

Health and Safety

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AUTHORITY NEWSLETTER

August 2005

matters

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This newsletter is produced regularly.

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Work Positive - Prioritising Organisational Stress

The latest version of Work Positive was officially launched on 26th July by the Minister for Labour Affairs, Mr. Tony Killeen TD on behalf of the Health and Safety Authority. Work Positive is an initiative aimed at tackling stress within the workplace.

Work Positive was originally published in 2002 by Health Scotland and the Health and Safety Authority. The latest version is different in that it contains the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards approach that incorporates a risk assessment template covering the known causes of workplace stress. It provides a step-by-step guide to assessing risks of stress, outlining the aims of each step and thereby helping managers eliminate these risk factors in their organisation.

The Health and Safety Authority will run a pilot scheme of Work Positive involving the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI). The scheme is being piloted in six companies - three on either side of the border to assess the levels of stress in their workplaces. Work Positive is available at a cost of €20.00 by contacting the Authority's Publications Unit at (01) 614 7806 or by logging onto the publications section of our website at www.hsa.ie



From left to right: Jim Lyons, Chairman of the HSA, Minister for Labour Affairs, Tony Killeen, T.D. and Patricia Murray, Organisational Psychologist of the HSA.

Health and Safety Authority issues warning on quarries during Quarry Safety Week

The Health and Safety Authority issued an urgent warning to all those involved in the quarry industry following the third death this year in the sector. The main risk areas in the quarrying industry are

vehicles, machinery, falls from height and face collapse. The Authority has been working closely with the industry to try to develop an improved safety culture, but is concerned that this year's fatalities show that the industry still has some way to go to achieve this aim. Quarry Safety Week was from 15th - 20th August. The Health and Safety Authority produced a special safety calendar to mark this year's event which sets out the basic safety guidelines when working in quarries.

ISOLATE AND LOCK OUT

- Isolate and lock out all energy sources, including when working on or near electrical equipment.
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VEHICLE SAFETY

- Quarry vehicles should be inspected regularly.
- The vehicle is inspected and confirmed to be in a safe working order.
- Quarry vehicles should be inspected regularly.

WORKING AT HEIGHTS

- Working at height is not something which should be done by just one person.
- Working at height is not something which should be done by just one person.

QUARRY SAFETY WEEK - PUT SAFETY FIRST

AUGUST '05	SEPTEMBER '05	OCTOBER '05	NOVEMBER '05
W 1 9 12 22 29	W 5 12 19 26	W 3 10 17 24 31	W 7 14 21 28
T 2 9 16 23 30	T 6 13 20 27	T 4 11 18 25	T 8 15 22 29
W 3 10 17 24 31	W 7 14 21 28	W 5 12 19 26	W 9 16 23 30
Th 4 11 18 25	Th 8 15 22 29	Th 6 13 20 27	Th 10 17 24 31
F 5 12 19 26	F 9 16 23 30	F 7 14 21 28	F 11 18 25
S 6 13 20 27	S 13 20 27 34	S 11 18 25 32	S 14 21 28
S 13 20 27	S 20 27 34	S 18 25 32	S 21 28

CONFINED SPACES

- Confined spaces are defined as any space which is not designed for continuous occupancy, is enclosed or partially enclosed, and where the normal means of entry and exit is restricted.
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SAFE OPERATING

- Every quarry must have a Safety Committee.
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MANUAL HANDLING

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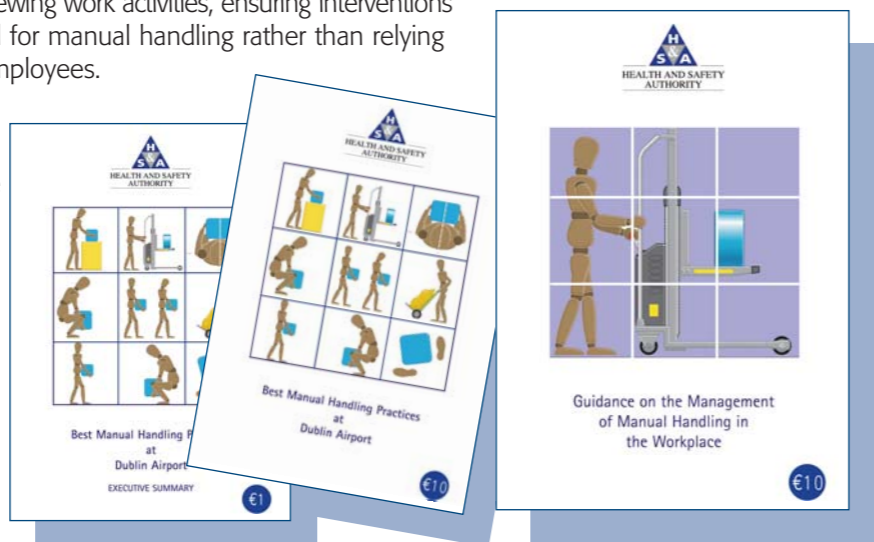
Over 30% of workplace injuries due to manual handling

The Health and Safety Authority and the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) launched a Report on 29th June 2005 which examines the effects our baggage is having on ourselves and those who work in the airport. The Report which highlights the shocking statistic, that 1 in every 3 workplace injuries results from manual handling. An analysis of injuries shows that the spine is the most common body part injured with sprains and torn ligaments the most common injury suffered.

