



National Irish Safety Organisation

# UPDATE

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## ROAD SAFETY - - -



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**President Pauric Corrigan**

**During these difficult times of economic downturn, NISO still provides a cost-effective means of delivering health and safety advice, support and training to its members.**

Outside of its membership, NISO can be the first point of contact for businesses seeking help and advice for health and safety issues. NISO provides this service in line with the National Strategy for developing and promoting health and safety within the workplace environment.

Last year, 2008, saw a reduction of 10 in workplace fatalities, from 67 in 2007. In times of downturn, the safety and health of employees may sometimes be overlooked. Health and safety should not be seen as a cost burden when planning or reviewing cost saving measures within the workplace.

With the number of workers in employment falling, one could easily say the number of fatalities and accidents should also be reducing. For this very reason, all those involved in planning health and safety within the workplace should be more observant to ensure that this is the case.

The Health and Safety Authority launched its programme of work for 2009 on 3rd February. They stated that their workplace inspections will be up 1,400 on the 16,000 inspections carried out in 2008. Construction is still their highest targeted area, with 5,500 inspections. Other sectors range from 2,000 in manufacturing to 1,500 in agriculture, with the hospitality sector being targeted with 1,000 inspections. Workplaces in the finance, second level education, healthcare, public

## NISO remains a cost effective resource in difficult times

administration will be receiving 200 inspections each.

These inspections will be supportive when the health and safety inspector calls. There will also be a number of what are termed activity-based inspections: carriage of dangerous goods, storage of petroleum (both private and retail), chemical and pharmaceutical industries.

NISO welcomes the Health and Safety Authority's programme of work for 2009 and sees this as being an important part of monitoring and implementing health and safety during these difficult economic times.

### AN ACTIVE ORGANISATION

I have attended seven of the Regional Annual General Meetings to date, where a presentation was given on the issues that NISO faced in 2008, along with an outline plan going forward into 2009 and beyond.

NISO is very grateful of the support given by Minister Kelleher and his Department officials for their continuing recognition of the work carried out by the National Irish Safety Organisation in fulfilling its objectives, in line with the national strategy on occupational health and safety. The Organisation is equally appreciative of the support of the HSA, which is constantly expressed in tangible ways, such as sending inspectors to speak at regional seminars and in contributing to NISO UPDATE.

NISO has now achieved FETAC registration and approval and is well-advanced in gaining accreditation of our HETAC health and safety course. This had taken considerable time and effort over the last six months, with the support of our Head Office Staff, Limerick Institute of Technology and the Mid-West Region. It is hoped to commence FETAC health and safety approved courses in the very near future and to run the HETAC health and safety course commencing in September 2009.

The National Annual General Meeting of NISO will be held at 12 noon on the 25th April 2009 in the Brandon Hotel, Tralee, where I look forward to meeting NISO members.

Plans for our 2009 safety conference and awards ceremony are at an advanced stage. This year it will be hosted by the Western Region at the Breaffy International Hotel Castlebar on the 24th & 25th September. Applications for NISO awards should be with members by mid-March, with a closing date for receipt of submissions by Friday 1st May 2009.

Regional safety quizzes are under way in the eight regions, where contestants will go forward to the National Safety Quiz. This year's quiz will be held in Tralee on the 25th April 2009 following our Annual General Meeting, along with our colleagues from the Northern Ireland Safety Group.



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## NISO FETAC accreditation

**NISO has been accredited as a FETAC-approved training provider.**

The accreditation will enable NISO to provide the full range of FETAC-approved courses, ranging from first aid to CSCS. Welcoming the accreditation, NISO president Pauric Corrigan said it had been achieved "after many months of diligent work carried out by NISO staff at head office". NISO is, Corrigan said, "now in a position to deliver FETAC-



approved health and safety training courses in line with those on the list of approved FETAC programmes". NISO will be able to deliver courses at FETAC levels three to six on the national framework of qualifications.

Looking forward, he said that NISO will now be working with FETAC to gain recognition and a suitable award level for the NISO OSH certificate course. Separately, NISO is working towards achieving HETAC accreditation for an advanced NISO OHS certificate course.

## HSA to target high risk sectors in 2009

**The HSA's 2009 Work Programme is intended to "keep safety and health high on the agenda for employees and employers alike", according to the Minister for Labour Affairs, Billy Kelleher, T.D.**

Speaking at the launch of the Work Programme, the Minister noted that the programme sets out the targets, key priorities and activities for the Authority in 2009 and includes over 17,000 workplace inspections. The Minister added: "We live in difficult economic times but the right to work in a healthy and safe environment remains. While the Health and Safety Authority understands the tough circumstances facing most employers, worker safety, health and well-being are no less important and we cannot allow the huge gains we've made in the last number of years to slip."

The Authority is planning an inspection programme that covers all sectors but recognises that there are certain high risk sectors that will require more attention. Martin O'Halloran, CEO of the HSA said: "We always review fatality, injury and illness statistics for previous years and target our resources where they are most needed. This year is no different

and includes a focus on the high risk sectors of agriculture, quarries and construction. The farming community in particular needs to put health and safety at the top of the agenda." As well as the Authority's enforcement programme, there are a number of key national programmes planned for 2009, especially in the areas of occupational health and education.

With occupational illness on the increase, the recommendations of a workplace health and well-being strategy are to be implemented and occupational health inspection numbers will be increased. The education programme will focus on mainstreaming health and safety at all levels of the system, with the overall aim of targeting the 'workers of the future'. Mr. O'Halloran stated: "The Authority is very conscious of what's happening in workplaces and the difficult circumstances facing employers. However, smart businesses know that in the long term it pays to invest in employee safety, health and welfare."

"The Health and Safety Authority is committed to working in partnership with all key stakeholders and we will continue to provide a supportive role where we can. In particular, small and micro businesses should not dread a health and safety inspection but instead use it as an opportunity to learn how they can protect their workers as effectively and efficiently as possible," added O'Halloran.

## Department reviewing dangerous substances legislation

**The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is, in connection with its review of the Dangerous Substances Acts and Regulations, inviting submissions on a consultation document which it published recently.**

The focus of the consultation process is on updating the regulatory regime applying to petrol and other fuels currently covered under dangerous substances legislation. In advance of opening the consultation process, the Department commissioned a report by Arup Consulting Engineers. The report provided advice and set out recommendations.

According to the Department's notice of the consultation, the Dangerous Substances Acts are largely redundant and are scheduled to be repealed. Recent EU legislation has overtaken many of the provisions of the Acts.

The proposed revision has implications for, amongst others, petrol station operators, bulk fuel storage operators, Seveso sites and local authorities. The consultation document and the Arup report are available on the Department's website, [www.entemp.ie](http://www.entemp.ie). Look down the right hand side of the home page to find the link to the consultation document. The closing date for submissions is March 31st.



