National Irish Safety Organisation

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

SUMMER 2021

National Hish Safety Organisation

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President's Message

At our recent AGM I referred to these unprecedented times and Health and Safety.

COVID-19

COVID-19 has caused great difficulties here and around the world. The pandemic caused us to rearrange or cancel many of the events NISO had planned in 2020.

Having acknowledged the excellent work by our Health Authorities during this crisis I went on to express my concern that in recent times Government has given out mixed and at times contradictory messages in the fight against this pandemic.

We have seen and heard members of NPHET on radio and television stating what should be allowed and what should not be allowed before NPHET actually holds its meetings. This is wrong; the members of NPHET and indeed Government ministers and TDs should only speak after their meetings and after having considered all the information in order to give the public clear messaging.

Too many people in important positions are spinning the information and in so doing they are sowing seeds of confusion and risk losing the support of the public.

Workplace Fatalities

I find it very disturbing to see that 53 people lost their lives in workplace accidents last year which is an increase in fatalities compared to 2019 (47) and 2018 (39).

The highest number of fatalities occurred in agriculture again in 2020 with 20 deaths, followed closely by construction with 15 deaths.

COVID-19 was high on everyone's agenda last year and received and continues to receive a large amount of publicity. As safety professionals, whiles it's important to keep prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and follow the Work Safely Protocol, we must also continue to keep a focus on all other aspects of health and safety in the workplace.

Machinery, vehicles, slips, trips and falls etc. continue to be the cause of most accidents, injuries and fatalities in the workplace.

Why are the fatalities so high in the agricultural community? Why is it considered acceptable on a farm for young children to travel in or on farm machinery?

If this high rate of fatalities occurred in an industrial environment the Trade Unions would be asking serious questions. In contrast there is very little said on this matter by the farming organisations.

I think there would be a public outcry if industrial workers turned up for work with their young children and wanted to allow the children in or on the machinery. I have no doubt that prosecutions would follow if this happened particularly where injury or death occurred.

Accepting that most farm deaths are family related and can be classified as both the home and the workplace, we



Harry Galvin, president, National Irish Safety Organisation

see very little Court action following farming deaths. As a society we need to do something different to stop this carnage on our farms.

Compensation Levels

It interesting to see that awards for injuries are showing signs of being lowered in line with recent judicial guidelines. This is seen as the solution to high insurance premiums. The media, government and other lobby groups are quick to champion this view. If these groups were as interested in investing in the prevention of these accidents there would be a sharp reduction in injuries and therefore major insurance savings.

Speaking about prevention policies does not get the media attention but speaking about reducing compensation payments gets plenty of coverage.

Stay safe,

Harry Galvin, President, National Irish Safety Organisation



Workplace fatalities increased by 13% in 2020

The HSA has published its Annual Review of Workplace Injuries, Illnesses and Fatalities for 2019–2020.

Of the 53 work-related fatalities in 2020, 28 or 52.8% were self-employed, 12 were employees (22.6%) and 13 were non-workers (24.5%).

More than half of those who died last year were self-employed with 18 of those working in agriculture, forestry and fishing, seven in construction, two in wholesale and retail trade and one in accommodation and food service.

Welcoming the new report, the Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, Damien English TD, said "There are approximately 300,000 self-employed people in Ireland, most of whom work alone, juggling a myriad of skills, who might consider time spent on health and safety issues important, but not urgent. These are the people who have the most to lose if they have an incident or serious illness. The HSA have many free tools, courses and supports available and I'd encourage all employers and workers, including the self-employed, to avail of them or to contact the HSA for advice."

In 2020, the most common causes of fatal accidents were loss of control of means of transport (16, 30.2%), fall from height (seven, 13.2%), fall of object from above (six, 11.3%) and entering a dangerous area (six, 11.3%).

Of all the workplace fatalities in 2020, 18 of the deceased were aged over 65. The proportion of fatal accidents involving workers aged over 65 years has increase from 7.4% in 1990 to 34% in 2020.