The Health and Safety Authority also released a new Guidance Document on Manual Handling. The document had been produced over a three year period and involved studying international best practice across many sectors. It focused on preventing injury through risk assessment, viewing work activities, ensuring interventions are made to eliminate or reduce the need for manual handling rather than relying solely on training and consultation with employees.

The Health and Safety Authority and the DAA commissioned the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUI, Galway) to investigate manual handling practices in the aviation industry and to make recommendations for passengers, the airport operator, travel agencies, airlines and a host of other organisations and highlight the consequences manual handling injuries are having on the individual, the employer and ultimately the economy.

Copies are available from our publications office at (01) 6147806 or by logging on to our website at www.hsa.ie



Month of May sees fines in excess of €165,000 for Breaches of health and safety legislation

Dublin Circuit Court imposes fines of €140,000 on two construction companies.

On 27th May 2005 the Dublin Circuit Court imposed a fine of €40,000 on PJ Carey Contractors Ltd. following an investigation into death of a four and half year old. The accident occurred on 22nd August 2001 in Ballymun.

In passing sentence Judge Kevin Haugh said: "the company should have implemented additional safeguards appropriate to the site and policed their own workforce. The same diligence shown in the preparation of the plans was not shown in the policing of the plans."

On 11th May 2005 Dublin Circuit Court imposed a fine of €100,000 on South Midland Construction Company Ltd. The prosecution arose from an investigation into the death of a worker on 23rd November at a site in Church Avenue, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.

In passing sentence Judge Michael White stated that he hoped the fine would act as a deterrent. Judge White underlined that sole workers who carry out the same task repeatedly can be exposed to particular risks to their safety and he stated that, in these circumstances, there is a responsibility on employers to ensure that the necessary safety systems are in place to protect these workers.

Cork Circuit Court imposes a fine of €25,000

On 4th May 2005 Cork Circuit Court imposed a fine of €25,000 on Mr. Robert Fitzgerald following an investigation into the death of a 23 year old employee on 1st September 2003. The employee was killed on 1st September 2003 when the atmosphere inside the tank of a road tanker vehicle exploded. At the time he was carrying out a repair inside the tank.

Mr. Robert Fitzgerald of Aghada, Midleton, Co. Cork operates his business at Youghal Road, Midleton, Co. Cork pleaded guilty to a count taken under Regulation 5(3)(a) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Confined Spaces) Regulations, 2001 – failure to provide a safe system of work for the entry of persons into a confined space. A fine of €25,000 was imposed.

Health and Safety Authority launches 2004 Annual Report



The Annual Report 2004 of the Health and Safety Authority was launched on 30th May 2005 by Minister for Labour Affairs Mr. Tony Killeen TD. The Report contains details of Authority's activities for the previous year along with details of prosecutions taken by the Authority and the Authority's financial report.

A detailed statistical report and a ten year review of health and safety trends was launched in conjunction with the Annual Report.

Some key statistics in the report include the following:

- 50 fatalities in 2004 compared to 70 in 2003
- Agriculture & Fishing is the worst sector (16) followed by Construction (15)
- 11,382 inspections carried out
- 45,000 calls to Authority's information line
- Male workers incur twice as many injuries as females
- 70% of injuries occur in the 20 – 44 age group
- Most likely region to suffer injury - Mid-east (Kildare, Meath, Wicklow)
- Most likely region to suffer illness - West (Galway, Mayo, Roscommon)

The ten year review of health and safety trends entitled Health and Safety at Work in Ireland draws on a range of demographic and health and safety statistics to give a picture of occupational health and safety in Ireland over the 10 year period from 1992 to 2002. The publication addresses four specific questions:

- 1 What is the trend of health and safety in Ireland?
- 2 What are the characteristics of the health and safety problems specific to Ireland?
- 3 What actions are needed in what areas?
- 4 What kinds of information are available and what kinds are missing?

Copies of these publications are available to download from the Authority's website or by contacting the Publications Unit at (01) 614 7806.

Minister for Marine launches Fishing Vessel Safety CD-ROM

The Minister for Marine, Pat the Cope Gallagher recently launched the Fishing Vessel Safety CD-ROM at the Irish Skipper Galway Expo-05. The CD aims to assist vessel owners to produce a safety statement for their vessel.

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) developed this initiative based on the knowledge that many of those engaged in one of the most dangerous of occupations, fishing, find the task of completing a safety statement difficult. The CD comes with a booklet on getting started and a folder for the printed safety statement.

The CD has been developed by BIM and its UK counterpart organisation, SEAFISH, with the financial support of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and the practical and financial support of the Health and Safety Authority, whose input was co-ordinated by senior inspector Pat O'Halloran.

