

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*

WINTER 2014

All Ireland
Safety Quiz 2014

HSA to launch new
e-learning portal for
health and safety
courses



The Governor's safety
insights enthrall
NISO conference

National Irish Safety Organisation

Update!

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial/
President's Message2
NISO/National News.....3-6

FEATURES

The Governor's safety
insights enthral NISO
conference.....7-8
NISO Conference 2014.....8
All Ireland Safety Quiz
2014.....9

FORUM

HSA to launch new
e-learning portal for
health and safety courses....10
Supporting Professionals12

Helpline13
New Irish legislation
October 2013-January
201415
Upcoming Events16



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

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



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

Editorial enquiries to: The Editor,
NISO, A11 Calmount Park,
Calmount Avenue, Ballymount,
Dublin 12. Tel: 01 465 9760
Fax: 01 465 9765
Email: info@niso.ie

Design & Print: Print Bureau
Tel: 01 4733 567
www.printbureau.ie



*Pauric Corrigan, president,
National Irish Safety Organisation*

NISO President Reflects on 2013 Conference and Awards

The National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO) safety conference and awards ceremony which was held on 4 October last was an overwhelming success for all who attended. Both events witnessed an increase in numbers in relation to the attendance on previous years. NISO wishes to acknowledge those who participated in and attended the conference.

The feedback from our conference evaluation forms was very positive and the panel of speakers were well received by those in attendance. 2013 also marked NISO's 50th anniversary and this was celebrated with our gala dinner and safety awards presentation. It was a privilege to serve as president of NISO in the 50th year of the organisation.

Like the conference, safety award submissions also increased on previous years as did the number of companies attending the gala dinner and presentations. The awards were co-presented by Lucinda Creighton, T.D., Priscilla Woods, Northern Ireland Safety Group (NISG), Dermot Carey, Construction Industry Federation (CIF) and Pauric Corrigan, NISO president.

Awards 2014

Work has already commenced on reviewing the Safety Awards for 2014. A number of safety award workshops, which are free to attend, will take place in January and February. Companies who will be making submissions in 2014 are strongly advised to

attend as well as companies considering making an awards submission for the first time. The workshops have proved to be of great benefit in highlighting areas of weakness in submissions and changes that will be implemented for 2014.

Feedback in the form of a spidergraph will be available for distribution at the workshops to those who made submissions to the 2013 safety awards. Dates and locations of the Safety Award Workshops can be seen on page 16 of this edition of the NISO Update.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the companies who have made submissions to our awards and NISO looks forward to receiving their submissions in 2014. A big thank you also to our sponsors, CIF, Construction Safety Partnership (CSP), Phillips 66 Whitegate Refinery Ltd., Abbott Ireland Sligo, Anderco, Bord Gais Networks, Boston Scientific Galway, Cold Chon (Galway) Ltd., Kilcawley Construction, MacNaughtonMcGregor, Roadbridge and Shell E & P Ireland Ltd. Sincere thanks to all others who helped with the successful organisation and delivery of the conference and awards in the NISO's 50th year.

Health and safety looking forward

NISO still has grave concerns regarding the ongoing financial constraints being placed by Government on the

Health and Safety Authority. With increasing trends emerging in fatalities and serious injuries in some sectors, further reductions in funding to the HSA's budget in 2014 may lead to further increases.

One could compare this to the increase in road fatalities and the reduction in funding and manpower in An Garda Síochána. Proactive policing of our national roads network was starting to show a decline in fatalities.

AGMs and Safety Quiz

At this time of year, NISO has held its regional annual general meetings (AGMs). I attended all regional AGMs as it is one time of the year when NISO members can voice their opinions and I can bring these back to our executive committee for consideration.

The NISO regional safety quizzes will take place in February and March. Companies are asked to make a special effort and enter teams into their regional quiz finals. The successful novice and previous entrants teams will then go forward to the All Ireland Safety Quiz Final on 5 April 2014 in Westport. Dates for the regional finals are available on the NISO website: www.niso.ie.

On behalf of NISO, my fellow officers, executive members and staff, I would like to wish all our members and the wider safety community a safe, healthy and peaceful New Year.

HSA publications

Driving for Work – Driver Health Guidelines

The aim of these guidelines is to make working drivers more aware of the main health issues that may affect them and, consequently, to improve their ability to drive safely. The guide includes information on fitness to drive, common health conditions and healthy lifestyle and will help drivers look after and improve their health. A description of the most common health issues affecting working drivers and details of websites with more comprehensive information on each topic are also included in the guide.

Staying Fit for Farming

This booklet provides information on staying fit for farming and includes stories from farmers on their own health experiences. It looks at different situations and illnesses and sets out how symptoms can be identified early on. The booklet includes sections on planning for the future, coping with stress, healthy

eating, getting active, alcohol and smoking, back care, heart health, cancer prevention and early detection, breaking isolation and visiting your doctor before it is too late.

Chemical Importers – Information Sheet

Under EU Chemical Regulations, those who import chemicals from outside the EU have a number of duties to fulfill. This information sheet outlines the key responsibilities for EU importers of chemical substances and mixtures under the REACH, CLP and Rotterdam Regulations, for which the Health and Safety Authority are the relevant competent authority in Ireland.

Safety in Contract Cleaning

This guidance document provides information in relation to chemical and biological safety with respect to those working in contract cleaning. The guide looks at the chemical and biological hazards present in

contract cleaning, protective measures, occupational health effects, what an employer is required to do, relevant legislation and sources for further information.