## NISO AGM and Quiz to be held in Tralee

**NISO will break new ground this year by holding the organisation's annual general meeting and the finals of the All Ireland Safety Quiz, which is run in association with the Northern Ireland Safety Group, on the same day.**

The AGM and Quiz finals will be held at the Brandon Hotel, Tralee, on April 25th. The

AGM will be held at 12 noon and the Quiz finals will kick off at 2pm. The semi-finals will be held first and will be followed by the Novices Final. The day will be rounded off with the Previous Entrants Final, which will take place at 5pm.

Urging as many members as possible to attend the AGM and stay for the Quiz finals, NISO president Pauric Corrigan said "We are facing challenging times. NISO and the health and safety community should be seen to be proactive in these difficult times".

## Farming blackspots targeted with safety seminars

**A series of farm safety seminars, aimed at preventing fatal and serious injury in the sector, were recently held by the HSA and Teagasc, in association with the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee.**

The seminars, which were held in accident blackspot areas, covered key farm safety issues, including prevention strategies, safety training and injury case studies.

With 21 farm-related deaths in 2008 and four so far this year, there is clear evidence that working in agriculture continues to be one of the most demanding and hazardous occupations.

According to Pat Griffin, senior inspector with the Authority: "Each year we see a disproportionate number of people killed on farms. Last year over 40% of all workplace fatalities occurred on farms and when you consider that only 6% of the workforce is

engaged in agriculture, we have to find a way to stop this carnage."

John McNamara, Teagasc health and safety officer, expressed the hope that the seminars will influence farmers and change behaviours to a more safety-first attitude. David Meredith of Teagasc says that the highest level of accidents occur in early spring. He said it was not a coincidence that they decided to hold these seminars during March, when the accident rate is higher due to the heavy workload, particularly on dairy farms.

The seminars were held Tipperary, West Cork, Westmeath and Cavan.



## NISO regional officers

**The NISO Regions have now completed the election of officers and committee members for 2009.**

Members of NISO, who may want to contact their regional officers during the year, should note that the contact details are as follows:

- **Eastern Region:** Harry Galvin, chairperson, and Alan Thompson, honorary secretary; email [east@niso.ie](mailto:east@niso.ie)
- **Southern Region:** Pat Goulding, chairperson, and Kevin Harty, honorary secretary; email [south@niso.ie](mailto:south@niso.ie)
- **Midlands Region:** Jim Shaw, chairperson, and Chris McCormack, honorary secretary; email [midland@niso.ie](mailto:midland@niso.ie)
- **Southeast Region:** Liam Walsh, chairperson, and Phillip O'Keeffe, honorary secretary; email [southeast@niso.ie](mailto:southeast@niso.ie)
- **Mid West Region:** Matt Bane, chairperson, and Des McNamara, honorary secretary; email [midwest@niso.ie](mailto:midwest@niso.ie)
- **North East Region:** Fergal McKeivitt, chairperson, and Pat Donnelly, honorary secretary; email [northeast@niso.ie](mailto:northeast@niso.ie)
- **North West Region:** John C Quinn, chairperson, and Jacqueline Gallagher, honorary secretary; email [northwest@niso.ie](mailto:northwest@niso.ie)
- **Western Region:** Pauric Corrigan, chairperson, and Carol Madden, honorary secretary; email [west@niso.ie](mailto:west@niso.ie)

## HSA consults on pressure vessels and underground services

**The HSA recently published consultation documents on (a) proposed new regulations governing the examination and testing of pressure vessels and (b) a code of practice on avoiding danger from underground services.**

The Authority has published draft new Pressure Vessels Regulations, a draft guide to the proposed new regulations, a draft regulation repealing current legislation and a draft Regulatory Impact Statement. The proposed new pressure vessels regulations are concerned with the design, construction, safe operating limits, markings, information and instruction, maintenance, examination and testing of pressure vessels.

It also prescribes the reports to be completed by a competent person and the records and registers which are to be kept. In addition, the proposed regulations set down rules on the precautions to be taken in respect of certain vessels and the duties of persons who hire pressure vessels to users.

If adopted, the proposed new Pressure Vessel Regulations will be brought in to force as an amendment to the General Application Regulations 2007.

The HSA has drafted a proposed Code of Practice for Avoiding Danger from Underground Services, with the aim of providing practical guidance, which should improve the level of safety when excavation work is carried out.

The new draft Code will replace the existing Code, which was published in 2005. The Code is concerned with the provisions of the Construction Regulations 2006 dealing with the precautions to be taken in any excavation, shaft, earthwork, underground works or tunnels to avoid risk from underground cables, and distribution systems and provides guidance in relation to hazard identification (SHWW Act 2005, s19) and safety statements (SHWW Act 2005, s20).

The consultation documents can be downloaded from the HSA's website, [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie). Scroll down the right hand side of the home page, click on the 'Public Consultation' icon and follow the links. The closing date for submission of comments is Monday, March 30th at 5pm.

## Michael Henry retires

**Michael Henry retired last month from the HSA, where he had in recent years served as assistant chief executive workplace compliance and advice.**

Paying tribute, the Authority's chief executive Martin O'Halloran said that Michael has, over his nearly 40 years in health and safety, become one of the most highly regarded professionals in the field in Ireland.

He is, O'Halloran added, "respected for his depth of knowledge and his totally balanced and fair approach in dealing with many difficult situations". We are, O'Halloran said,

"sad to see such a truly professional and widely respected colleague leave the Authority".

Michael Henry, who started his working life as a teacher, joined the old Department of Labour Affairs in 1970. When the HSA was established following the enactment of the SHWW Act 1989, he joined the Authority, where in 1993 he became chief inspector (the old title for his current role).

He was highly respected by the safety community and enjoyed the confidence of both sides of industry. Speaking to NISO UPDATE, NISO president Pauric Corrigan thanked Michael for his assistance to NISO over the years and wished him a long and enjoyable retirement.

## Guidance on low level access

**Since some contractors have prohibited the use of ladders on their sites, after the introduction of the Work at Height Regulations, what are we using instead of ladders?**

This question was posed at a recent NISO Eastern Region seminar by Dave Dagger, a consultant with ACT, who specialises in access training, and a member of the NISO Eastern Region committee.

We are, said Dagger, using low level access equipment: Instant Snappy's; Boss Mini Max; and Tubasca podium steps, to name a few. But he challenged the delegates to consider if this equipment is safer than using a ladder?

