

National Irish Safety Organisation

Update!



Celebrating
50
years

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

SPRING 2013



SAFETY OF YOUNG PERSONS IN THE WORKPLACE



INSIDE

**ALL IRELAND SAFETY
QUIZ FINALS 2013 -
RESULTS**

**HELP ON SPACE
REQUIREMENTS,
DISABILITY AND
DRIVING FOR WORK**

National Irish Safety Organisation

Update!

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Pauric Corrigan, president, National Irish Safety Organisation

NISO President Reports

Last year, with both the UK Government and Europe looking at reducing the burden placed on business by health and safety legislation and standards, I stated that one should be asking the question will current health and safety legislation and standards be maintained?

It now appears we have an even greater burden to deal with in the health and safety community with funding being reduced to the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) by central Government, leading to a reduction in staffing and resources available to monitor, support and enforce health and safety in the Irish workplace.

One could argue that these cuts may increase the burden on businesses through poor health and safety standards and higher fines in the courts as a result. The reduction in funding to the HSA may also increase insurance premiums and become a burden when companies are completing pre-qualifying questionnaires when tendering for contracts.

Increase funding

One way of increasing funding for the HSA would be for the Department of Finance to return the fines awarded in the courts for poor health and safety standards to the Authority's annual budget, such as the recent €1m fine handed down at Wexford Circuit Court.

NISO will continue to support and work to maintain standards in health and safety in the workplace. An example of this is the very successful series of safety representative seminars recently held throughout the country.

An area that NISO is considering to pursue is farm

safety following a very successful farm safety seminar held in Tullamore where a total of ninety delegates attended. NISO's objective is to promote occupational health and safety in all places of work with the aim of reducing accidents and ill health. The executive committee of NISO has endorsed this programme of farm safety workshops.

AGM

NISO held its 21st Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday 13 April in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Limerick, followed by the All Ireland Safety Quiz Final. It was the first major function that NISO has held in this the 50th year anniversary of the organisation. The AGM was well attended and both the president's and honorary secretary's reports reflected on the work of NISO over the last twelve months and highlighted some of the past and present issues that NISO has faced and dealt with in its 50 years of existence.

A report given by the honorary treasurer, Des Brandon, reported that NISO's mortgage on its head office was paid off in March this year and concluded that NISO was in a sound financial standing. I would like to thank all the members and life honorary members who attended our AGM.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the winners and runners up of the 40th All

Ireland Safety Quiz Final. The safety quiz was first held in Limerick in 1974 and was inspired by past president Pat Storan. This years previous entrants winners were SSE Generation Ireland Ltd. representing the south east region, while runners up were Abbott Ireland Nutritional Division representing the north east region. Winners of the novice category were Abbott Ireland Diagnostics Division representing the north west region, while runners up were Clarochem Ireland Ltd. representing the eastern region.

Well done to all the teams representing the eight regions and Northern Ireland in reaching the All Ireland Safety Quiz Final. Every team was a winner in their own region. A big thanks to all who helped and supported the events on Saturday 13 April.

Conference and awards

NISO's annual conference and safety awards ceremony (in conjunction with NISG) will be hosted this year by the NISO western region committee and will take place in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Galway on Friday 4 October 2013. The theme of this years conference is titled *Safety Fifty and Beyond*. The conference will be followed that evening by a gala dinner and safety awards presentation.

Pauric Corrigan
President, National Irish Safety Organisation

HSA publications

Guide on Manual Handling Risk Assessment in the Manufacturing Sector

This guide gives direction and practical information to those that work in the manufacturing sector on action that can be taken to manage the potential hazard of manual handling in the workplace. The objectives of the guide are:

- To raise awareness of the business case for managing the hazard of manual handling;
- To explain why the hazard of manual handling needs to be managed in the workplace;
- To help employers understand and recognise what the potential risk factors are in relation to manual handling in their workplace;
- To give direction on manual handling risk assessment;
- To explain how to complete a manual handling risk assessment process through illustrated case studies;
- To give direction on developing a safe system of work plan.

An Introduction to the Management of Manual Handling in the Construction Sector

Construction is a sector where the nature of work conducted varies greatly, however, it is also a sector where workers engage in work tasks that require a significant amount of manual handling. This guide has been put together as an introduction to the management of manual handling in the construction sector. The main objectives of the guide are:

- To present the business case for managing the hazard of manual handling in construction;
- To outline briefly the legislation that relates to

- manual handling;
- To explain the potential health effects of not managing the hazard of manual handling;
- To explain the five steps of manual handling risk assessment.

Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (S.I. No. 445 of 2012) Pressure Systems

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (S.I. No. 445 of 2012) amend the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 299 of 2007) by adding a Part 10 and associated Schedule 12 to deal with pressure systems.

The failure of pressure equipment can result in fatalities and serious injuries and cause major damage to property. The purpose of the regulations is to provide a robust regime for the management of pressure systems, including clear requirements for periodic statutory examinations of pressure vessels. The guide explains the new regulations and provides information on how to comply with the regulations.

