanks, in bulk and in packages, of dangerous goods by road, including the packing, loading, filling and unloading of the dangerous goods in relation to their carriage. They apply the provisions of Annexes A and B to the 'European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road' (ADR) 2009.

The regulations place duties on the various participants associated with the carriage of the dangerous goods. They contain requirements for the vehicles, tanks, tank containers, receptacles and packages containing the dangerous goods during their carriage. The regulations require that the drivers, and others involved in the carriage of the dangerous goods by road, be adequately trained and, in the case of drivers, hold certificates of such training. The regulations also contain provisions on an EU harmonised approach to the road checks aspect of their enforcement.

Dangerous Substances (Retail and Private Petroleum Stores) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 628 of 2010)

These regulations were signed by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation on the 20th of December 2010. The regulations extend, until 31st of December 2011, the authority to license in certain circumstances petrol stations which were constructed before the 28th of September 1979.

European Communities (Dangerous Substances and Preparations)(Marketing and Use) (Revocation) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 633 of 2010)

The European Communities (Dangerous Substances and Preparations)(Marketing and Use) (Revocation) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 633 of 2010), were signed into law by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation on the 21st of December 2010.

European Communities (Transport of Dangerous Goods by Rail) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 651 of 2010)

The European Communities (Transport of Dangerous Goods by Rail) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 651 of 2010), were signed into law by the Minister for Transport on the 20th of December 2010.

Chemicals Act (CLP Regulation) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 102 of 2011)

The Chemicals Act (CLP Regulation) Regulations, which came into operation on the 2nd of March 2011, designate the English language as the language for the purposes of labelling of hazardous chemicals.

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

GUIDES AND INFORMATION

Guide to the Construction Amendment Regulations 2010

In the last issue of NISO Update (Winter 2010), we published details of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 523 of 2010). A guide has now been published by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) that provides practical guidance on these regulations. It is aimed at all those responsible for the planning, design, implementation and maintenance of safe systems of work for construction, including clients, designers, project supervisors for the design process (PSDP), project supervisors for the construction stage (PSCS), contractors and employees.

Concerned about your Hearing - Information Sheet

This information sheet, produced by the HSA, details how noise affects our ears, what the warning signs of hazardous noise are, how hearing loss is measured, employers and employees duties, the selection of hearing protection, who can help and further information.

Your Steps to Chemical Safety

This booklet, produced by the HSA, shows a three step approach whereby a small business can safely manage its chemicals. It shows how to carry out a chemical risk assessment, which is required by law but more importantly, it will help you protect your employees safety and health. It will also potentially introduce cost savings to your business through more effective work practices, such as correct storage, handling, use and disposal procedures.

The above guides are available from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

HSA Programme of Work 2011

NISO has produced a document outlining legislation, reviews, information guides and other developments planned by the HSA for 2011. This can be downloaded from the NISO website: www.niso.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

Health and Safety Representation, Course L22487, FETAC Level 5

(Course Length: 3 days)
March 21, 22, 23

Safe Pass Course

(Course Length: 1 day)
March 25, April 1, April 8

Basic Manual Handling Course

(Course Length: Half day)
April 13

VDU/DSE Assessors Course

(Course Length: 1 day)
28 March, 30 May

Occupational First Aid Course, FETAC Level 5

(Course Length: 3 days)
March 23, 24, 25

Occupational First Aid Refresher/Re-Certification Course, FETAC Level 5

(Course Length: 1 day)
March 29

Noise Assessment Course

(Course Length: 4 days)
April 11, 12, 18, 19

2. Courses and events in the regions

SOUTH REGION

Regional Safety Quiz

April 1 at 7:30pm, Oriel House Hotel, Ballinacoly,
Co Cork
To book: Email south@niso.ie

EAST REGION

Seminar: Duties & Responsibilities of Fire Wardens & Fire Marshals

March 31, Gresham Hotel, Dublin 1
To book: Email east@niso.ie

MIDWEST REGION

Regional Safety Quiz

March 23 at 8:00pm,
Greenhills Hotel, Limerick
To book: Email midwest@niso.ie

MIDLAND REGION

Regional Safety Quiz

March 24 at 8:00pm,
Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore, Co Offaly
To book: Email midland@niso.ie

3. National Events

NISO/NISG All Ireland Safety Quiz Final

April 16 at 2:00pm, Clayton Hotel, Ballybrit,
Co Galway

NISO AGM

April 16 at 12 noon, Clayton Hotel, Ballybrit, Co
Galway

NISO Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition

September 30, The Malton Hotel, Killarney, Co
Kerry

**NISO and NISG Health and Safety Awards
Ceremony**

September 30, The Malton Hotel, Killarney, Co
Kerry



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