The CD pack is available free of charge to owners of fishing vessels by contacting BIM, either phoning/ emailing Ray Murray (01-2144187, murray@bim.ie) or logging on to the BIM website, www.bim.ie.



Pictured L to R, Pat O'Halloran HSA, Roddy Cooke BIM, Ray Murray BIM, Minister for Marine, Mr. Pat the Cope Gallagher, Mary Dorgan HSA and Alan Dean, SEAFISH UK

WHAT'S NEW?

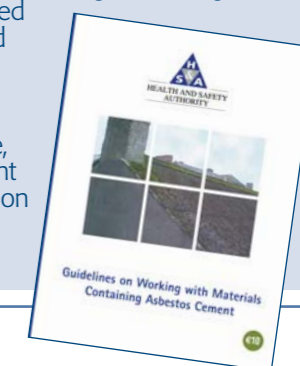
Safe System of Work Plan DVD now available

The Authority has launched a DVD to complement the already successful Safe System of Work Plan (SSWP), which was launched for the Construction sector in January 2005. The DVD, which is designed for staff training purposes, identifies the key hazards and the precautions required on construction sites.



Guidelines on Working With Materials Containing Asbestos Cement

These guidelines offer practical advice on the necessary precautions to prevent exposure to asbestos fibres or, where this is not reasonably practicable, to reduce exposure to asbestos fibres. It also gives examples of possible levels of exposure for typical work activities. The guidance is aimed at anyone who is liable to control or carry out work with asbestos cement, including employers, project supervisors, design and construction staff, designers, architects, contract managers, site agents, self-employed builders and contractors involved in construction, maintenance, refurbishment and demolition work.



New modern and updated Health and Safety legislation is enacted.

Minister Killeen recently signed the commencement order for Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. The new Act introduces a modern, effective and coherent framework for Health and Safety in all workplaces.

Each year the failure to implement health and safety legislation is costing Irish business €1.6 billion. The cost of accidents, arising from criminal and civil court proceedings, increased insurance premiums, retraining costs, absence of key employees, not to mention the damage to company reputation can all be significantly reduced by implementing proper health and safety management practices which prevent the accidents happening in the first place.

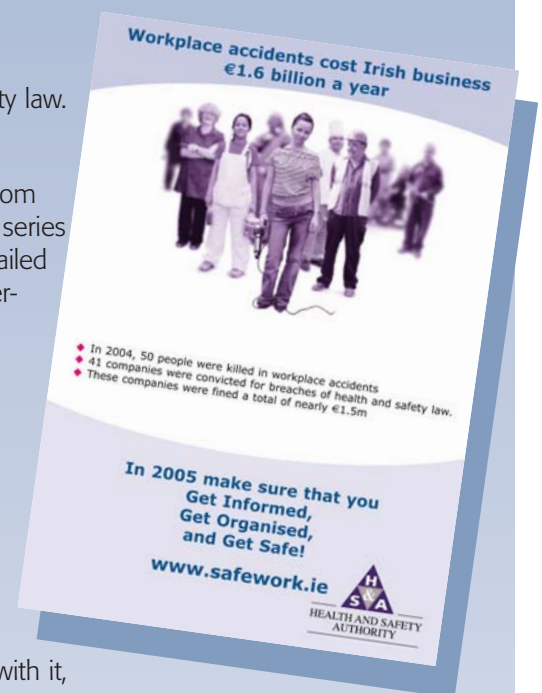
- In 2004, 50 people were killed in workplace accidents
- 41 companies were convicted for breaches of health and safety law.
- These companies were fined a total of nearly €1.5m

The Health and Safety Authority will be holding 28 regional seminars from 29th August through to 28th September. They will also be launching a series of publications including a short guide to the Act as well as a more detailed technical document which will assist safety managers and others to understand the new legislation.

The topics covered by the regional seminars include:

- New provisions regarding on-the-spot fines.
- Increased criminal penalties for infringements of the Act.
- New provisions regarding intoxicants and testing.
- Requirements of employers, directors and managers.
- Your duties to protect the general public.

For more information on the New Act and the publications associated with it, visit www.hsa.ie



*Achieving a
Healthy
and Safe
Working Life
-Together*

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Launch of New Workplace Contact Unit

On 4th July the Health and Safety Authority's launched its new Workplace Contact Unit. Replacing and improving on a number of services including the Infotel helpline, the Workplace Unit is now the focal point of contact to the Authority. The Workplace Contact Unit aims to improve efficiency and interactions with its customers/workplaces.

Operating with a dedicated team, the Workplace Contact Unit captures requests for information, reporting of workplace complaints and reporting of workplace fatal and serious accidents and incidents

In addition to these requests and reports the Workplace Contact Unit is:

- Providing a health and safety information service
- Responding to, and taking action in relation to complaints received
- Ensuring a speedy response to fatal and serious accidents and incidents

The Workplace Contact number new LO-CALL number is 1890 289 389. All calls to the Authority's field offices and its old Infotel helpline number will be diverted to this service. Callers outside the Republic of Ireland can contact the Workplace Contact Unit at 00353-1-6147000.