REACH – Authorisation Information Sheet

Authorisation is a process under REACH designed to manage the risks of hazardous substances. It is a licensing system of sorts, whereby certain substances may not be placed on the market for a use, or used, in the EU unless the company has been authorised to do so.

The information sheet

includes:

- Advice for suppliers;
- Advice for downstream users;
- Information on how substances are added to the authorisation list;
- Latest application dates and sunset dates;
- Information to be included in the authorisation application;
- The cost of each

application for authorisation;

- How authorisation is granted.

All listed publications from the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) are available to download from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.



HSA Strategy Statement 2013-2015

The mission of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) over the next three years is to protect people from death, injury and ill-health arising from all work activities and chemicals.

The Authority's five strategic priorities are:

1. Enable enterprises to comply with their legal obligations in a practical and reasonable manner.
2. Achieve a high standard of compliance with safety, health and welfare and chemical laws.
3. Support the Minister in the development of a well-functioning, robust and proportionate regulatory framework.
4. Engage and work with people and organisations nationally and internationally to achieve the vision of a country where worker safety, health and welfare and the safe management of chemicals are central to successful enterprise.
5. Be a high performing organisation delivering value to the Irish taxpayer.

The Authority will deliver this strategy through the development and implementation of annual programmes of work. The programme for 2013 has been published and areas of focus include agriculture, construction, small business, chemicals, national inspection and investigation programme, performance assessment and engaging with other national and international bodies to maximise healthier and safer workplaces.

In the foreword of the *Programme of Work 2013*, Martin O'Halloran, chief executive of the HSA, writes on the challenges faced by the Authority. He says the Authority, like most agencies, will face further reductions in its staffing and finances during 2013. While the approximate number of staff reductions is known, the actual mix of staff that will leave and not be replaced is uncertain. This programme of work for 2013 has been drafted based on expected reductions in resources but some planned work may have to be reduced or ceased, depending on resources available and the availability of staff with the necessary competencies.

The HSA Strategy Statement 2013-2015 and the Programme of Work 2013 can be downloaded from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

Injuries Board concerned by emerging claims culture

The Injuries Board Annual Review 2012 reported an increase of 4.7% in personal injury claims, this represents an increase of 24% since 2007.

The Injuries Board assesses personal injury claims and makes awards relating to motor, employer and public liability accidents, without the need for litigation. According to the Board, the increase in personal injury claims was driven by motor claims which increased by 6.7% in 2012 and by one third over the past five years.

Commenting, Patricia Byron, CEO of the Injuries Board said, "The steady but

consistent increase in claims volumes over the past five years is a real concern at a time when our roads have never been safer and we have fewer people at work. The trend coincides with a significant increase in promotion and advertising by claims handling intermediaries.

"Last year, the Injuries Board raised concerns that specialist claims-farming firms were promoting a claims culture that could result in higher insurance premiums for consumers and business and a decline in competitiveness."

The Annual Review reveals that the Injuries Board last

year:

- Received 28,962 new claims (excludes 641 one-off DuPuy hip replacement claims) in 2012, compared to 27,669 in 2011 and 26,964 in 2010;
- Made 10,136 awards in 2012, compared to 9,833 in 2011 and 8,380 in 2010;
- Made awards with a total value of €217.94m in 2012, compared to €209.8m in 2011 and €186.6m in 2010;
- Made an average award of €21,502 in 2012, compared to €21,339 in 2011 and €22,271 in 2010;
- The average time to process a claim in 2012 was 7.2 months, the same time-

frame as 2011, in comparison to 6.9 months in 2010 and 6.5 months in 2009.

Seventy-five percent of the total awards in 2012 were for motor liability claims, with the average award being €20,631. 8% of the total awards in 2012 were for employer's liability, with the average award being €27,286. Public liability claims accounted for the remaining 17% of total awards in 2012, with the average award being €22,656.

For further information on the Annual Review 2012, please view the Injuries Board website: www.injuriesboard.ie.

Road Safety Strategy 2013-2020

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Leo Varadkar, T.D., has launched the Government's fourth Road Safety Strategy. The Strategy – 'Closing the Gap' – will run until 2020 and aims to make Ireland one of the safest countries in terms of road deaths in the EU. It will also focus on new measures to reduce the number and severity of serious injuries arising from road collisions. The Road Safety Authority (RSA) are responsible for the overall implementation of the strategy.

The Government has adopted a highly ambitious vision for road safety in Ireland and for the remainder of the decade. Ireland had approximately 41 fatalities per million population in 2011. The Strategy requires a reduction of road collision fatalities on Irish roads to 25 per million population or less by 2020. This means reducing deaths from 186 in 2011 to 124 or fewer by 2020.

Key measures included in the strategy are:

- Rehabilitative/driving awareness courses for repeat offenders will be considered, along with the feasibility of alcolocks to immobilise vehicles;
- Consideration will be given to extending the safety camera network to offences other than speeding;
- Measures to combat car clocking will be considered;
- Employers will be encouraged to implement a handbrake lock for phone use by professional drivers;
- In-vehicle devices that sense tiredness will be encouraged;
- Regular audits of road markings, safety black-spots and signage will be recommended;
- Fixed charge notices for cyclists will be considered;
- The Road Safety Authority (RSA) will have more frequent access to PULSE data (An Garda Síochána's database) in order to spot trends;
- At least five new service areas on motorways will be built to combat tiredness;
- Legislation will be tightened to prevent the reintroduction of written-off vehicles;
- Breakdown kits for cars will be made compulsory;
- Rectification notices will be applied to common minor faults.