Reducing the Manual Handling of Roof Panels – Information Sheet

This factsheet highlights the physical risk factors associated with the manual handling of roof panels and presents examples of how such risk factors can be reduced. Composite roof panels are widely used in building construction.

Guide on Manual Handling Risk Management in Transport and Storage

This guide gives practical information on actions that can be taken to manage the potential hazard of manual handling in transport and storage. It underlines the importance of taking an in-depth look at current work practices to identify potentially hazardous manual handling and, in

consultation with staff, developing improved systems of work which will reduce unsafe manual handling. It is specifically focused on those work activities in transport and storage which involve loading and unloading of materials to and from vehicles

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



Dates for 2014

NISO AGM

5 April - Hotel Westport, Westport, Co Mayo.
AGM will commence at 12:00hrs.

NISO/NISG All Ireland Quiz Finals

5 April - Hotel Westport, Westport, Co Mayo.

All Ireland Safety Awards Entries Deadline

30 April

Annual Health and Safety Conference and Awards Presentation

3 October – Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, Co Westmeath

National AGM 2014

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO) will take place on Saturday 5 April at 12:00hrs in Hotel Westport, Westport, Co Mayo.

The AGM is open to all members of NISO, including student members, individual members and employees of corporate members. Members are encouraged to attend the National AGM, express their views and become involved with their regional committees. The AGM will also provide an opportunity for attendees to network with other like-minded professionals.

Any queries regarding the National AGM 2014 can be directed to email: info@niso.ie or telephone number: 01 465 9760.

46 workplace fatalities in 2013

Official figures, released by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), show that there were 46 people killed in work-related accidents during 2013, compared to 48 in 2012.

There were reductions in fatalities in the Agriculture sector, from 21 in 2012 down to 16 in 2013; the Fishing sector, from 7 in 2012 to 4 in 2013; and the Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities sector with 4 fatalities in 2012 and 1 reported last year.

Commenting on the sector with the highest number of fatalities, Martin O'Halloran, chief executive officer of the HSA said, "We recognise that some jobs can be more hazardous than others, the number of fatalities in Agriculture each year bears that out.

However, we will never accept that these deaths are inevitable and cannot be prevented. I am particularly concerned that 4 children lost their lives due to work-related accidents on Irish farms last year. We are working to foster a culture of safety in the sector but high accident rates show that the pace of change is too slow. I am calling on farmers to make 2014 the safest year on farms ever recorded".

The Construction sector recorded the second highest number of fatalities with 11 killed, making it the third year in a row that fatalities increased in the sector. The main causes were the movement of vehicles on site and falls from height.

The number of fatalities in the

Transportation and Storage sector increased from 1 in 2012 to 4 in 2013.

Other statistics include:

- Incidents involving vehicles at work accounted for 20 fatalities in 2013.
- The county with the highest number of fatalities during 2013 was Cork with 12 occurring; 6 in Agriculture, 4 in Construction, 1 in Education and 1 in Fishing.
- Counties Dublin and Waterford recorded the second highest number of fatalities with 4 in each.
- Of the 46 killed in work-related accidents in 2013, there were 8 non-worker fatalities; 5 in Agriculture, 2 in Retail and 1 in Construction.

For further information on workplace accidents in 2013, visit the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group

A number of State and semi-State bodies have joined forces for a new initiative to improve the safety of visitors to 900 national monuments, parks, historic houses and recreation sites and 1,000km of inland navigable waterways across Ireland.

The Office of Public Works (OPW), Coillte, the State Claims Agency, Waterways Ireland, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the

Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht have joined the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group (VSCG).

The group aims to promote best practice in managing visitor safety. The OPW oversees more than 740 national monuments, with 3.8 million visitors to its sites in 2012, while Coillte's 160 forests, parks and recreation sites attract 18 million visitors annually.

Minister of State for Public Service Reform, with special responsibility for the Office of Public Works, Brian Hayes, T.D., said: "Tourism is a key strand of the Government's economic policy and last year's Gathering Initiative has helped attract many new visitors to our beautiful forests, waterways, historic parks and houses. As such, it is essential that these visitors have safe access to our valuable assets. I am sure all will benefit greatly from this new initiative".



New Court Jurisdictions

The jurisdiction limit of the Circuit Court in personal injury cases will be increased to €60,000, while the limit for the District Court will be increased to €15,000.

The increased jurisdictions have generated reservations from the Bar Council, the Law Society, the insurance industry, business organisations and experienced health and safety and claims managers, all of whom fear that the increased jurisdictions will lead to higher awards and increased insurance costs.

Defective scaffold boards



The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) have issued a safety alert regarding defective scaffold boards, which are causing an increasing number of accidents on Northern Ireland's building sites.

The majority of injuries associated with defective scaffold boards happen when boards used in 'platform brackets' break during normal work activities. HSENI find during their site visits that there are boards in use which superficially look sound, but on closer inspection are found to have been weakened.

It is vital that a system of work is in place that ensures all scaffold boards are checked regularly for damage, rot or any other feature which may reduce the strength of the board.

Common examples of unacceptable damage include:

- fungal decay, for example, wet rot,
- broken or damaged end bands,
- wood broken from the edge of the boards which significantly reduces the cross-section of the board, for example, notches,
- loose or broken knots,
- excessive cuts in the faces of boards caused by hand saws, circular saws or angle grinders (trades likely to use power tools on scaffold must use sacrificial timber and not cut directly onto scaffold boards),

- transverse cracks caused by overloading,
- infestation of the timber, for example, holes caused by insects.