Manual handling and falls were the most common triggers in 2020, as they have been in all years since 2016. This shows that these two triggers have consistently been amongst the most prevalent causes of non-fatal incidents in recent years.

The part of the body affected in the greatest number of non-fatal incidents to workers was the back. Back injuries

were reported in 20.4% of worker incidents, but only in 4.7% of nonworker incidents. This is because more workers were involved in manual handling incidents caused by lifting or moving heavy objects than nonworkers. For non-workers, the part of the body injured most frequently was the head (21.3%). These head injuries most often followed slips or falls.

The most common working environment for non-fatal workrelated incidents was industrial or maintenance areas for workers (25.5%) and shop or service areas for non-workers (54.9%).

To read the Health and Safety Authority's Annual Review of Workplace Injuries, Illnesses and Fatalities 2019–2020 visit: https://www.hsa.ie/eng/publications_a nd_forms/publications/corporate/annu al_review_of_workplace_injuries_illne sses_and_fatalities_2019%E2%80%93 2020.html

PIAB reports sharp reduction in Personal Injuries Claims

The Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB) has published its Annual Report 2020. According to the report, since the new Personal Injuries Guidelines was implemented in April 2021, preliminary analysis shows average award values through PIAB have halved.

The reductions in claims numbers in 2020 were substantially due to lower levels of accidents resulting from far fewer people on Ireland's roads, attending workplaces or meeting together in public areas including hospitality, childcare, leisure or similar environments, due to COVID restrictions.

Some of the highlights from the report include:

Personal Injuries Claims:

- PIAB dealt with 26,009 new personal injuries claims and awarded total compensation of €206 million in 2020.
- The number of personal injuries claims in 2020 fell by 16%, mainly due to the pandemic.
- The number of claims has reduced by 22% over the past two years.
- Awards acceptance rates have fallen 58% to 51% since 2015 despite similar average awards.

PIAB highlights and developments:

- PIAB Total Awards were down €70m on 2019 and have fallen €92m over two years due to lower claims volumes.
- According to PIAB, these reductions in claims volumes should impact insurance costs significantly.

Rosaline Carroll, Chief Executive, PIAB, said: "Claims costs are reducing significantly due to lower volumes and lower values and this new environment is ripe for premium reductions. Our claims data shows claims numbers are down sharply, while we also know Awards are already 50% lower in recent months, as new award



guidelines take effect. All parties involved need to fully support the new guidelines, so that acceptance of PIAB awards and consenting to fully use the PIAB process increase."

Employers Liability (EL):

EL claims for workplace injuries are the smallest of the three liability categories. PIAB received 5,049 Employers Liability claims in 2020 and issued 1,103 awards in that category. The average award in this category was €30,558. Injuries in the workplace, can often involve more severe and life-changing injuries resulting in higher average awards.

Public Liability (PL):

The number of Public Liability claims received by PIAB in 2020 was 6,823 and the number of awards made in that category was 1,426. The average award in this category was €26,065.

Motor Liability (ML):

ML claims continue to be the largest category of claims in Ireland. PIAB received 14,137 motor claims in 2020,

issued 6,058 awards in relation to those claims with an average award of €22,357 in this category.

Dermot Divilly, Chairperson of PIAB commented: "There has never been a period in which the major benefits and cost savings which the PIAB system brings have been needed more. As Ireland moves into a period of economic recovery, there is now, more than ever, a need for everyone to help us to fully crystalise the benefits of our service and to ensure it is not hampered or weakened."

Robert Troy, Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with responsibility for PIAB added: "Addressing the cost and availability of insurance is a priority for me and for the Government. The actions completed to date under the Action Plan for Insurance Reform are already having an effect with an average 50% reduction in awards arising from the Personal Injuries Guidelines."

Source: piab.ie

The HSA publish its Annual Report for 2020

The HSA has published Annual Report 2020 which outlines its many activities and achievements throughout the year.