For further information on the *Road Safety Strategy 2013-2020*, visit the RSA website: www.rsa.ie.

Farm safety awareness fortnight campaign



The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) joined forces to highlight the dangers of working on farms in 'Farm Safety Fortnight', which took place between 8-22 April. The campaign included an increased number of farm visits by the HSA with the focus being on older farmers in the 60+ age group.

Over the last 10 years there have been 182 people killed, and many more seriously injured, as the result of farm accidents. More than half of these accidents involve farmers over the age of 60.

In an effort to reverse this trend, and focus attention on age as a risk factor, the HSA and the IFA have jointly produced a DVD entitled *Older, Wiser, Safer – A Practical Guide to Safety for Older Farmers*.

"Older farmers can continue to be safe and productive on their farms, the key is to recognise age-related risks such as reduced strength and flexibility, and to modify expectations as well as work practices so that operations are completed safely," said John Bryan, IFA president.

The main causes of death and injury on farms are tractors and machinery (47%), livestock (13%) and falls from height (12%). To date, this year, there have been two deaths reported due to work activity on farms (as of 24 April).

For further information on this farm safety campaign, visit the HSA website: www.hsa.ie. The *Older, Wiser, Safer – A Practical Guide to Safety for Older Farmers* DVD can also be viewed on YouTube via the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/user/HSAAOlderWiserSafer?feature=mhee>

NISO AGM



L to R – Bill Kelly, NISO vice-president; Pauric Corrigan, NISO president; Des Brandon, NISO honorary treasurer

Delivering the presidential address at the National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO) annual general meeting (AGM), NISO president Pauric Corrigan said that even though the downturn in the economy continues, NISO is continuing to recruit new members.

Mr Corrigan said that the organisation is now in a “stable financial position”. Figures were given showing that the organisation recorded a surplus of €70,365 for the year, an increase of over 40% on the 2011 surplus. NISO is represented on Health and Safety Authority (HSA) regional committees and REACH committees, on the Construction Safety Partnership, the ETCL, and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work’s Irish Focal Point.

NISO vice-president Bill Kelly read the honorary secretary’s report on behalf of Harry Galvin who could not attend due to health

reasons. Mr Galvin commented in his report that NISO has now cleared the mortgage on their offices in Calmount Park, Dublin 12 and he recalled the vision of executive committee members at the end of the 90s who went about securing the premises.

Burden on business

According to Mr Galvin’s report, NISO are finding the Government’s approach to safety related matters confusing with different arms of government following contradictory policies. On the one hand they are committed to reducing the costs on business but they are now proposing increases in the Circuit Courts and District Courts awards, which will lead not only to increased awards but also increased legal and related professional costs.

Galvin’s report goes on to say that while this is happening we are seeing a reduction in the resources of the HSA and this in turn restricts their role

in preventing accidents. NISO would like to see a co-ordinated approach from Government to the whole area of safety with the focus on prevention, which would lead to a major saving to the economy as well as a healthier society.

Mr Corrigan also spoke of the burden imposed on businesses due to the restructuring of the FETAC Level 4, Workplace Safety component. Initially this FETAC Level 4 component had a credit value of one credit which represented a notional 10 hours of learner effort. However, the revised component has a credit value of 10 credits which represents a notional 100 hours of learner effort.

According to Corrigan, “the workplace safety component provided an introduction to health and safety in the workplace and was aimed at reducing the burden on business. This year the component has been extended to 100 notional

hours of learner effort thus greatly increasing the burden on businesses and the risk of new employees not receiving basic health and safety training due to increased costs for tutors and downtime for staff away on training.

Both Mr Corrigan and Mr Galvin expressed their thanks to Martin O’Halloran and the HSA for their support during the year. They also thanked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton, T.D., and his officials for their support. Minister Bruton has accepted an invitation from NISO to attend the health and safety awards ceremony on 4 October, which will take place in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Galway.

Workers’ Memorial Day

The ICTU will this year commemorate Workers’ Memorial Day with a ceremony in Glasnevin Cemetery Dublin. Workers’ Memorial Day is held every year to remember all those who have suffered or died because of their work but at the same time ensuring that such tragedies are not repeated. The commemoration will be held at Glasnevin Cemetery at 11:30am on Sunday 28 April.

Edel Niland, health and safety officer at DIT, writes on the safety of young persons in the workplace



Edel Niland, health and safety officer, DIT

As health and safety officer for Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), I have responsibility for a student population of 20,000 spread across 39 locations. I meet young people on a daily basis and therefore have first-hand experience of safety and young people. Young people are especially vulnerable in the workplace for many reasons: their age, inexperience, immaturity, etc. The top three causes of accidents faced by young people are moving machinery, slips, trips and falls and manual handling.