To prevent further accidents, the HSENI recommend that scaffold boards comply with the following:

- all scaffolding boards conform to BS 2482:2009,
- they are cleaned prior to inspection – all surface contamination which obscures the surface of the board, for example, cement must be removed before inspection - this can usually be done using a paint scraper or a stiff hand brush,
- boards are inspected prior to being put into use, at regular intervals whilst in use and before storage,
- they are not damaged beyond the limits in the British Standard including cracks, cuts or notches cut out of them,
- damaged/defective boards are immediately taken out of use and disposed of appropriately,
- all boards in storage are stacked in a way which allows for ventilation,
- where machine testing is carried out ensure that boards are tested in both directions.

For further information on this safety alert, visit the HSENI website: www.hseni.gov.uk.

EU-OSHA report on record breaking campaign

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) brought its campaign on 'Working together for risk prevention' to a close in November last.

According to Dr Christa Sedlatschek, director of EU-OSHA, "The Healthy Workplaces campaigns have proven once again to be one of the most successful and effective ways of promoting good occupational safety and health (OSH) at a grass-roots level. We are delighted that so many companies and organisations across Europe took part in this risk prevention campaign – they all understand and appreciate the huge contribution that OSH can make to improving working conditions".

Together with EU-OSHA's Europe-wide network of focal points, a record number of official campaign partners – 87 companies and organisations – took part in the campaign. The campaign began in April 2012 and has encouraged employees and managers to work together to manage risks in the workplace.

The 2014-2015 campaign will be launched in spring 2014 and will be called 'Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress'. For further information on campaigns run by EU-OSHA, visit the EU-OSHA website: www.osha.europa.eu.



HSA Safety Alerts

Potentially Dangerous Mobile Sandblasters

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) have been made aware of mobile sandblasters entering the EU that are potentially dangerous and do not conform to the relevant European safety directive (97/23/EC).

The consigners of these products are mainly the following companies:

- Yongkang Xieheng Zhejiang Industry Co. Ltd.
- D&J International and/or Dragon Tools.

The products in question usually bear the designation SBxx, RAXx or 80 Mobil Profi. Safety deficiencies associated with these products include:

- defective welds,
- operating valve not suitable for intended use,
- no suitable valve in situ to allow safe depressurisation,
- no marking on safety valve,
- incorrect marking (declaration of conformity and/or instructions for use missing or incorrect).

If you have in possession or have come across one of these products, you are asked to contact the HSA workplace contact unit on 1890 289 389.

Are you Competent to Operate a Chainsaw Safely?

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is concerned with the increased number of fatalities involving chainsaws at work. Over the last five years 12 persons

have suffered a fatal accident arising from the use of chainsaws or tree felling work activities.

The Teagasc National Farm Survey indicates that about 6.5% of all injuries, in the agriculture and forestry sector, are chainsaw or wood related indicating that approximately 120 serious injuries occur each year. Self-employed farmers, farm workers and contractors are particularly at risk. These persons may only use chainsaws occasionally and may lack the training, experience and knowledge required for certain tasks.

Chainsaw injuries involve cuts and lacerations to the limbs, neck, head and trunk. The major cause of timber related fatal accidents is being struck by falling trees or branches while felling trees. Appropriate training in chainsaw use and the wearing of suitable protective clothing to protect against these injuries is essential.

If you find you cannot meet the competency/training requirements or don't have all the personal protective equipment for chainsaw work activities, then you must engage the services of a competent chainsaw provider.

For further information on chainsaw safety, view the HSA information sheet titled *Are you Competent to Operate a Chainsaw Safely?* and the HSA *Guide to Safe Working with Timber and Chainsaws*. Both publications can be downloaded from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.



For further information on these alerts, visit the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

Farm Safety Awareness

Following two recent farm fatalities since the start of the year, National Irish Safety Organisation (NISO) president, Pauric Corrigan, has called for a safety awareness training programme for farmers that will take into account the hazards that farmers face in their every day farming activities. Farming by its very nature is a dangerous occupation and at this time of the year a farmer's working hours can often be short, due to inclement weather conditions and reduced daylight working hours.

According to Corrigan, while we are mindful that farmers are aware of the dangers that are associated with their work, they can often take simple precautions to protect both themselves and their loved ones. There are many sensible and practical measures that cost little or nothing to implement, which, when in place, make farms safer places for farming families to live, work and play.

In order to farm safely, do not be tempted to rush routine work, instead take a moment to think about what could go wrong before starting any job. Always stop and think. Accidents are foreseeable and preventable.

Corrigan has called for all farming bodies, the Department of Agriculture, IFA, ICSA, Teagasc and all stake holders, to actively collaborate to promote health and safety on the farm.

NISO are planning a number of farming safety workshops in February.



The Governor's safety insights enthral NISO conference

Bringing a well attended and successful conference to a close, the former Governor of Mountjoy Prison, John Lonergan, enthralled delegates attending the NISO Annual Conference 2013 with a speech which presented a very practical insight into workplace health and safety.