Some of the HSA's highlights in 2020 include:

- The Workplace Contact Unit handled 28,684 contacts in 2020, 39% more than in 2019. Of the 28,684 contacts received, over a third or 9,982 were requests for information in relation to COVID-19.
- The numbers registering to use the HSA's free safety statement and risk assessment tool, BeSMART.ie, increased by 15% in 2020. There were 11,868 new registrants in 2020

 the highest on record, compared with 9,967 new registrants in 2019.
- The online farm risk assessment tool, farmsafely.com, also recorded an increase, with 13,227 registered users in 2020, compared to 11,502 registered users in 2019.
- 52,644 online health and safety courses, HSALearning.ie, were taken in 2020, the highest on record and 60% more than the number of courses taken in 2019.

Enforcement:

- 9,135 inspections completed and 1,160 investigations completed. Enforcement was taken on 65% of inspections and investigations.
- Fines totalling €1,327,000 were imposed in 2020.

COVID-19:

 COVID-19: 5,416 COVID-19 inspections to check adherence with the Work Safely Protocol; 2,457 complaints handled in relation to COVID-19 and the Return to Work / Work Safely Protocols; 408,630 downloads of COVID-19 checklists and templates.

Speaking at the launch of the report the CEO of the HSA, Dr. Sharon McGuinness, said "Unfortunately, we have seen work-related fatalities happening to victims from all age groups. Of the 13 non-workers to die in work-related fatalities in 2020, five were aged under 18 years old. This drives home the need for appropriate procedures to be put in place to protect everyone in a workplace, be they employees, customers or visitors. Proper risk assessments and health and safety considerations must be implemented in all workplaces to ensure everyone's safety. No job is worth a loss of life, injury or illness." To read the Health and Safety Authority's Annual Report in full visit: https://www.hsa.ie/eng/ publications_and_forms/ publications/ corporate/ hsa_annual _report_ 2020.html



NISO Welcomes New Members

National Irish Safety Organisation welcomes all of the organisations that have joined recently. As a not for profit organisation with charitable status, your membership of NISO supports our endeavours to promote health and safety in Irish workplaces.

Contact NISO on 01 465 9750 or email info@niso.ie for further information on NISO membership and to receive a copy of our Membership Brochure.

New Members

Organisations to recently join NISO include:

- Antaris Consulting
- Axis Construction Limited
- Bridge Training Services
- Dublin Respiratory
- Entegro Ltd.
- Erith Contractors Ltd.

- Erto Egis Road and Tunnel Operation
- Indaver Ireland Limited
- J. Vaughan Electrical Contractors
- Manning and Buckley Electrical Ltd.
- PJK Electrical Solutions Ltd. t/a Electrical Solutions
- Sensori Facilites Management



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NISO CERTIFICATE IN SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE AT WORK COURSE 13 weeks; 1 evening per week

Commencing

Dublin / Nationally Online 14 September 2021

niso.ie

NISO

Athlone IT Online 20 September 2021

Limerick IT Online 21 September 2021

DETAILS AND CONTACTS: National Irish Safety Organisation A11 Calmount Park, Ballymount, Dublin 12 T 1850 SAFETY F 01 4659765 E info@niso.ie W niso.ie Course Price: €425 (NISO members); €525 (Non members)

Contact Details T 01 465 9760 E info@niso.ie

NISO National AGM 2021

NISO held its 2021 AGM on 22 July 2021 in the Green Isle Hotel, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.

At the 2021 AGM of the National Irish Safety Organisation, NISO President, Harry Galvin, noted that it is NISO's normal practice to hold the annual AGM in March/April in conjunction with the All Ireland Safety Quiz Finals and that for the second year in a row the AGM had to be delayed until July due to COVID-19.