There is a popular misconception that young workers incur more injuries because of their risk-taking behaviour and inflated sense of invincibility. However, recent research regarding causation would point strongly to workplace factors. Research suggests that young workers are more at risk as they often work in more hazardous environments and engage in more physically demanding tasks than their

older counterparts. Some may not have received the training or orientation necessary to work safely.

Employment of young persons is often concentrated in the service and low skilled sectors, whereby they juggle work/school/life balance. Jobs may be seasonal or with irregular work patterns such as evening, shift or weekend work. It would be quite the norm to see a young person work in late night bars and still be up for an early morning lecture. These irregular hours challenge the body's natural rhythms and therefore can cause challenged judgment or delayed reaction time.

Legislation

Legislation concerned with the health and safety of young persons in the workplace include the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007* and the *Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996*. Legislation does not prohibit the employment of young persons, as defined in the above act and regulations. It merely provides a framework for their protection, however, the solutions lie in our hands. How can we implement the requirements of legislation at workplace level in very challenging times?

We need a multifaceted approach, whereby young people are well-educated, well-informed, in safe jobs supported with good initiatives that they are interested in. Above all we need perseverance.

Risk education

Risk education is the key to fostering a culture of health and safety and raising awareness. We want to equip our young people with the basic knowledge and skills that they will carry forward into their working lives. To do this, we must mainstream risk education into the school curriculum. This starts at a basic level in preschool and primary level where children rhyme off the safe cross code. It is further developed in secondary level with the schools' workplace safety programme for transition year students, where they are introduced to good work practices.

Unfortunately it is my experience, and research would suggest, that the embedding of risk is least well-developed at third level education. Our future engineers, scientists, architects, medical professionals and business managers all need good health and safety knowledge. With good risk education, we can help develop a set of safe behaviours that young persons will transfer into their future working lives.

In the workplace, we all know our obligation to provide a safe place, plant, systems of work, etc. If we employ young people, we must in addition ensure that a risk assessment is completed prior to their employment. The risks identified and the control measures allocated must be communicated to the young person and their parent/guardian. The risk assessment should take

account of the young person's attributes and limitations. They must receive suitable training, orientation and there must be a good level of supervision.

How do we keep young people interested?

We need to connect and communicate with our young people and involve them in accident prevention programmes. We need to use their language and connect with them with interfaces that they are comfortable with and use on a daily basis. In DIT we use the safety facebook page to share our safety videos.

The UK 'Speak Up, Stay Safe' campaign has tapped into facebook and twitter as a forum to connect to young people. They organise chats on twitter whereby young people can come together to discuss common topics and share ideas.

Safety is perceived as boring, so we have to enter and embrace young people's social networks to get our message across. Perseverance is required as it does not happen overnight - there will always be problems and challenges.

At DIT we pride ourselves on the work experience component offered on our programmes. We launched an initiative called 'Safety Smart Right From The Start'. The aim of this was to ensure the safety of students whilst on our premises and also to ensure their safety while participating in work experience programmes. In doing this, we hoped to



ensure that the DIT graduate would be widely renowned as a safety conscious graduate and therefore more employable and attractive to future employers in today's challenging economic climate.

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges faced to ensure the safety of students, while on the premises at DIT and on work experience, include:

- It is difficult to ensure risk assessments are completed. Risk assessments can be perceived as an extra layer of work on an already loaded schedule with limited resources and an ever shrinking semester.
- We are reluctant to cause inconvenience to host organisations as we rely on their goodwill to take students. We do not want them to be discouraged by extra documentation requirements and fear the implications of taking students as we raise issues such as training, risk

assessment, insurance, student supervision ratios, health surveillance, etc.

Further gaps identified included training. There was no dedicated resource for student training and hence training was not facilitated in DIT and in some cases, it was not facilitated in the host organisations.

Solutions implemented by DIT to counteract these challenges included:

- Legal briefings were organised to bring staff up to date with our requirements. We simplified the risk assessment template and developed a paperless one.
- Development of an e-learning package for students going on work placement. The main aim is to provide the student with an awareness level of training prior to work experience. The benefit of e-learning is that it is a flexible method of delivery, with minimum administration required,

and we hope is more engaging for students.

- Working with the Students Union and with their full co-operation, we decided that no one could receive funding unless the risk assessments were completed. This is a major issue and continues to be so. It means that no one can get funding for a rag week activity, a field work trip like water monitoring in the river Dargle, or a sports activity like caving in Cavan, unless the required risk assessment is completed.
- Working with the Students Union to develop new posters that do not seem as stiff next to the flamboyant posters with loads of freebies advertised. We also developed a character called 'Safe Sam' and have used him at induction so we don't appear as stiff and rigid next to the exciting, energetic Union reps with bags full of fun.
- Working with all schools

in DIT to ensure that projects now focus on risk assessments and that all required risk assessments are completed and the students get the practical training, e.g. performing a chemical agent/biological agent risk assessment or an environmental health report in one of our kitchens.