Herbert Mulligan, editor, *Health and Safety Review*

Recalling his first job in a sawmill in 1964, Mr Lonergan said “health and safety was never mentioned”. Equipment was, he said unprotected, there was no induction and no training. “Injuries were part and parcel of life”. Dealing with the issue of occupational safety in prisons he challenged the notion that good safety practices are incompatible with security. Giving some examples, he spoke of the bravery of prison officers rescuing prisoners who set fire to cells. Turning his attention to the issue of resources, Mr Lonergan said policy is easy, but “resources are essential”.

The Governor, as Mr Lonergan is known, delivered the closing address at a conference at which delegates heard about policy developments, claims and the

future for occupational health and safety. One of the highlights of the conference was a drama on equipping people to hold effective safety cultures with the objective of building safety cultures.

An insight into incident management and emergency response at one of the country's major resource developments was provided by Claudia Van Den Berg and David Keane from Shell, who spoke about the Shell to Sea project.

Policy

Trade union leader Eamon Devoy warned delegates that the EU Commission's new policy Regulatory Fitness and Performance (REFIT) does not auger well for health and safety in the future.

Commenting on a European Commission policy document in which it withdrew proposals for directives on musculoskeletal disorders, carcinogens and mutagens, occupational safety and health for hairdressers and on environmental tobacco smoke, Mr Devoy, who chairs ICTU's health and safety committee and was until recently vice-chair of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), predicted “We are not going to have a new health

and safety strategy”. Saying that the EU OSH Strategy 2007-2012 was successful, with a 25% drop in fatal accident achieved, he said the Commission has not yet drafted or agreed to draft a new strategy.

He described the proposals in the REFIT policy as a direct attack on workers' rights. He said the Commission wants to weaken legislation on information and consultation and to commercialise health and safety standards to favour businesses involved in race to the bottom practices.

Speaking later EU-OSHA director, Dr Christa Sedlatschek, told delegates that “OSH is under strong scrutiny”. There is an ongoing evaluation of legislation at European and national level. She said that if we deregulate OSH for micro and small enterprises, we will encounter problems later.

Claims

It is when things go wrong that safety professionals, who in many organisations are the organisation's claims manager, become involved in the claims process.

As senior counsel, David Nolan, who chairs the Bar Council, put it to delegates attending the NISO annual

conference, “if you are coming to me, things have gone wrong”. While it may be when things go wrong that safety professionals meet barristers, they are likely to meet Gay Connolly, group claims director AON Risk Solutions Ireland, who spoke after Mr Nolan, or his counterparts in the insurance industry, at an earlier stage. What both men offered delegates were nuggets of wisdom to be applied when managing OSH.

Giving some examples of what can go wrong for defendants in court, Mr Nolan, who as he said acts for both plaintiffs and defendants, said, no judge will accept that a worker, who has been shown a video or some slides, has received proper manual handling training. He said training must be appropriate to the work to be done and employers must ensure that safety statements are relevant to the work to be done and the workplace. Often the safety statements he sees are “pro-forma documents, not appropriate to the work done”.

Speaking about training Gay Connolly said it must be relevant and records must be available. Training has to be appropriate and task specific. On the issue of records, he said “The making

and keeping of records is fundamental to defending claims". In court "if it is not written down, it did not happen". For employers defending employer liability (EL) claims or organisations defending public liability (PL) claims, "It is often the fact that you cannot show that you did the right thing that is the problem for defendants".

The future

Looking to the future, the HSA CEO, Martin O'Halloran, who traced improvements in Irish health and safety standards since NISO was founded in 1963 by tracking the fatality rate per 100,000, which has fallen from 9 per 100,000 to just over 2 per 100,000 over the

50 years period, having said that "we live in a society, not an economy", expressed his fear that with cutbacks many of the "gains will be lost".

Recalling the past, Mr O'Halloran said that in 1963 the primary piece of health and safety legislation was the *Factories Act 1955*. In 1973 Ireland joined the EU. Expressing implicit approval of the Barrington Commission Report finding that "health and safety is a management responsibility", he said that in his opinion 1983 was the most important year in NISO's 50 years. Now in 2013 comprehensive health and safety legislation is in place and awareness of health and safety in Ireland

is high. The culture has changed. The courts take health and safety seriously and have imposed €1m fines and suspended custodial sentences. Ireland is among the top five or six European countries in health and safety performance.

Looking to the future, Jan Chemiel, the recently appointed CEO of IOSH said "Deregulation is happening". It is, he added, coming from the EU. But "at the same time Governments are driving organisations to take more and more responsibility". There is, he said, the triple bottom line - social, environmental and economic. There is "increased scrutiny from society and an awareness of

reputational damage. Giving an insight into the priority business affords health and safety, he said private equity investors are subjecting the health and safety performance of organisations they are investing in to due diligence.

Giving an example of how health and safety has improved on the shop floor, Michael Gillen from PharmaChemical Ireland and recently appointed to the HSA board, speaking for IBEC said the key now is sustainability. Looking to the future, he said we are going to see more people working from home. The challenge of the future will be using health and safety as a way of making things happen.

NISO Conference 2014

Ireland's premier health and safety conference for safety professionals and business leaders.

**Friday 3 October,
Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar,
Co Westmeath**

The NISO conference will offer delegates an insight into current topical issues, which will be addressed by a panel of renown national and international speakers.

To register your interest in conference 2014, email conference@niso.ie specifying "Conference 2014 Interest" in the subject line.



Mullingar Park Hotel

All Ireland Safety Quiz 2014



Regional Quiz Dates

NISO Western Region

[covering counties Galway, Mayo, Roscommon]

5 February 2014; 20:00hrs;

Oranmore Lodge Hotel,
Oranmore, Co Galway.