The answer is of course yes - but only when all the hazards have been assessed. Low level access equipment has its own inherent hazards: base dimensions; working height; safe working load and horizontal loads. The only way to ensure staff remain safe and use this equipment without risk of injury is provide adequate training.

Now, he asked, what training can employers provide? Low level access equipment has been in circulation for many years now. Manufacturers have been looking at this since the EU directive was introduced in 2001 and along with their representative body PASMA (Prefabricated Access Suppliers and Manufacturers Association) they have developed two specific courses for this equipment, the PASMA Low Level Access Course and the ECA (Electrical Contractor Association) approved course for Low Level Access. Both of these courses cover all low level access equipment and consist of a half day training course.

Employers should, as well as ensuring training is carried out, also ensure they obtain the manufacturer's instruction manual, which all suppliers must provide, whether one is hiring or buying equipment. The instruction manual will provide information on safe assembly methods and safe use guidance for the particular equipment.



# Be safe on the road

## Figures revealed by the Road Safety Authority last year show that 22% of fatal road accident collisions involved work-related vehicles being used in connection with work.

Also, 16% of serious injury road accidents involved a vehicle being used in connection with work. The figures were revealed by RSA director Michael Rowland, when he addressed a HSA-organised workplace transport safety seminar.

The HSA has in recent months expressed its concern at the number of deaths involving vehicles being used in connection with work. Only some, if indeed any, of these deaths would have occurred as a result of accidents on the road. But there can be no doubt that many people drive for a living, be they professional drivers - such as lorry and bus drivers - or occasional drivers, such as health and safety advisers, who may be driving from plant to plant or, if self-employed, client to client.

Whatever the reason for driving in connection with work, most people probably do drive at some time or other in connection with their work. For those who do, there are a number of factors to be considered, says NISO president, Pauric Corrigan: the driver, the vehicle and documentation.

### THE DRIVER

Drivers must, Corrigan says, be medically fit and hold the appropriate licence for the vehicle they are driving.

The HSA has published a number of very useful 'Information Sheets' on workplace transport safety. One, dealing with what the Authority calls the safe driver, sets out useful

guidelines on driver selection, driver training and the supervision of drivers.

The HSA advises employers that when selecting drivers they should consider the employee's health: eyesight, hearing and mental ability. They should check the driver's experience and assess competence. They should select drivers "who have the correct attitude to safe driving".

Drivers should be trained and competent to use the vehicle they are driving. Training records should be kept up-to-date and driver training should be reassessed at regular intervals.

Basic rules should be set down for drivers. Taking up this point, Pauric Corrigan says drivers must know the rules of the road and any updates, any company rules and they must observe them.

### THE VEHICLE

While the HSA's guidance on vehicles is mainly concerned with vehicles which will be used in workplaces, it is also applicable to vehicles that would be used on public roads. The Authority offers guidance on the matters to be considered when purchasing vehicles and on the maintenance of vehicles.

Vehicles purchased should be suitable for the task they are scheduled to carry out. Employers, when purchasing vehicles, should consider the following: ergonomic factors, access and egress from vehicles, the driver's field of vision, driver protection and safety features.

If vehicles are intended to carry loads, the employer should ensure that the vehicle will be capable of carrying the load. Corrigan makes the point that employers and drivers must ensure "vehicles are not overloaded" as this can greatly affect the stability of the vehicle. According to the HSA, the extent of

maintenance will vary with each vehicle, but at a minimum should involve basic safety checks and planned preventative maintenance. The HSA's guidance states that drivers and operators are usually the first to notice defects.

NISO president Pauric Corrigan advises drivers to check vehicles before setting out on a journey. Even the apparently simple things like "ensuring the vehicle is clean and tidy" must not be overlooked. Make sure windscreens are clean and that the driver has a clear view, he says. He adds check lights and tyres.

### SETTING OUT ON A JOURNEY

When setting out on a journey, Corrigan says, drivers should also make sure that they have with them all relevant documentation, such as licenses and certificates relating to conditions and weights of loads. They should also have accident report forms, so that if there is an accident, proper notes can be taken. Names and addresses, registration details of vehicles and insurance particulars should be exchanged.

In the event of an accident, drivers should never make a statement and should report the accident to their employer as soon as possible. This, he adds, requires that employers "have proper accident procedures in place". Also, he says, avoid personal conflict, which can lead to road rage.

In relation to personal security, he advises: "lock doors in towns and cities and keep valuables out of sight".

While the HSA's guidance mainly relates to vehicles operating in the workplace, much of the advice is applicable to vehicles and drivers who will be on the public roads. The advice can be accessed under the 'Transport' icon on the home page of the Authority's website, [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).



# Occupational Health and Safety - Review 2008 Legislation

**Below we re-produce edited extracts, setting out health and safety legislation enacted during 2008, from a NISO document put together by Ted O'Keeffe, operations manager NISO. Readers can access the full document and download specific documents by visiting the NISO website, [www.niso.ie](http://www.niso.ie). The full document includes details of Codes of Practice and HSA guidance publications and statistics.**

## IRISH LEGISLATION: ACTS AND STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

### CHEMICALS ACT 2008 (Number 13 of 2008)

The Act was brought into operation on 15 July 2008 through the Chemicals Act 2008 (Commencement) Order 2008 (S.I. No. 273 of 2008),

The purpose of the Chemicals Act 2008 is to give further effect to EU chemicals-related legislation

### SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE AT WORK (QUARRIES) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 28 of 2008)

These Regulations set out requirements with respect to safety, health and welfare in quarries, as defined in Regulation 3, and replace a range of provisions formerly applied in the Mines and Quarries Act, 1965 and in various Regulations made under that Act.

### SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE AT WORK ACT 2005 (QUARRIES) (REPEALS AND REVOCATIONS) (COMMENCEMENT) ORDER 2008. (S.I. No. 29 of 2008)

The purpose of this Order (as provided for in sections 1(2) and 4(2) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (No. 10 of 2005)) is to activate the repeal of the Mines and Quarries Act, 1965 (No. 7 of 1965) in so far as that Act relates to quarries (including Sections 23 to 29, 91 to 97 and 133(2) and

(3)) and to revoke all Regulations, Orders and Rules made under that Act as they relate to quarries.

### EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (RAILWAY SAFETY) REGULATIONS 2008 S.I. No. 61 of 2008

### EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (ROAD TRANSPORT) (WORKING CONDITIONS AND ROAD SAFETY) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 62 of 2008)

The European Communities (Road Transport) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 88 of 2006) and the European Communities (Road Transport) (Recording Equipment) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 89 of 2006) are revoked.

### FISHING VESSEL (PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 63 of 2008)

These Regulations amend the Fishing Vessel (Personal Flotation Devices) Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 586 of 2001), to update the criteria for the marked personal flotation device in these regulations.

### EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (VEHICLE DRIVERS CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 91 of 2008)

These Regulations transpose into Irish law Directive 2003/59/EC relating to the qualification and training requirements for professional drivers of buses, coaches and goods vehicles.

### ROAD TRAFFIC (RETREADED TYRES) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 118 of 2008)

These Regulations, which give effect to Council Decision 2006/443/EC, restrict the sale and supply of retreaded tyres to tyres that conform with UN-ECE Regulations 108 and 109 and bear the appropriate "E-Mark".

### SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE AT WORK (CONSTRUCTION) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 130 of 2008)

The purpose of these Regulations is to amend the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 504 of 2006) as regards the operational date for Regulations 19(1)(b), 25(1)(b), 29(1)(g), 74(e) and 97(b) and (c), which is changed from 6 May 2008 to 6 July 2009, in respect of the possession of a Construction Skills Registration Card under the Construction

Skills Certification Scheme, as it applies to the following tasks-

- (i) Mobile tower scaffold (where the employee has not been trained in basic or advanced scaffolding),
- (ii) Signing, lighting and guarding on roads,
- (iii) Locating under-ground services, and
- (iv) Shotfiring, which are listed at paragraphs 1(1)(c), (r), (s) and (t) of Schedule 4 to the 2006 Regulations.

These Regulations also rectify a typographical error in paragraph 1(1)(n) of Schedule 4 to the 2006 Regulations.

### EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (EXPORT AND IMPORT OF CERTAIN DANGEROUS CHEMICALS) (INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS) (ENFORCEMENT) (REVOCATION) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 269 of 2008)

These Regulations were signed on 15 July 2008 and revoked the European Communities (Export and Import of Certain Dangerous Chemicals) (Industrial Chemicals) (Enforcement) Regulations 2002 (S.I. No. 395 of 2002) on that date.

### EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (DETERGENTS) (REVOCATION) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 270 of 2008)

These Regulations came into operation on 15 July 2008.

The European Communities (Detergents) Regulations 2005 (S.I. No. 844 of 2005) are revoked.

### EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (CLASSIFICATION, PACKAGING AND LABELLING OF DANGEROUS PREPARATIONS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2008. (S.I. No. 271 of 2008)

These Regulations make technical amendments to the European Communities (Classification, Packaging and Labelling of Dangerous Preparations) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 62 of 2004) as amended by the European Communities (Classification, Packaging and Labelling of Dangerous Preparations) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 76 of 2007)

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (CLASSIFICATION, PACKAGING LABELLING AND NOTIFICATION OF DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES) REGULATIONS 2008. (S.I. No. 272 of 2008)**

These Regulations amend the European Communities (Classification, Packaging, Labelling and Notification of Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 116 of 2003) as last previously amended by the European Communities (Classification, Packaging, Labelling and Notification of Dangerous Substances) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 25 of 2006). The Regulations transpose Directive 2006/121/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 amending Council Directive 67/548/EEC on the approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances in order to adapt it to Regulation (EC) No. 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) and establishing a European Chemicals Agency.

**CHEMICALS ACT 2008 (COMMENCEMENT) ORDER 2008 (S.I. No. 273 of 2008)**

These Regulations amend the European Communities (Classification, Packaging, Labelling and Notification of Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 116 of 2003) as last previously amended by the European Communities (Classification, Packaging, Labelling and Notification of Dangerous Substances) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 25 of 2006). The Regulations transpose Directive 2006/121/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 amending Council Directive 67/548/EEC on the approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances in order to adapt it to Regulation (EC) No. 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) and establishing a European Chemicals Agency.

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (EXPORT AND IMPORT OF CERTAIN DANGEROUS CHEMICALS) (ENFORCEMENT) (REVOCATION) REGULATIONS, 2008 (S.I. No. 287 of 2008)**

These Regulations revoke instruments dealing with the Export and Import of Certain Dangerous Chemicals whose provisions have been incorporated in the Chemicals Act 2008.

**ROAD TRAFFIC (DRIVING MIRRORS — ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 312 of 2008)**

These Regulations provide for the fitment of additional mirrors to reduce the lateral blind spots on certain heavy goods vehicles registered since 1 January 2000.

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (VEHICLE DRIVERS CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE) (No. 2) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 359 of 2008)**

These Regulations implement Directive 2003/59/EC relating to the qualification and training requirements for professional drivers of buses, coaches and goods vehicles. They also revoke the European Communities (Vehicle Drivers Certificate of Professional Competence) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 91 of 2008), which previously was the basis for implementing the Directive.

**ROAD TRAFFIC (CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF VEHICLES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 366 of 2008)**

These Regulations provide that 4.65 metres is the maximum height limit for vehicles (including loads carried).

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES AND PREPARATIONS) (MARKETING AND USE) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 371 of 2008)**

The Regulations transpose Directive 2007/51/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 September 2007 amending Council Directive 76/769/EEC relating to restrictions on the marketing of certain measuring devices containing mercury.

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (LIFTS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 406 of 2008)**

These Regulations were signed on 17 October 2008 and they come into operation on 29 December 2009. The Regulations transpose Article 24 of Directive 2006/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2006 on machinery, and amending Directive 95/16/EC of 29 June 1995. (The other provisions of that Directive are transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Machinery) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 407 of 2008)). The Regulations amend the European Communities (Lifts) Regulations 1998 by amending the definitions of "Authority" and "lift", and insert a new definition for "carrier". The reference to "Directive 95/16/EC" is updated to include a reference "as amended by Article 24 of Directive 2006/42/EC..."

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (MACHINERY) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 407 of 2008)**

These Regulations set down requirements for placing machinery on the market, conformity assessment and CE marking. The Regulations make provisions regarding the organisation of, and access to, technical documentation and also set down a requirement to ensure risk assessment is carried out for machinery. The Regulations also make provision for the appointment and monitoring of Notified Bodies and for the appointment and functions of Competent Authorities responsible for enforcing the Regulations and carrying out market surveillance. These Regulations come into effect on 29 December 2009 and implement Directive 2006/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2006 on machinery and amending Directive 95/16/EC of 29 June 1995.

**SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE AT WORK (CONSTRUCTION) (AMENDMENT) (No. 2) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 423 of 2008)**

The purpose of these Regulations is to amend the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 504 of 2006), as previously amended by the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 130 of 2008), by substituting revised provisions for Regulation 97, relating to guarding, lighting and signage in connection with construction works on roads, footpaths and cycle tracks.

The revised provisions come into operation from 6 July 2009.

**ROAD TRAFFIC (LICENSING OF DRIVERS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2008 (S.I. No. 471 of 2008)**

These regulations provide for certain changes relating to the conduct of driving tests and the forms, certificates and licences used in connection with driver testing and licensing.

**ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT (DELEGATION OF MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS) (No. 3) ORDER 2008 (S.I. No. 289 of 2008)**

This Order delegates to Billy Kelleher, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment the powers and duties of the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment under the Acts and Instruments specified in the Order including –  
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, - Chemicals Act 2008, - Safety in Industry Acts 1955 and 1980, - Mines and Quarries Act 1965.



# NISO Occupational Safety Awards 2009

**Entry to the NISO/NISG Awards offers organisations the opportunity to focus on health and safety performance, by involving everybody in the organisation in the positive effort of seeking to achieve an award.**



*GE Healthcare won the Pharmaceuticals Award*



*Sierra Communications win the President's Award for Large Organisations.*

As Francis Hackett, health and safety manager at GE Healthcare, winners of last year's Pharmaceutical Award puts it, "the key to our success is employee involvement". Paul Ablitt, health and safety manager with Sierra Communications, says participating in the awards has involved employees so that safety is everyone's responsibility, which is what has made our "continuous improvement possible". Last year Sierra Communications won the President's Award for Large Organisations.

As many of the award winners from past years have told NISO, the awards are a great benchmarking tool.

Triona Delicato, from ComReg's human resources

– corporate affairs division says: "It is a great tool for benchmarking purposes". Her comments are reflected in the remark of Cagney Contract Cleaning's health and safety officer Gregory O'Keeffe, who says the awards enable us to "benchmark" ourselves "with some of the

best companies in the 32 counties". ComReg won a merit award in 2008, while Cagney Contract Cleaners were highly commended.



*ComReg win a Merit Award*



*Cagney Contract Cleaners highly commended*

## ENTER THE 2009 AWARDS

NISO together with the Northern Ireland Safety Group is now inviting organisations throughout the 32 counties to join with Paul Ablitt and his colleagues in Sierra Communications who are looking forward to "participating in the awards programme in 2009 by entering this year's Annual Occupational Safety Awards.

Entering the Awards offers both business and health and safety benefits for organisations by:

- providing a comprehensive performance check of your health and safety management system and practices against best standards

- motivating your managers and employees to know and apply the health and safety standards required for your business to comply with the law;
- demonstrating year-on-year improvements in your health and safety management practices and performance to your Board, stakeholders, employees and clients/customers;
- achieving peer and public recognition for your commitment to operating a safe, healthy and successful business.

Find out more about the business benefits of entering this year's All-Island Safety Awards by:

- Reading about them in the Safety Awards brochure

- Contacting Ted O'Keeffe or Michelle Ward by emailing us at [awards@niso.ie](mailto:awards@niso.ie) or by visiting our websites NISO [www.niso.ie](http://www.niso.ie) and NISG [www.nisg.org.uk](http://www.nisg.org.uk)

NISO looks forward to being your partner in health and safety management and performance. Working together, and sharing our experience in implementing best practice, we can make our workplaces safer and healthier.

Successful organisations will be presented with their Awards on 24 September 2009 in the Breaffy House Resort, Castlebar, Co Mayo, which will be held in conjunction with the NISO Annual Conference to be held on 24 and 25 September 2009.

# The role of the safety representative



**SIPTU's health and safety adviser Sylvester Cronin writes**

**about the role of the safety representative, from the perspective of the safety representative.**

The right of workers to select Safety Representatives is by now a well-established legal right in Irish and European legislation. Under the Irish Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, safety representatives have significant rights, enshrined in law.

In order that safety representatives would maximise their effectiveness, I strongly advise that they should attend their union's education and training courses, where they would learn the basis of the safety and health legislation, effective communications and strategies and skills to enable them to make good representations.

For example, SIPTU, through its Education and Training Department in SIPTU College, has developed and delivers a range of courses nationwide for its Safety Representatives, e.g. 'Basic 5-day FETAC Safety Representatives Training Course' and 'Advanced 5-day HETAC Safety Representatives Training Course'.

The legislation provides us with the letter of the law. However, if we wanted to have a glimpse of the spirit of the law in relation to safety representatives and the rationale for their basic role, the Barrington Report (officially entitled 'Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Safety, Health and Welfare at Work') sheds light on this. The Commission asked itself a very important question, "Why Worker Involvement [in OSH]?" The Commission Report provides the answer as follows:

"Although the employer has the primary responsibility for occupational safety and health, every employee has an interest in decisions

about his working environment. Indeed, one could argue that his is a keener interest than that of anyone else. It is this same employee who has the most at stake. For this reason alone there must be a mechanism to enable him to defend his interests. In our introduction we pointed to the need to recognise that there are genuine conflicts of interest between employers and workers on health and safety issues. These conflicts must be identified and reconciled. There must be a mechanism or structure for their resolution."

A significant part of the mechanism for workers to defend their health and safety is provided for in legislation in the right of workers to select a safety representative from amongst their workers. The selected safety representative in turn has significant and powerful rights in the workplace, such as to carry out inspections in the workplace, investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences, make representations to employers, time off to acquire knowledge and training and to accompany an HSA inspector in carrying out an inspection.

The above are a sample of safety representatives' rights, but a more comprehensive understanding of all the rights is available at the union courses. It is very important to realise that if you do not have a safety representative in your workplace, these rights do not transfer to shop stewards or anyone else. Therefore, it is vitally important that there is at least one safety representative in every workplace.

Safety representatives have a very important role to play in highlighting areas and activities

in the workplace that pose risks, particularly unacceptable risks, to workers' safety and health. A simple but systematic process that the safety representative should adapt could be as follows:

1. Carry out regular inspections.
2. Keep written records of the inspections.
3. Have regular representation with your employer.
4. Give regular feed-back to those workers who you represent and/or those who raised OSH issues with you on the actions you took, the commitments given to resolve the issues, and when the issues were resolved.
5. Where there is a Safety Committee in operation, it would be a good idea to provide it with a copy of your written reports.
6. In the event that your system of operating is not functioning properly and you are not receiving the requisite co-operation, it is worthwhile contacting your local union organiser for assistance. He/she may very well be able to assist by raising such issues with you in appropriate areas, give you invaluable advice on how to proceed or provide you with expert assistance.
7. Lastly, if all else fails, you may raise issues or make a complaint to the HSA, who take seriously issues raised by safety representatives, since safety representatives have such significant rights under OSH legislation.

***It is vitally important that there is at least one safety representative in every workplace.***



# HSA plans active year promoting the health and safety message

**Gavin Lonergan, communications manager with the Health and Safety Authority, writes about the Authority's plans for 2009, current activities and recent publications.**

## HSA PROGRAMME OF WORK 2009

The Minister for Labour Affairs, Mr. Billy Kelleher T.D., was at the headquarters of the Health and Safety Authority in early February, to launch the Authority's Programme of Work for 2009.