None of these solutions are complete and that is where perseverance with health and safety is required.

Conclusion

Arising from our experiences, the following is a simple checklist to consider in your own place of employment:

- Do you employ young people?
- Have you performed pre-employment risk assessments?
- Have you issued adequate information and documentation?
- Do you give sufficient training and orientation?
- Do you have adequate supervision?
- Have you good review systems?

Society tends to overlook young people as real workers due to the casual nature of their jobs, but it does not matter whether they work 2 hours or 40 hours a week, they are real people with the same rights and responsibilities as all other employees. Employers need to do more to protect young people and young people need to know how to protect themselves.

We all have a role to play to ensure that young people, our sisters, brothers, sons and daughters do not become statistics.



All Ireland Safety Quiz Finals 2013 - Results

Wexford and Sligo teams scoop the honours in the 40th Anniversary All Ireland Safety Quiz Final.

At the All Ireland Safety Quiz Final, held in Limerick on 13 April 2013, SSE Generation Ireland Ltd. (Great Island) and Abbott Ireland Diagnostics Division, Sligo, were the overall winners in the Previous Entrants and Novice Categories respectively.

The All-Ireland Occupational Safety Quiz Finals are run jointly by the National Irish Safety

Organisation (NISO) and the Northern Ireland Safety Group (NISG) and a total of 16 teams competed from all parts of the island of Ireland.

The event was a great success with a number of teams in the running for top spot right to the last round of questions.

Kieran O'Donnell, T.D., presented the prizes at a special prize-giving dinner

that evening and praised the effort and knowledge of the participating teams and the role of NISO and NISG in promoting safety on the island.

NISO president Pauric Corrigan pointed to the fantastic commitment demonstrated by the teams participating in the event, as it marked for him the strong health and safety culture present in the sponsoring companies. He

particularly thanked the participating companies' managers for their support and encouragement to their teams.

Priscilla Woods, chairperson of the NISG thanked both the NISO and NISG for their cooperation in making the event a success.



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Previous Entrants Category Winners

- 1st Place: SSE Generation Ireland Ltd. (representing the south east region)
 2nd Place: Abbott Ireland Nutritional Division (representing the north east region)
 3rd Place: Pfizer Newbridge (representing the east region)

Novice Category Winners

- 1st Place: Abbott Ireland Diagnostics Division (representing the north west region)
 2nd Place: Clarochem Ireland Limited (representing the east region)
 3rd Place: University of Limerick (representing the mid west region)

OTHER PARTICIPATING TEAMS WERE:

Previous Entrants Category Teams

- Abbott Ireland Diagnostics Division (representing the north west region)
 Alkermes Pharma Ireland Limited (representing the midland region)
 Bord Na Mona Littleton (representing the mid west region)
 Cold Chon (Galway) Ltd. (representing the west region)
 Nacco Materials Handling Ltd. (representing Northern Ireland)
 PepsiCo Ireland (representing the south region)

Novice Category Teams

- Abbott Ireland Nutritional Division (representing the north east region)
 Alkermes Pharma Ireland Limited (representing the midland region)
 GE Energy (Ireland) Limited (representing the west)
 JMD Training (representing Northern Ireland)

- 1 Quiz teams deliberate over a question at All Ireland Quiz Finals 2013
- 2 SSE Generation Ireland Ltd., All Ireland Previous Entrants Category Winner
- 3 Abbott Ireland Diagnostics Division, All Ireland Novice Category Winner
- 4 Abbott Ireland Nutritional Division, All Ireland Previous Entrants Category Runners-Up
- 5 Clarochem Ireland Limited, All Ireland Novice Category Runners-Up

Athlone pharmaceutical company has record turn-out at National Safety Quiz team selection event

For the past three years, employees at the Alkermes Athlone, Ireland site have participated in the Safety Quiz campaign run by NISO at regional and All Ireland level, producing teams that have reached the All Ireland Safety Quiz Finals on two occasions.



Alkermes Athlone Site Quiz Committee members, L to R: Ian Kelleher; David Whyte; Teresa Fox; John Flanagan (NISO midland chairperson); Sarah Clarke; Daryl Miley. Missing from the photo is Paddy Conlon.

On Thursday 7 March, a site safety quiz was held on the Alkermes Athlone site, from which top teams were selected to represent Alkermes in the 2013 National Safety Quiz campaign. An unprecedented 21 teams, each consisting of four staff, participated. The event was fully supported by site senior management and

the high level of attendance showed significant interest in and commitment to safety across the site.

According to Colette Ryan, director of supply chain and operational excellence, "Employee participation in the NISO quiz year-on-year has increased the health and safety culture here at Alkermes where employees

are collectively committed to protecting our people, our products and our environment."

At the regional quiz in Tullamore on 14 March, Alkermes recorded significant success in both novice and previous entrants categories with two teams going forward to the All Ireland Safety Quiz Finals in

Limerick.

Alkermes plc is an integrated global biopharmaceutical company which applies its scientific expertise and technological know-how to develop innovative medicines designed to help patients with serious, chronic conditions better manage their disease.