NISO Eastern Region

[covering counties Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow]

27 February 2014; 19:30hrs;

Gresham Hotel, Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin.

NISO Midland Region

[covering counties Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath]

12 March 2014; 20:00hrs; Bridge

House Hotel, Tullamore,
Co Offaly.

NISO North West Region

[covering counties Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo]

13 March 2014; 20:00hrs;

Southern Hotel, Sligo.

NISO Mid West Region

[covering counties Clare, Limerick, Tipperary North]

20 March 2014; 20:00hrs;

Greenhills Hotel, Ennis Road,
Limerick.

NISO Southern Region

[covering counties Cork, Kerry]

20 March 2014; 20:00hrs; Oriel House Hotel, Ballincollig, Co Cork.

NISO South Eastern Region

[covering counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary South, Waterford, Wexford]

Date, time and venue to be confirmed.

NISO North East Region

[covering counties Cavan, Louth, Meath, Monaghan]

6 March 2014; 19:00hrs;

Fairways Hotel, Dundalk,
Co Louth.

NISG Northern Ireland

[covering counties Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Down, Fermanagh, Tyrone]

7 March 2014; 19:00hrs;

Wellington Park Hotel,
Malone Road, Belfast.

All Ireland Finals – date, venue, and time

5 April 2014

Hotel Westport, Westport,
Co Mayo

Quiz Registration: 14:30hrs

Finals: 15:00hrs

Why Enter?

Organisations are encouraged to participate in what is an entertaining and sociable event while at the same time participants who enter are more likely to retain more information on health and safety than from other sources. Participants tend to bring back and heighten the safety awareness culture within their own organisations.

Regional Safety Quiz Format

The Safety Quiz will comprise of teams of up to 4 persons. The winning team from both the Novice and Previous Entrants categories proceed to the All Ireland Finals on Saturday, 5 April 2013, Hotel Westport, Westport, Co Mayo.

All Ireland Safety Quiz Finals Format

The Novice and Previous Entrants Finals will be a table quiz comprising of teams of up to 4 persons. There will be no questions asked to individuals. The top two teams from both the Novice and Previous Entrants categories will emerge as winners and runner ups of the All Ireland Finals.

HSA to launch new e-learning portal for health and safety courses

Joanne Harmon, education manager with the Health and Safety Authority, writes about plans for the introduction of a new e-learning portal early in 2014.



Joanne Harmon, education manager, HSA

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is to launch its own e-learning portal in 2014, www.hsalearning.ie. A range of free online health and safety courses have been developed over the last number of years and all will be hosted on the Authority's own learning management system. All of the courses have been developed by the HSA with the aim of improving awareness of workplace safety, health and welfare. A number of the courses are aimed at teachers and students within the Irish education system.

Learners now have the flexibility to choose a course, and to study it in their own time and at their own pace. A short assessment is taken at the end of the course following which a certificate of completion can be downloaded. Each course

also has a specific set of learning outcomes and courses can be re-accessed as a refresher at any time.

Courses are available for the following work sectors:

Primary and Post-primary schools

A number of introductory courses have been developed for the education sector.

These courses are specifically aimed at:

- health and safety officers/principals/teachers in schools who have an interest in managing safety in schools, or those with designated responsibility for same,
- technologies teachers at post-primary level,
- science teachers at post-primary level,
- post-primary students (transition year, leaving certificate applied and leaving certificate vocational),
- third level students studying construction-related courses.

A further four courses have been developed for primary schools. They are designed to be used in the classroom using an interactive whiteboard with third and fourth class students and were developed in line with the aims and objectives of the SPHE programme of the

primary school curriculum. The courses cover the topics of keeping safe on the farm, at school, around electricity, and using screens and keypads. Comprehensive teacher guidelines are included with each course and teachers can choose to use one or all of the modules with their class.

Construction

This consists of an introductory course suitable for third level students of construction and related disciplines. It is also relevant to those undertaking apprenticeships in any construction-related areas. Also available is the SMP20 e-learning course which replaces the need for persons to attend a workshop. On

successful completion of the SMP20 module, learners will receive a unique 'Certificate Number', which will enable them to order the pack. The aim of the pack is to assist small contractors in establishing and maintaining an effective safety management system. The pack gives details of statutory health and safety duties and provides guidance and tools to enable compliance with these duties.

HealthCare

The six online healthcare courses have been developed by the HSA with the aim of improving knowledge of workplace health and safety for those working within the healthcare sector. The course





has been designed for employees with supervisory or managerial responsibilities in healthcare such as line managers and department heads. The content is suitable across all healthcare settings like dental surgeries, GP practices, hospitals, nursing and residential care.

A series of courses in the areas of transport, agriculture and small/micro business are currently under development. These courses will cover workplace transport safety management, specifically aimed at transport and logistics managers, supervisors, operatives and drivers. Some transport safety videos are viewable on the new LMS until the

courseware is complete.

Anyone can enrol and complete any number of courses that will benefit them, their employees, colleagues, service users or students in the area of safety, health and welfare in the workplace. Some courses have an estimated completion time of 90 minutes, others can take 140 minutes. The guideline for how long a course might take to complete is given with each course description online.