The Authority is planning an inspection programme that covers all sectors but recognises that there are certain high risk sectors that will require more attention. Martin O'Halloran, CEO of the Health and Safety Authority, said: "We always review fatality, injury and illness statistics for previous years and target our resources where they are most needed. This year is no different and includes a focus on the high risk sectors of agriculture, quarries and construction."

As well as the Authority's enforcement programme, there are a number of key national programmes planned for 2009, including in the areas of occupational health and education. With occupational illness on the increase, the recommendations of a workplace health and well-being strategy are to be implemented and occupational health inspection numbers will be increased. The education programme will focus on mainstreaming health and safety at all levels of the system, with the overall aim of targeting the 'workers of the future'.

## Construction Safety Seminars

A number of seminars are being run by the HSA throughout March, focusing on construction safety. Delegates will hear speakers from the Health and Safety Authority, the Local Authority and ESB Networks. Topics covered will

include scaffolding safety, guidelines for clients, avoiding danger from overhead power lines, working on roads, advice for small contractors, Construction Skills Certificate Scheme developments and workplace transport safety. Seminars take place in Dublin (March 3rd), Kilkenny (March 4th), Cork (March 10th), Limerick (March 11th), Galway (March 24th), Sligo (March 25th) and Athlone (March 26th). Online booking is now open through [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie), or alternatively phone Mark McDonnell on (01) 614 7072.

## Chemicals Management Seminars

Two important chemicals management seminars will take place in Cork on May 26th and in Dublin on May 28th. Content will include managing information in the supply chain, safety data sheets and the CLP (Classification, Labelling and Packaging) Regulations. Further details will be available on [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie) in the near future.

## Young Scientist Exhibition

The Health and Safety Authority enjoyed another very successful sponsorship of the Primary Science Fair at January's Young Scientist Exhibition. Primary schools from all over the country put lots of hard work into their projects. The Primary Science Fair has been sponsored by the Health and Safety Authority for the last number of years and students are encouraged to look at science and safety in their projects.

The Authority's stand - "Hazard House" - drew a further 3,000 students who completed the risk assessment

challenge. The Authority's own research shows that more than 50% of 15 year olds are already in the workplace, through summer jobs and part-time work. This makes workplace safety and health highly relevant to those still at school and provides a great opportunity to foster a culture of safety early on, to reap the rewards later.

## New Publications

A number of new publications are now available. *The Noise of Music (Sound advice for the music and entertainment sectors)* is intended to provide practical guidelines to help workers and employers in the music and entertainment sectors to protect their hearing and meet their legal obligations. *Guidelines on Occupational Dermatitis* provides useful information to enable employers and employees manage the prevention of occupational dermatitis in workplaces. *Clients in Construction (Best Practice Guidelines)* provides advice to anyone who may fulfil the role of "client" under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. It is designed for smaller, once-off clients, as well as the larger and more experienced client. These publications, as well as many others, are available to download free of charge through [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).





# The Competent Person

**Tony Briscoe, head of occupational health with IBEC writes about the role of the 'competent person'.**

Every employer is obliged to appoint a competent person to manage protection and preventive services.

When the EU Directive, commonly known as the Framework Directive (89/391/EEC), was made back in 1989, it included for the first time the requirement to put in place protective and preventive services (article 7), including the designation of workers to carry out these services.

It included a provision, which stated that if there was insufficient competence within the enterprise, due to lack of competence, external services could be enlisted. The Directive, in a series of the provisions, required:

- The appointment of at least one person and more if needed
- That the person(s) may not be placed at a disadvantage
- That they be given adequate time to fulfil their role
- If they have limited competence, the employer should enlist external services or persons
- That when enlisting external services, the employer must inform them of risks and factors affecting the business and give them access to particular information
- The person(s) appointed must be capable
- External services must have the necessary aptitudes, personal and professional means
- The persons designated must be sufficient in number and take account of the size of the enterprise and the hazards involved.

In addition to the above, the Directive requires:

- That the protection from and prevention of safety risks which Article 7 provides for shall be the responsibility of one or more workers, of one or separate services whether from within or outside the undertaking
- That the workers and/or agencies must work together
- Member States may define situations where the employer himself may take responsibility for the measures required

- Member States may define capabilities and aptitudes required and the sufficient number required.

The Directive was originally transposed by the General Application Regulations 1993, which included a provision that the employer should specify the activities of so-called designated persons.

Additionally, if the activities could not be undertaken by the person or persons appointed, they could be provided by either appointing a competent person or arranging a combination of internal and external competent persons working together. The regulation reflected the Directive wording on this area. The regulation did not address all the provisions in the Directive.

With the enactment of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work 2005 Act the provisions concerning competent persons have changed. Firstly, competent person is defined in the Act for the first time. In my view, this definition primarily results and relates to the above-mentioned provision, which requires member states to define capabilities and aptitudes for designated persons.

Secondly, the Act recognises as a first consideration the appointment from within of a competent person, as it clearly states if there are competent persons in the employment, they shall be appointed in preference to an external person for this purpose. The nuance here is stronger than the Directive, as it requires the employer to consider an existing competent person to be assigned from within the enterprise.

Again, the functions given to such persons are to be specified by the employer, although the Act does not go into detail on what such functions should be. This does not preclude the appointment of an external person. But it would suggest that in many cases there would inevitably be a combination of internal and external resources in order to fulfil this requirement.

Two aspects of the Directive which appear not to be discussed in our legislation are the requirement to work together as between

appointed persons and external agencies and significant provision in Article 7, Paragraph 7, of the Directive. This refers to the responsibility for protective and preventive services being assigned to the designated person(s), whether inside or outside the undertaking.

This is even more reason for such persons to establish the extent of their roles and responsibilities, I would suggest. This is an area where IBEC provides advice and assistance to its members and safety practitioners in member organisations on the role and responsibilities of safety coordinators and safety managers.

In addition, specific requirements exist that there is sufficient number of persons, they have sufficient time available, there is cooperation between the appointed persons and safety representatives and they are given adequate information and resources.

A further consideration - and one which applies when engaging an external provider - is the requirement to give that person adequate information so they can perform the appropriate functions.

In addition, the level of protection which is afforded such persons as employees appointed for this purpose now resides in Section 27 of the 2005 Act, which sets out circumstances involving penalisation, which also apply to designated persons appointed for such functions.

It would seem important for those involved in this role to clearly establish the functions specified by their employer for this role, having regard to the responsibilities that will inevitably attach to these functions.