Mr. Galvin thanked the NISO secretariat, the Executive Committee and Regional Committee members for their ongoing hard work, support and dedication during the challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial Report

Mr. Galvin reported that NISO is in a stable financial position but that the organisation has seen a sharp decrease in income. He outlined all of the usual activities and events that had to be cancelled since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 including many seminars, workshops and training courses; the regional quizzes and All Ireland Safety Quiz Final in 2020 and 2021; the Annual Safety Conference and Trade Exhibition in 2020 and the All Ireland Safety Awards presentation dinner. The Safety Award winners were instead announced in an online awards ceremony in January 2021.

Ongoing Support

The continued support from Ibec, ICTU, the HSA and Insurance Ireland was acknowledged as was the continued engagement with Northern Ireland Safety Group.

Special mention was given by Mr. Galvin to some of NISO's highlights over the previous year including:

• Events organised by NISO both nationally and locally by regional committees, including seminars, workshops, safety awards events etc., have seen in excess of 2,000 individuals taking part. This number is down on previous years due to the reduced number of public events.



- The NISO Certificate in Safety, Health and Safety at Work was successfully held online and was very well attended.
- The 29th All Ireland Safety Awards saw the Supreme Safety Award being retained by PM Group who became the first entrant to win the top award two years in a row. The Gold Award was won by Designer Group, the Silver Award by Actavo and the Bronze Award by Weltec Engineering Ltd.

Closing comments

In his closing comments, Mr. Galvin said that NISO would like to see a coordinated 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. He noted that NISO has continued to seek extra resources for the HSA from government and that with COVID-19 putting extra pressure on the HSA that extra resources are required. He also acknowledged the excellent work by our health authorities throughout this crisis.

Mr. Galvin concluded by calling on NISO members to renew their efforts to improve health and safety in our workplaces by the promotion of safety and health awareness and education. He also encouraged members to improve health and safety in Ireland by example and leadership.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2021/22

Harry Galvin, president Michael O'Neill, vice president Pauric Corrigan, secretary

Des Brandon, treasurer

Mary Keane

Fergal McKevitt

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2021/22

(In addition to the above)

David Connolly (members' representative)

John Flanagan (Midland region)

Aine Healy (Members' representative)

John McCarthy (ICTU representative)

Anne Murphy (lbec representative)

Edel Niland (members' representative)

Michael O'Keeffe (HSA representative)

Sean O'Shaughnessy (South region)

John Quinn (North West region)

Michael Ryan (South East region)

Philip Thornton (Mid West region)

Level Crossing Incidents Down

Iarnród Éireann appeals for all road users to act safely at Level Crossings.



60 Incidents at Level Crossings in 2020

Iarnród Éireann has called for renewed vigilance at level Crossings. Incident rates are stable, this may have been contributed to by reduced traffic volume due to Covid-19 restrictions, but as restrictions begin to ease, the company appeals for road users to be vigilant at level crossings.

In 2020 there were 60 incidents at level crossings, the majority of which were level crossing barriers being struck by vehicles which continued over the level crossing, even though the barriers were lowering and the warning lights were flashing.

These incidents can cause significant disruption to rail services, and also place both the road user and railway users at serious risk.

So far this year (2021), there have been 31 incidents at level crossings across the network. Some of these incidents have been particularly worrying and have been widely shared on social media. Iarnród Éireann encourages members of the public to be vigilant when using level crossings to cross the railway. Of particular concern are the incidents of unsafe behavior at unattended level crossings which are more likely to end in serious injury or fatality. There are 149 unattended level crossings on roads around the country, usually found on minor or private roads where there are relatively low levels of traffic. To support the level crossings campaign, a series of new level crossing booklets have been produced (available for download at

https://www.irishrail.ie/en-ie/About-Us/Rail-Bridge-Heights-and-Level-Crossings/Rail-Level-Crossings) to advise road-users how to use this type of crossing safely. These booklets provide step-by-step advice on how to approach and cross an unattended level crossing. Road-users are reminded that they are solely responsible for opening the gates before crossing the tracks and ensuring the gates are securely shut again once they have crossed to the other side. Failure to shut the gates could have serious consequences for another road-user. People simply should not take risks at level crossings. Unattended level crossings also pose a serious risk so it is important that road-users take responsibility for opening and closing the gates properly when passing through. If the gates are left open, another road-user might think that it is safe to cross without due care and the consequences could be very serious.