Certification

Another useful feature of the online courses is certification. Learners that successfully complete a course may download a certificate of completion to

show they have completed and passed the course. A pass rate of 80% is required for certification. Although not a formal health and safety recognised qualification, the certification may form part of an individual's training record for work or education purposes.

Teachers, lecturers, employers and managers will also be interested in the 'Group Manager' feature. This feature enables users to register a group or class to take one of the online courses. It can be used to enhance and support classroom teaching or to provide courses to larger groups of learners in the workplace. One clear advantage is that it allows

the group manager to monitor participant/student activity and to communicate with them. Group managers can also access simple group or class reports to see how learners are progressing.

By providing this new platform for online learning the HSA is keeping pace with the increased use of ICT in education and business and with the growth of life-long learning. To access HSA online courses see hsalearning.ie. For further information on the education strategy of the Health and Safety Authority, contact Joanne Harmon at joanne_harmon@hsa.ie.

Supporting Professionals

The landscape for health and safety practitioners has changed drastically over the last few years. There has been more demand placed on the role holder with additional work assigned to or expected from a worker.

Topics including environmental management, risk management, corporate social responsibility and business continuity have all been added to the list of responsibilities. This, coupled with an ever-increasing catalogue of emerging hazards, means practitioners need to ensure they remain up to date with legislative changes and industry best practice.

Competitive advantage

Of course, being so clued-up means health and safety professionals can add the competitive advantage to any company and emerge to be an asset the company can't do without. Having in place a robust safety management system, managed by a competent person is certainly the way every business should be heading. There is clear evidence that this can not only

set companies apart from their rivals, it can also save on the bottom line – adding significant funds to the net profit of any company.

How you might say? We all know it is just not good enough to copy your competition when it comes to safety. As a health and safety practitioner we must remain up to date and assist our companies in being the leader and setting itself apart from its competition – a skill all health and safety practitioners have accomplished over the years.

Technology

We have novel ways of doing this, such as using modern technology. For example, the IOSH group on LinkedIn or IOSH forums. Networking with our IOSH peers at the many IOSH Ireland branch events held throughout the

year and by reading the many magazines that cover health and safety are other channels for development. However, is this enough when it comes to the changing role and face of the profession?

We are all well aware of the need to ensure that our employees remain up to date on their health and safety obligations, but what about us? How do we remain the constant knowledgeable professional in the workplace if we don't attend training courses?

As a health and safety practitioner, I deliver training but I also attend training courses on a regular basis to ensure that I remain up to speed with current developments in my field. I can certainly say that in addition to the conferences available in Ireland, there are a



Michelle Peate-Morgan, chair, IOSH Ireland

wealth of courses recognised by IOSH that we as health and safety practitioners can benefit from. These include programmes such as 'Meaning Business – Developing and Delivering the Business Case for Health and Safety' and 'OHSAS 18001 Lead Auditor'.

In summary, whilst I have no doubt you have all set your New Years resolutions for 2014, perhaps having thought about your own development, there is one more addition you can add to your list.



Sponsorship and advertising opportunities are available

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

Help on PPE, ladders and pregnant employees

Brian O'Connor answers members' queries.

QUESTION 1

During my work I am required to wear safety goggles continuously throughout the day. However, I find for certain tasks that this item of personal protective equipment (PPE) can pose a risk to my safety as the goggles can steam up and make visibility poor. What does the legislation require in terms of the use of PPE?

ANSWER 1

The *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007*, Part 2 Chapter 3 covers use of personal protective equipment (PPE) at work. The fundamental principle is that PPE should only be used as a last resort. The safety and health of employees must be first safeguarded by measures to eliminate workplace risks at source, through technical or organisational means or by providing protection on a collective basis. Collective protective measures must also have priority over protective measures applying to individual employees. If these measures are not sufficient, only then should PPE be used to protect against the hazards that are unavoidable.

When deciding what PPE is required, the employer must assess the hazards in the workplace and ensure that the PPE is appropriate to the risk. The employer must consider if the PPE prevents or adequately controls the risks involved without increasing the overall level of risk. If the

PPE increases the level of risk then the employer must consider other appropriate controls.

Many types of safety goggles restrict the area of view and cause tunnel vision. Misting of lenses may also arise, particularly where the operation involves hard physical work. In these cases the employer must consider if the PPE is actually increasing the risk of a serious injury occurring. If eye injuries are common in the workplace and safety goggles are identified as a control, it may be an idea to make the wearing of safety goggles compulsory in areas of the workplace where eye injuries are likely to occur.

For further information on PPE in the workplace, please view the *Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 3 of Part 2: Personal Protective Equipment*. This guide is available to download from the Health and Safety Authority website: www.hsa.ie.

QUESTION 2

Ladders are used on a daily basis in our workplace. In relation to training, must employees be trained on the safe use of ladders and who must carry out this training?

ANSWER 2

Falls from ladders account for at least one fatality each year so training in the safe use of ladders is very important.

Employers have a duty under section 8 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005* to provide this training as well as the necessary information, instruction and supervision to his/her employees.

The training must be provided by a competent person. A competent person is defined in the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, Section 2 of Part 1, as 'For the purpose of the relevant statutory provisions, a person is deemed to be a competent person where, having regard to the task he or she is required to perform and taking account of the size or hazards (or both of them) of the undertaking or establishment in which he or she undertakes work, the person possesses sufficient training, experience and knowledge appropriate to the nature of the work to be undertaken'.