Alkermes Pharma Ireland Limited Previous Entrants Quiz Team. Also in the picture are John Flanagan, NISO midland chairperson; Priscilla Woods, NISG chairperson; Pauric Corrigan, NISO president; Kieran O'Donnell, T.D.

Update from the Health and Safety Authority

Deirdre Sinnott, head of the transport safety unit with the Health and Safety Authority, writes about load security.



Deirdre Sinnott, head of the transport safety unit with the Health and Safety Authority.

Every year loading and unloading accidents injure hundreds of people and cost businesses millions in damaged goods, damaged vehicles, road closures, journey delays, injuries and lost work time.

Accidents associated with vehicle use at work still accounts annually for almost half of all deaths reported to the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). Between 2006 and 2011 there were 509 reported incidents to the HSA that involved loading and unloading operations, including people struck by falling objects, falls from

height or slips and trips. There were 12 load related deaths reported in this time. A further 497 incidents resulted in reportable absence from work due to injury.

By law, employers must have documented safe systems of work in place for loading, unloading, load securing and preventing loads falling off vehicles, in workplaces and on the road.

Employers must have written procedures in place, based on a risk assessment, for:

- Loading vehicles;

- Restraining loads on vehicles;
- Dealing with any loads that have shifted and are in an unsafe condition;
- Unloading vehicles.

Take these simple steps to keep your loads, vehicles, employees and contractors safe and protect your business.

Plan loading and unloading operations

Time spent planning and documenting your loading and unloading practices may prevent the problems a poorly planned and unsafe load can cause. You should:

- Provide a safe waiting

area for drivers not involved in loading and unloading operations;

- Provide clear rules and instructions to employees on where to load and unload vehicles;
- Provide clear rules and instructions to employees and how to load and unload vehicles;



- Provide correct equipment to load and unload vehicles safely;
- Provide a loading plan for each journey – consider multi-drop loads;
- Communicate relevant information about each delivery site to drivers, including reporting arrangements, site rules, equipment and facilities.

Implement safe loading procedures

Restraining loads securely and safely is crucial in preventing accidents in transit and during unloading:

- Load to the headboard - if the load cannot be loaded to the headboard, use blockage or dunnage to fill the gap;
- Loads should not move in any direction in transit of the trailer;
- Never use curtains to secure a load - loads that shift in transit may fall out when the curtain is opened;
- Lashings should not be secured to rope hooks;
- Webbing straps should be regularly checked for damage and wear and tear;
- Chains must be certified and in good condition.

Plan safe routes and Journeys

In the course of any journey there is potential for loads to shift and become unstable which may affect the safe driving and stability of the vehicle, e.g. increase risk of vehicle overturning at bends, junctions or roundabouts.

- If a load does shift, it is vital that the driver feels

under no pressure to continue the journey;

- Provide clear instructions to the driver on who to contact for advice/assistance in the event of a load shift.

Carry out safe unloading

Correctly restraining loads before the start of any journey is the best way to minimise the risks of falls and crush injuries during unloading. Employers should also:

- Avoid need for working at height to prevent falls, wherever possible;
- Provide a plan to safely unload the vehicle when load has shifted.

Other things to think about

Prevent falls from the vehicle cab or load bed:

- Before drivers set off, check that steps or handholds are in good condition;
- On refrigerated vehicles, check the floor for ice or water and drivers should follow any instructions to reduce the amount of water;
- Drivers should wear well-fitting, slip-resistant safety footwear when working on vehicles;
- Keep the soles of safety footwear clean;
- All spills and dirt, such as diesel or mud on the catwalk or load area, should be cleaned up immediately;
- Keep the load area tidy – pick up loose ropes and packaging.



Prevent hitting a pedestrian:

- Restrict the loading area to workers involved in loading or unloading;
- Make sure signs, road markings, speed limits and one-way systems are being followed;
- Remind drivers that they become pedestrians when they step out of the vehicle;
- Don't let anyone guide a vehicle unless they are a trained banksman or signaller.

Prevent injury caused by poor manual handling:

- Provide safe procedures for all goods and loads that are moved, loaded

or unloaded;

- Provide instruction and training on how to safely lift and move loads;
- Provide documented rules to employees on how to safely lift and move loads;
- Make sure that employees use the correct equipment to load and unload vehicles safely;
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

For more practical advice and free resources on safe load securing, visit www.vehiclesatwork.ie or phone the HSA on 1890 289 389

Sponsorship and advertising opportunities are available

For further information, please contact
Ted O'Keeffe
tokeeffe@niso.ie
or phone 01 465 9760

Technological Changes and the OSH Practitioner

Since its inception health and safety legislation has continued to change over the years. All these changes have been welcomed by occupational safety and health (OSH) practitioners throughout Europe.

The constant across all of the legislative changes throughout the years has been the trusted occupational safety and health practitioner, working in the background to ensure every employee returns home at the end of each working day. With over 1,700 Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) practitioners in Ireland, all practitioners should be commended and respected for the work they do each and every day.