*(Tony Briscoe is Head of Occupational Health and Safety with IBEC and was responsible for establishing the IBEC OHS Service. He was also a Member of the EU Advisory*

*Committee on Safety Health and Hygiene at Work during the time the Framework Directive was considered and developed.)*



# Help on first aid, rest facilities, Safe Pass and hiring consultants

*NISO's health and safety advisor Brian O'Connor answers members' queries.*

## Question 1

**I own a small electrical company with less than ten employees. We have contracts with many construction companies, which means we must split the ten employees into groups of two or three to cover the various jobs that are going on. As all ten employees are never together on a job, does this mean I must have a trained occupational first aider for each group?**

## Answer 1

Unfortunately, there is no straightforward yes or no answer. It is recommended in the "Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 2 of Part 7: First Aid" that a factory, construction site, surface mine or quarry with a maximum number of up to 49 people present at any one time provide one first aider, if the safety statement and risk assessment shows it necessary.

This means you must carry out a risk assessment to decide if any occupational first aiders are needed, and if so, how many should be provided. When carrying out such a risk assessment you must consider the following factors:

- The hazards present,
- The risks involved with these hazards,
- The maximum severity posed (this could be a minor injury or permanent disability),
- The frequency and number of people that are exposed to this hazard,
- The probability that this hazard could cause harm,
- The time it would take for medical assistance to get to the workplace (the recommended number of occupational first aiders should be doubled, if the workplace is more than one hour away from medical assistance),
- The controls that are already in place, and,
- Additional controls required.

You should also check with the construction sites that your employees are working on; there is a very good chance that an occupational first aider will already be provided on each site.

A risk assessment will also assist in deciding what first aid equipment should be provided, if necessary. Different hazards are present in different workplaces and, therefore, different first aid equipment is necessary.

For further information on the recommended numbers of occupational first aiders, please view page 9 of the "Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 2 of Part 7: First Aid".

## Question 2

**We are an archaeological company carrying out testing on four sites where construction work will take place. Each site is about 30 acres and takes one week to do for a team of eight people. For each site we set up a small drive-in compound with two portacabins (one canteen and one staff room) and two portaloos. Can you please answer the following:**

- **Is it okay to use properly ventilated gas heaters to provide warmth and heat during break times or if works are suspended due to bad weather (windows are left open)?**
- **Is it okay to use a gas ring as a facility to boil water (solid gas ring kept on steady base and properly ventilated)?**
- **Do we need to provide running water? Currently we provide potable drinking water in large plastic containers with a dispenser on the bottom – is this okay?**
- **Regarding washing facilities – all we can provide are hand wipes and the water in the plastic container, is this okay?**

## Answer 2

In relation to the gas heater and the gas ring, a risk assessment must be carried out highlighting the risks involved with using these appliances and the controls that should be in place. You should also contact the company that supply the portacabins and ensure that the gas heater and gas ring can be used safely.

It is positive that you are considering ventilation (regulation 81 of the Construction Regs 2006) by keeping the windows open. However, you must ensure that there is sufficient fresh air provided by this open window. If not, you will have to consider another means of ventilation to comply with this regulation.

Regarding the provision of running water, paragraph 2, regulation 100, of the Construction Regs 2006 states: "Subject to paragraph (4), a contractor responsible for a construction site, where there are reasonable grounds for believing that the work to be undertaken on the site will not be completed within 30 working days after its commencement, shall ensure that the facilities for washing referred to in paragraph (1) include - (c) a sufficient supply of hot and cold or warm running water."

You state that you will be finished with this site in one week. However, the contractor responsible for the construction site must decide if the archaeological work and the other construction work to follow will exceed 30 days. If yes, then the contractor responsible for the construction site must ensure that "a sufficient supply of hot and cold or warm running water" is provided.

If construction work is completed within the 30 days, then the contractor responsible for the construction site must provide the persons at work with an adequate supply of potable drinking water.

The standard of washing facilities, like above, depends on the duration and the amount of people on site. If work is completed within 30 days, then the contractor responsible for the construction site shall ensure that adequate and suitable facilities for washing are provided, taking into account the number of persons at work and the nature of the work.

If construction work exceeds 30 days, there are further facilities that must be provided by the contractor responsible for the construction site. These facilities are specified in paragraph 2, regulation 100 of the Construction Regs 2006 and include items such as adequate troughs or basins etc. There are further requirements again if the work exceeds 12 months and/or if more than 100 persons are at work on the construction site. Again, these requirements are specified in regulation 100 of the Construction Regs 2006.

### Question 3

**We have declared our site a construction site and have workers coming to it from England to work there for three days. Do they require a FAS Safe Pass Card?**

### Answer 3

Please note that in the following answer, "Safety Awareness Scheme" is the title for Schedule 3 of the Construction Regulations 2006 and FAS Safe Pass training is included in this Schedule. The exemption from FAS Safe Pass training is specified in paragraph 3, regulation 4, of the Construction Regulations 2006. This states:

"Schedule 3 does not apply to a person involved in the installation, commissioning, maintenance, repair or removal of mechanical, electrical, gas, compressed air, hydraulic, telecommunication and computer systems, or similar services, where -

- (a) the person is normally domiciled outside the State,

- (b) the person's normal place of employment is outside the State, and,
- (c) the person has not been working on the project for a period in excess of 20 working days in any 12 month period."

"A person mentioned in paragraph 3 shall be in possession of a letter in the English or Irish language from the relevant employer, which letter-

- (a) describes the work to be undertaken,
- (b) states the competence of the person to undertake that work, and
- (c) specifies the commencement date and the anticipated completion date of that work."

There were 15 fatalities in the construction sector in 2008, making it the second highest sector for fatalities - next to the agriculture, hunting and forestry sector which had 21 fatalities. So although a person may be exempt from attending a FAS Safe Pass training course, it may be considered good practice, bearing in mind the inherent dangers present on a construction site, for that person to increase their awareness of health and safety in construction by participating on the Safe Pass course.

### Question 4

**I am the operations manager in a manufacturing plant and we need our safety statement updated. We do not have the resources available to employ a full-time health and safety officer, so we tend to contract out any health and safety work that needs to be carried out. My question is how can I make sure that I am bringing in a qualified and suitable person to carry out this work?**

### Answer 4

No matter what the service, whether it is a painter, plumber, electrician or consultant,

people should ensure that they are appointing a competent person to carry out the task and getting their money's worth for the service.

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 three components are accounted for when deeming that someone is competent to carry out a certain task. For example, many people may have the training and knowledge to carry out the work but may not have the experience required.

Useful criteria to look for when examining the competency of a person are:

- The Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the person providing the service; from the CV you should judge if this person has experience of carrying out such work in your industry,
- References and contact details of companies where this person has carried out such work previously,
- Their qualifications,
- Professional membership of a body related to their occupation.