The key words outlined above are training, experience and knowledge. It is vital that all

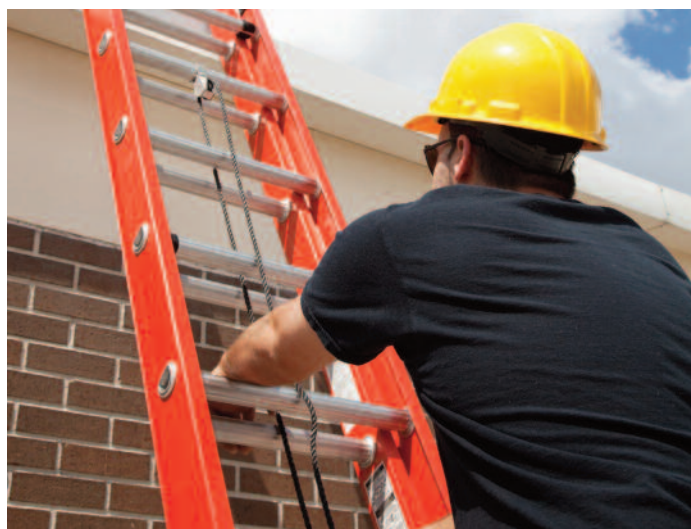


Brian O'Connor, health and safety specialist, National Irish Safety Organisation

three components are accounted for when deeming that someone is competent to carry out a certain task.

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) recommend that training in the safe use of ladders include the following:

- How to visually check the ladder before use,
- How to secure the ladder,
- Avoid overreaching,
- Importance of having three points of contact while working on a ladder,
- How to carry tools on a ladder,
- Why the top three rungs



- should be kept free,
- The requirement that ladders used for access should project at least one metre beyond any landing and be secured,
- How to protect members of the public,
- The correct angle (4:1 ratio),
- How to cope with sloping footpaths or slippery surfaces,
- The dangers from overhead lines,
- What footwear should be used, and,
- The dangers of use in wet or windy conditions.

For further information on the safe use of ladders please view the HSA's information sheet titled *Using Ladders Safely* and also the *Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Part 4: Work at Height*. These documents can be downloaded from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

QUESTION 3

What action must be taken to ensure the safety, health and welfare of a pregnant employee in the workplace?

ANSWER 3

An employer must assess the specific risks posed to a pregnant employee and ensure she is not exposed to physical agents such as ionising radiation or vibration, chemical agents which may cause cancer and anything else in the workplace referred to in Part A of Schedule 8 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007*, that will damage either her own safety or health or that of her developing child. The nature, degree and duration of the exposure to any agent,



process or working condition must also be determined.

The employer must appoint a competent person to carry out this assessment. The assessment must cover any risk to safety or health likely to arise from exposure of a pregnant employee to an agent or working condition listed in Part B of Schedule 8 of the *General Application Regulations 2007*, this includes work with pressurisation chambers, rubella, toxoplasma, lead and lead substances and underground mine work. Night work must also be considered when carrying out the risk assessment, if the pregnant employee has a medical certificate stating she should not perform any night work due to health and safety reasons then the employer must remove her from night work by either transferring her to day duties or granting her leave. If the risk assessment identifies a

risk to the pregnant employee, then the employer must take the following practical steps to avoid the risk:

1. Adjust the working conditions and/or hours of work. For example, if the pregnant employee is a cleaner and it is a cleaning product that poses a risk, it may be possible to replace this cleaning product with one which will not harm the pregnant employee or her developing child. If step one does not remove the risk then follow step two.
2. Provide suitable alternative work. For example, if the pregnant employee's role is to stack shelves on the shop floor and the handling of loads is posing a risk, the employer may consider moving the pregnant employee to the check out area. If step two is not possible or does not

remove the risk then follow step 3.

3. The employer should assist the employee in receiving health and safety leave under section 18 of the *Maternity Protection Act 1994*.

The employer, as well as having specific responsibilities for pregnant employees, also has specific responsibilities towards post natal and breastfeeding employees. For further information please view the *Guide to the General Application Regulations 2007, Chapter 2 of Part 6: Protection of Pregnant, Post Natal and Breastfeeding Employees*. This document can be downloaded from the HSA website: www.hsa.ie.

Brian O'Connor BSc OSH, MSc EHS

New Irish legislation October 2013 – January 2014

Statutory Instruments Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Biological Agents) Regulations 2013 (SI 572/2013)

The regulations transpose the EU Directive 2000/54/EC on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work. Employers must identify the biological agent to which workers are, or may be, exposed. They must assess the risk and put in place control measures. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is given powers to prohibit specific uses of biological agents or to request additional control measures. The *Biological Agents Regulation 1994 and 1998* are repealed and replaced by SI 572/2013.

European Union (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (SI 571/2013)

Due to a re-classification of heavy fuel oil as 'Very Toxic to Aquatic Organisms', under the EU Regulation (EC) No. 1272/2008 on the classification, labelling and packaging of chemicals, it now falls within the scope of the Seveso II Directive (Directive 96/82/EC, as amended by Directive 2003/105/EC). The Seveso II Directive is transposed into Irish law by the *European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2006* (S.I. No. 74 of 2006).