Practitioners assist with the implementation of legislation, codes of practice and standards on a regular basis regardless of how much the working environment has changed. Remember that around 20 years ago, there were no such things as desktop computers in the workplace, but now we have a plethora of electronic devices. Devices such as smart phones are now commonplace, allowing work to be completed on a small screen, while tablets are slowly replacing laptops. These changes are all leading to new emerging safety risks.

Techno-stress

Many will remember when repetitive strain injuries

(RSI) were put on the map, later renamed work-related upper limb disorder (WRULD) and now commonly known as musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Now, we have an emergence of techno-stress related to our modern working lives, which no longer just end at 5pm for many workers. In all of these changes, the safety and health practitioner is required to remain up-to-date, possessing knowledge of how technological advances may affect the workers and what practical risk management should be put in place.

It can be a lonely business for the health and safety professional. The majority of companies have only one practitioner and geographical location alone can make it difficult to share experiences and discuss ideas with other professionals. This is where the work of the network of IOSH committees comes into its own. It offers a network of like-minded people to share advice and help make the voice of the health and safety community in Ireland heard.

IOSH's vision – 'A world of work that is safe, healthy and sustainable' – is echoed throughout Ireland at the

numerous IOSH committee events and practitioners are encouraged to check the Ireland Branch events page at www.iosh.co.uk on a regular basis, for events in their area and industry. Any looking to get involved in their local IOSH committee can put their name forward – IOSH is always looking for practitioners to get involved with its work in Ireland. Alternatively, there is the option to present a topic or paper at one of our conferences.

Electronic developments

Throughout the electronic developments over the years, the IOSH Ireland branch committee will continue to communicate through the trusted IOSH Connect weekly e-zine, and of course through the monthly SHP magazine – both through the hard copy and electronic version. The recent developments in initial professional development (IPD) have also helped members going through this process to upload directly onto the website and to have criteria assessed as they go through the process. The Institution has recently updated how continuing professional development (CPD) is completed. All of these developments help our members in their personal development.



Michelle Peate-Morgan, chair, IOSH Ireland

IOSH is also aware that tightened budgets mean that a lot of practitioners are finding it harder to get out of the workplace to attend events. As a result, we will be investigating ways to communicate with members directly into their workplaces with our seminars.

The last twelve months have been a busy time for IOSH in Ireland, celebrating our 30th anniversary year during 2012 and culminating in our International Symposium in November. But there are many more years ahead. Over the coming months, IOSH will continue to share news and resources and connect members in Ireland with networking events. As the nation slowly moves out of recession, there is a lot to look forward to, especially in our IOSH community, which continues to grow from strength to strength.



Help on space requirements, disability and driving for work

Brian O'Connor answers members' queries.

QUESTION 1

I am the health and safety officer in a manufacturing plant and I am worried that there might be overcrowding in the workplace. Is there a legal obligation on employers to provide a certain amount of space per operator in a typical production cell? If yes, what are the space requirements?

ANSWER 1

As per regulation 17 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007*, 'an employer shall ensure that:

- (a) workrooms have sufficient surface area, height and air space to allow employees to perform their work without risk to their safety, health or welfare, and,
- (b) the dimensions of the free unoccupied area at a workstation are calculated to allow employees sufficient freedom of movement to perform their work and, where this is not possible for reasons specific to the workstation, the employee is provided with sufficient freedom of movement near his or her workstation.'

The *Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 1 of Part 2: Workplace*, provides guidance to factories, offices and other similar workplaces when calculating the allocation of space. As per the guide, when calculating the allocation of

space a reasonable approach should be taken as regards discounting any large spaces taken up by unusual fittings, furniture, machinery, etc.

'In a room containing a counter, the space up to and under the counter should be included when calculating the space available for each person behind the counter. In offices, 4.65 square metres should be the minimum amount of floor space allowed for every person employed in any room, including the area occupied by the office desk and chair but excluding filing cabinets and other office furniture.

At least 11.3 cubic metres should be provided for each person at work in a room other than an office at any one time. When calculating the volume, no space more than 4.3 metres from the floor should be taken into account.'

For further information on space requirements or other aspects of the physical environment at the place of work, please view the *Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 1 of Part 2: Workplace*. This guide is available to download from the Health and Safety Authority website: www.hsa.ie.

QUESTION 2

I am the employer of a small factory and I have recently learned that one of our employees has a visual impairment. Are there any

health and safety considerations I need to take into account to ensure the safety, health and welfare of this person?

ANSWER 2

In accordance with the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, as employer you must 'ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees'.

Regulation 25 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007*, states that 'an employer shall ensure that places of work, where necessary, are organised to take account of persons at work with disabilities, in particular as regards doors, passageways, staircases, showers, washbasins, lavatories and workstations used or occupied directly by those persons.'

The *Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004* also requires employers to take appropriate measures (unless the costs of doing so are disproportionate) to enable people with disabilities to have access to employment, to participate or advance in employment and to undergo training.

The employer must carry out a risk assessment and take into account the differences of individual workers. It is important neither to assume that all workers are the same nor to make assumptions about health and safety risks associated with a particular disability.