Iarnród Éireann reminds users of the onus to use crossings responsibly:

- At automatic crossings: stop safely when the warning lights begin to flash. Never go through crossings when barriers are about to lower or lowering.
- At staff operated crossings: respect gatekeepers, whose role is to ensure your safety and that of rail users. Stop immediately when the gatekeeper requests it.
- At user operated crossings: Always stop before crossing to check the line, check the line again after crossing, and **always close the gate after use** for your safety and that of others.

IRISH RAIL FEATURE

Almost 300 people die at level crossings across Europe every year and level crossing accidents account for 1% of road deaths in Europe but 31% of all rail fatalities. Although Ireland's record is far stronger than the European average, and there have been no level crossing fatalities since 2010, vigilance is essential and Iarnród Éireann is bringing the message of International Level Crossing Awareness Day to Irish crossing users. The theme for this year is; *"All Together we are stronger"*

Jim Meade, Chief Executive of Iarnród Éireann said: "The number of incidents at level crossings is still too high. In recent months, we have had a number of very worrying incidents and level crossings and we would appeal to all road users to obey the rules of the roads at level crossings. They are for everyone's safety"

Road-users are advised to use the 'Rail Cross Code' when crossing an unattended level crossing:

RAIL CROSS CODE

Always expect a train. Failure to do so could have serious consequences.

Stop, look both ways, and listen – unattended level crossings are guarded by iron gates and accompanied by stop signs. You should stop your vehicle well clear of the gates to allow enough room to open fully away from the tracks.

Switch off any mobile or music devices that might prevent you from hearing an approaching train and open the windows on the driver and passenger sides of your vehicle. If you are on foot or on a bicycle, remove your headphones, hood or other items of clothing that might impair your sight or hearing. Carefully read and follow the instructions provided at the level crossing. After opening the gates on both sides of the train tracks, drive forward and stop behind the white line.

Look both ways, looking for the lights of an approaching train and listening for a train horn.

Give way to trains. Let any approaching train pass, then look both ways again.

When the railway is clear, cross quickly – Only when the tracks are clear in both directions should you cross. Drive across the train tracks and stop well clear of the crossing on the opposite side. **Shut and fasten both gates after you** - even if there is traffic behind you, make certain the gates are properly shut before moving on. If <u>you</u> have opened the gate, <u>you</u> are responsible for ensuring that the gate is properly shut afterwards. Don't assume someone else will do it. If the gates were open when you arrived and you have crossed the railway, make sure you close and secure the gates afterwards. Don't just leave them open or assume someone else will close them. Not only is this reckless, it is against the law.



New Publications

HSA COVID-19 Templates, Checklists and Posters

The HSA has compiled a comprehensive range of checklists and templates to help employers, business owners and managers to get their business up and running again and to inform workers about what they need to do to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. They have been drafted based on the Government's Work Safely Protocol and should be read in conjunction with the Work Safety Protocol. There are eight ready-made checklists tailored for employers, employees and lead worker representative(s) now available to download in English or Irish. Available from hsa.ie.

Interim Guidance on Fitness to Work Following COVID-19 Absence

New guidance booklets from the HSA as follows: Interim Guidance for Employers on Fitness to Work Following COVID-19 Absence; Interim Guidance for Employees on Fitness to Work Following COVID-19 Absence and an Interactive Checklist PDF. This guidance sets out the steps involved in determining/assessing Fitness for Work of any worker, after an absence due to COVID-19 Infection or suspected infection. This Guidance should be considered within an organisation's existing sickness and absence management procedures and policies. An Interactive Checklists PDF is also available for employers. Available from hsa.ie.