European Union (Railway Safety) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 444/2013)

The purpose of these regulations is to restate the

national law that gives effect to Directive 2004/49/EC (as amended by Directive 2008/57/EC and Directive 2008/110/EC) on safety of the community's railways except in respect of Chapter V (Accident and Incident Investigation) of the Directive – the existing national provisions for the latter are provided in the *Railway Safety Act 2005*. The regulations include provisions for safety management systems, safety certificates, safety authorisation, access to training facilities and maintenance of vehicles; all of which apply to the railway system in the State to which the Directive applies. These regulations replace and repeal the earlier transposition

provisions in this regard that were provided in the *Railway Safety Act 2005* as amended by the *European Communities (Railway Safety) Regulations of 2008 and 2011*. The regulations also make some consequential amendments to the *Railway Safety Act 2005*.

Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013 (Jurisdiction of District Court and Circuit Court) (Commencement) Order 2013

This Order appoints the 3rd day of February 2014 as the date on which section 2(1) and Part 3 of the *Courts and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013* (No. 32 of 2013) comes into operation.

European Union (Biocidal Products) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 427/2013)

These regulations set down the requirements and conditions relating to the authorisation and registration of biocidal products, which must be complied with in relation to the placing of such products on the market and their usage, in accordance with European Parliament and Council Regulation (EU) No. 528/2012.

In addition, these regulations set down the requirements which must be met for articles treated with biocidal products that are intended to be placed on the market, together with associated enforcement and financial provisions.

Latest Statistics

The latest workplace fatality statistics as of 17 January 2014 show there was one workplace fatality so far this year.

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
A - Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1	20	28	27	29
B - Mining and quarrying	0	2	1	1	0
C - Manufacturing	1	1	0	2	2
D - Electricity; gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0	1	0	0	0
E - Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	0	1	4	3	2
F - Construction	0	11	8	6	6
G - Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and personal goods	0	3	3	2	4
H - Transportation and storage	0	4	1	7	3
I - Accommodation and food service activities	0	0	0	1	0
J - Information and communication	0	0	0	0	0
K - Financial and insurance activities	0	0	0	0	0
L - Real estate activities	0	0	0	0	0
M - Professional, scientific and technical activities	0	1	1	2	0
N - Administrative and support service activities	0	0	1	0	0
O - Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	0	0	0	1	0
P - Education	0	1	0	0	0
Q - Human health and social work activities	0	0	1	1	1
R - Arts, entertainment and recreation	0	0	0	1	1
S - Other service activities	0	1	0	0	0
Total fatalities	2	46	48	54	48

Source: www.hsa.ie

National Irish Safety Organisation Events Diary

Please keep an eye on our website: www.niso.ie for forthcoming courses in 2014.



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

Safe Pass Course

(Course Length: 1 day)

31 January / 14 February / 28 February

Basic Manual Handling Course

(Course Length: Half day)

12 February

Health and Safety Representation Course, L22487, FETAC Level 5

(Course Length: 3 days)

17, 18, 19 February

Manual Handling Instructor Course, 6N0233, FETAC Level 6

(Course Length: 5 days)

24, 25, 26 February & 3, 4 March

VDU/DSE Assessors Course

(Course Length: 1 day) TBC

Safety Award Workshop

Venue: Prince of Wales Hotel, Athlone, Co Westmeath.

23 January; 11:30-13:00hrs.

MIDWEST REGION

Course: NISO Introduction to Occupational Safety and Health

Venue: Limerick Institute of Technology
(Course Length: 13 weeks, Tuesdays for 2 hours)

Commences 28 January.

Contact: <http://www.lit.ie/LifelongLearning/Courses/>

Safety Award Workshop

Venue: Greenhills Hotel, Ennis Road, Limerick.

20 February; 14:00- 15:30hrs

Safety Quiz

Venue: Greenhills Hotel, Ennis Road, Limerick.

20 March; 20:00hrs.

NORTH EAST REGION

Safety Quiz

Venue: Fairways Hotel, Dundalk, Co Louth.

6 March; 19:00hrs.

NORTH WEST REGION

Safety Quiz

Venue: Southern Hotel, Sligo.

13 March; 20:00hrs.

SOUTH EAST REGION

Safety Award Workshop

Venue: Ramada Viking Hotel, Cork Road, Waterford.

21 January; 15:00 – 16:30hrs.

SOUTH REGION

Safety Award Workshop

Venue: Oriel House Hotel, Ballincollig, Cork.

30 January; 11:30-13:00hrs.

Safety Quiz

Venue: Oriel House Hotel, Ballincollig, Co Cork.

20 March; 20:00hrs

WEST REGION

Seminar: Should tougher action be taken against employees who flout workplace safety rules?

Venue: Oranmore Lodge Hotel, Oranmore, Co Galway.

22 January; 14:15-16:15hrs

Safety Award Workshop

Venue: Oranmore Lodge Hotel, Oranmore, Co Galway.

5 February; 15:30-17:00hrs.

Safety Quiz

Venue: Oranmore Lodge Hotel, Oranmore, Co Galway.

5 February; 20:00 hrs

NORTHERN IRELAND – ORGANISED BY NISC

Safety Award Workshop

Venue: Belfast.

17 February

Safety Quiz

Wellington Park Hotel, Malone Road, Belfast.

7 March; 19:00hrs

3. National Events

NISO/NISG All Ireland Quiz Finals

Venue: Hotel Westport, Westport, Co Mayo.

5 April 2014

NISO Annual General Meeting

Venue: Hotel Westport, Westport, Co Mayo.

5 April 2014

NISO Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition

Venue: Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.

3 October 2014

NISO/NISG Health and Safety Awards Ceremony

Venue: Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.

3 October 2014



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