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

When carrying out the risk assessment, the employer should:

- Identify groups of workers who might be at greater risk and make a specific assessment of the risks to them, taking account of both the nature and extent of the disability and the working environment;
- Take account of people's abilities when planning work – disabled workers often have special skills, which should not be lost because of poorly adapted working conditions;
- Consult the individuals concerned during the risk assessment process; and
- Seek advice as necessary - this may be provided by occupational safety and health (OSH) services and authorities, health professionals, safety professionals and ergonomists, disability employment services or disability organisations.

This risk assessment will help to decide on any health and safety controls required to ensure a safe place of work for this employee. Examples

of such controls for an employee with a visual impairment may include highly visible signs in large format for entrances and exits, extra lighting in badly lit areas and contrasting coloured nosings on the top and bottom steps on a set of stairs.

For further information on this topic please view the document titled *Employees with Disabilities* available from the Health and Safety Authority website: www.hsa.ie.

QUESTION 3

I am supervisor for a team of sales representatives and roughly 60% of our occupation involves driving. Our employer has provided mobile phone holders in each car but are there any additional controls we should consider to ensure the health and safety of employees when driving for work?

ANSWER 3

Employers have a duty to provide a safe place of work for employees. Under the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, a vehicle is

defined as a place of work. Employers must ensure that:

- work related journeys are safe;
- members of staff are able to drive safely; and
- all vehicles and vehicle equipment are fit for use and in a safe condition.

Employers also have a duty of care to others who may be affected by their employees' work activities, which in the case of driving for work includes all other road users and pedestrians.

In order to manage work-related road safety effectively it should be integrated into your arrangements for managing health and safety at work. The main areas that need to be addressed are policy, responsibility, organisation, systems and monitoring. Questions that need to be considered include:

- Does your health and safety policy statement cover work-related road safety?
- Is there top-level commitment to work-related road safety in your organisation and is responsibility clearly

defined?

- Are you confident that your vehicles are regularly inspected and serviced in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations?
- Do you monitor performance to ensure that your work-related road safety policy is effective?

As per the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, the employer must identify hazards in the workplace and carry out a risk assessment. Areas of consideration when carrying out the risk assessment include:

- The driver - Are you satisfied that:
 - your drivers are competent and capable of doing their work in a way that is safe for them and other people?
 - your drivers are properly trained?
 - your drivers are sufficiently fit and healthy to drive safely and not put themselves or others at risk?
- The vehicle - Are you satisfied that:
 - vehicles are fit for the

purpose for which they are used?

- vehicles are maintained in a safe and fit condition?
- safety equipment is properly fitted and maintained?
- drivers have access to information that will help them reduce risks?
- drivers' health, and possibly safety, is not being put at risk, e.g. from inappropriate seating position or driving posture?
- The journey - Do you plan routes thoroughly? Are work schedules realistic? Are you satisfied that sufficient time is allowed to complete journeys safely? Are you satisfied that drivers will not be put at risk from fatigue caused by driving excessive distances without appropriate breaks? Are you satisfied that sufficient consideration is given to adverse weather conditions, such as snow or high winds, when planning journeys?

For further safety information on driving for work, please view the documents titled *Safe Driving for Work Employer Guide* and *Safe Driving for Work – Drivers Handbook*, both available to download from the Health and Safety Authority website: www.hsa.ie. The Health and Safety Executive (UK) also have a document titled *Driving at Work – Managing Work Related Road Safety*, available to download at: www.hse.gov.uk.

Brian O'Connor BSc OSH, MSc EHS



National Irish Safety Organisation Events Diary



Celebrating
50
years

Please keep an eye on our website: www.niso.ie for forthcoming courses in 2013.

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

Safe Pass Course

(Course Length: 1 day)
10 May / 24 May / 14 June

VDU/DSE Assessors Course

(Course Length: 1 day) 20 May

Manual Handling Instructor and Assessor Course, 6N0233, FETAC Level 6

(Course Length: 3 days)
10, 11, 12 & 17, 18 June

Basic Manual Handling Course

(Course Length: Half day)
12 June

Health and Safety Representation Course, L22487, FETAC Level 5

(Course Length: 3 days)
17, 18, 19 June

2. Courses and events in the regions

MIDLAND REGION

Course: NISO Introduction to
Occupational Safety and Health

Venue: Athlone Institute of
Technology

(Course Length: 13 weeks,
Mondays for 2 hours)

Commencing date to be
confirmed

Contact: midland@niso.ie

MIDWEST REGION

Course: NISO Introduction to
Occupational Safety and Health

Venue: Limerick Institute of
Technology

(Course Length: 13 weeks,
Tuesdays for 2 hours)

Commencing date to be
confirmed

Contact: midwest@niso.ie or
www.lit.ie/

LifelongLearning/Courses/

3. National Events

NISO Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition

Venue: Radisson Blu, Galway
4 October 2013

NISO and NISG Health and Safety Awards Ceremony

Venue: Radisson Blu, Galway
4 October 2013



4. All Ireland Safety Awards

All Ireland Safety Awards

Entries Deadline

3 May

For further information, please
visit: www.safetyawards.ie



Celebrating
50
years

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