Chemical Agents and Carcinogens Code of Practice 2021

Code of Practice for the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Chemical Agents) Regulations (2001–2021)

and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Carcinogens) Regulations (2001– 2019). The HSA advises employers who use or generate hazardous substances in their workplace to review their current chemical risk assessments and control measures to ensure compliance with any revised OELVs listed. Available from hsa.ie.

Safety for Seasonal

Workers in Horticulture These guidelines from the HSA will serve as a useful resource for those non-Irish national employees, but also for everyone in the borticultural industry.



the horticultural industry, whether self-

employed, an employer or an employee. Available from hsa.ie

Employees with Disabilities

An employer's guide to implementing inclusive health and safety practices for employees with disabilities from the HSA. Available from hsa.ie.



Legislation

S.I. No. 231/2021 - Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Chemical Agents) (Amendment) Regulations 2021

The purpose of these Regulations is to amend the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Chemical Agents) Regulations 2001 to give further effect to Council Directive 98/24/EC of 7 April 1998, Commission Directive 2000/39/EC of 8 June 2000, Commission Directive 2006/15/EC of 7 February 2006, Commission Directive 2009/161/EU of 17 December 2009, Commission Directive (EU) 2017/164 of 31 January 2017 and Commission Directive (EU) 2019/1831 of 24 October 2019.

Fatal Workplace Injuries by Economic Sector 2010-2021 (NACE Revision 2)

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
A - Agriculture + forestry and fishing	4+0+0	20+0+3	19+0+3	15+1+4	25+0+2	21+5	18+6	32+1	16+5	20+8	22+5	21+7
B - Mining and quarrying	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	1	1	2
C - Manufacturing	4	4	4	2	0	2	3	3	1	0	2	2
D - Electricity; gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
E - Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	1	1	2	2	1	1	3	0	1	4	3	2
F - Construction	6	14	11	5	6	10	11	6	11	8	6	6
G - Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and personal goods	1	5	1	2	3	2	3	5	3	3	2	4
H - Transportation and storage	1	3	6	8	5	1	3	3	4	1	7	3
I - Accommodation and food service activities	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
J - Information and communication	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K - Financial and insurance activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L - Real estate activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
${\rm I\!M}$ - Professional, scientific and technical activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0
${\bf N}$ - Administrative and support service activities	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0
${\bm 0}$ - Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	0	1	0	0	5	0	4	1	0	0	1	0
P - Education	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
${\boldsymbol{Q}}$ - Human health and social work activities	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	1
R - Arts, entertainment and recreation	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
S - Other service activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	18	53	47	39	48	48	56	55	47	48	54	48

(Source: HSA, correct at 29 July 2021. Note that some accidents may be under investigation and may not have been recorded yet.)

Upcoming Training and Events

Upcoming dates for NISO training will be scheduled in line with Government advice.

1. Courses held at the NISO Training Centre, Ballymount, Dublin 12 / Online

DSE/VDU Risk Assessor Training [Online] NISO Certificate (1 day) 3 August 2021

Manual Handling Basic NISO Certificate (half day) 23 August 2021

Mobile and Home Working Assessor Course [Online] NISO Certificate (1 day) September 2021

Safety Representation NISO Certificate (2 day) September 2021



2. NISO Certificate in Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

Course length: 13 wks / 2 evenings p/wk

NATIONAL

Venue: NISO Training Centre, Dublin 12 Commencing: 14 September 2021 Contact: info@niso.ie

MIDLAND REGION

Venue: Athlone Institute of Technology [Online] Commencing: 20 September 2021 Contact: sreidy@ait.ie

MIDWEST REGION

Venue: Limerick Institute of Technology, Moylish Campus [Online] Commencing: 21 September 2021

Contact: FLLimerick@lit.ie

3. National / All Ireland Events (Subject to Government Guidance

NISO Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition Great Southern Hotel, Killarney, Co. Kerry 4 November 2021

NISO/NISG All Ireland Safety Awards Gala Dinner Great Southern Hotel, Killarney, Co. Kerry 4 November 2021



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