It is also a good idea to ask for a portfolio/ example of past work this person has carried out. An interview or a short meeting with this person may also give you an idea of how competent they are.

The above is a non-exhaustive and may be altered as you wish.

*If you have any questions you would like answered, you can email [boconnor@niso.ie](mailto:boconnor@niso.ie)*



# Membership of NISO North-West reflects region's economy

**With members drawn from the farming community, industry, construction and the public service, the membership of National Irish Safety Organisation's North-West region reflects the structure of the region's economy.**

Another characteristic of the NISO North-West region is the geographical spread, ranging from, according to John Quinn who chairs the NISO North-West region committee, "Malin Head in Donegal down to Carrick-on-Shannon in Leitrim and across to Enniscrone on the Sligo/Mayo border".

Quinn explains that the geographic spread of the region poses the problem of where to hold committee meetings. Arranging meetings can be "difficult". Mostly meetings are arranged for either Sligo or Bundoran. There are eight members on the region's committee.

The members of the NISO North-West region committee are drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds. Quinn himself has worked with Eircom for 30 years. Martin Shields, who is a HR manager with Medisize, is another stalwart of the committee, while the honorary secretary Jacqueline Gallagher is a self-employed safety consultant.

## DECLINE IN MANUFACTURING

However, while the decline in manufacturing, particularly in Quinn's home county of Donegal, has hit membership, NISO is still thriving and vibrant in the North West. For example, Quinn talks about the NISO Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health course, known more simply as the NISO Certificate in OSH. The courses are, he says, well attended, usually by about 25 people.

One of the characteristics of those attending the course in the North West is that many of those going on the course are self-employed. Many of those attending are, he says, "looking

to progress and become safety officers". Another characteristic of the course is the attendance of people from across the border in Derry and Fermanagh.

Quinn attributes much of the credit for the success of the NISO OSH Cert courses in the North-West to his committee colleague Martin Shields.

Talking about people coming to the NISO OSH Certificate course leads Quinn on to talk about the good working relationship between the NISO North-West Region and the Northern Ireland Safety Group.

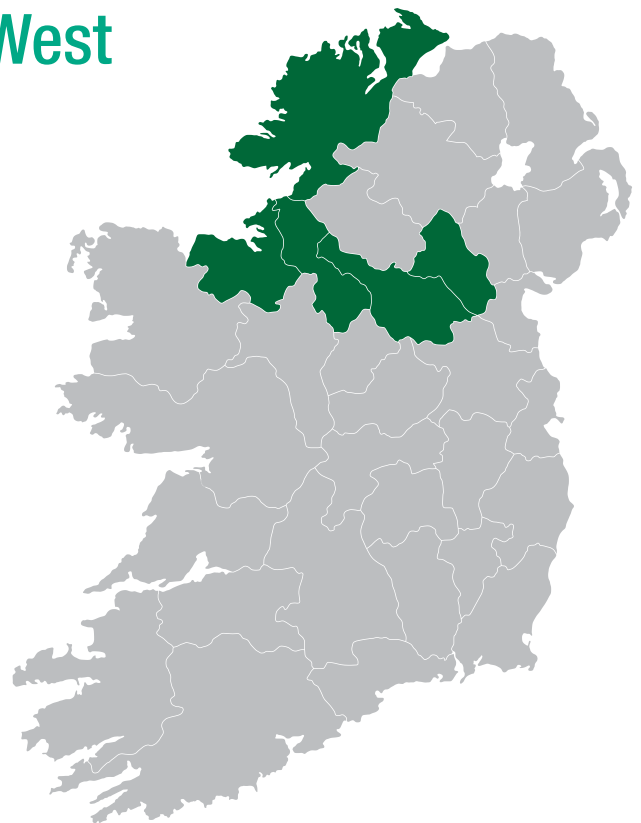
Apart from attending the certificate courses, people from Derry and Fermanagh also attend occupational first aid training courses organised by NISO. The close relationship between the NISO North-West Region and the NISG is cemented by the annual meeting between the two groups.

## QUIZ

Another sign of the vibrancy of the Organisation in the North-West Region is the NISO Health and Safety Quiz. Every year up to ten teams enter the quiz, which was this year held in Carrick-on-Shannon.

The winners in this year's quiz were the Sligo-based company Abbott Ireland, who won the previous entrants quiz and their sister company the Abbott Ireland Diagnostics Division, which is also based at Ballytivnan in Sligo. The North-West region can also be a willing host to companies from Ballina like Hollister, who enter the North-West quiz.

Talk of the quiz leads on to talk of the late Anthony Kennedy, a young man who was killed in an accident a few years ago. Anthony, who worked with Abbott Diagnostics, was an



enthusiastic participant in the quiz. In his memory, the Kennedy family presented the NISO North-West region with a cup in Anthony's memory. The cup is presented to the winners of the quiz in the region.

## SAFETY ISSUES

In the North-West, safety in farming is a big issue. Quinn says "we should be talking to Teagasc". A big problem in farming is, Quinn says, the seasonal nature of the work. Young people, in the 12 to 14 year age group, are attracted to the work and to tractors and machinery. Being unaware of the dangers, they are sometimes injured.

Another safety issue in the area is the poor state of many roads. Recalling some accidents – one particularly tragic – Quinn mentions that a lot of vehicles end up in fields.

## CONFERENCE IN THE WEST

Looking forward to the NISO annual conference, which this year will be held in Castlebar, Quinn says holding the conference in the West "will make a huge difference to members in the North-West".

There will, he predicts, be a big increase in numbers from the North-West attending the conference.



**NATIONAL IRISH SAFETY ORGANISATION - UPCOMING EVENTS – [www.niso.ie](http://www.niso.ie)**

*All courses are held at NISO's Training Centre, Ballymount, Dublin 12, unless otherwise stated. For more information or to book on any of these course, please send an email to [info@niso.ie](mailto:info@niso.ie) with your details.*

**SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE COURSE**

Course Length: 3 days  
April 6th, 7th, 8th

**HEALTH & SAFETY FOR THE NON-SAFETY SPECIALIST COURSE**

Course Length: 2 days  
March 30th, 31st

**MANUAL HANDLING INSTRUCTOR & ASSESSOR COURSE**

Course Length: 5 days (3 days on week 1 and 2 days on week 2)  
April 20th, 21st, 22nd, 27th, 28th

**MANUAL HANDLING INSTRUCTOR & ASSESSOR REFRESHER COURSE**

Course Length: 2 days  
April 21st, 22nd

**BASIC MANUAL HANDLING COURSE**

Course Length: Half day  
March 12th / April 29th

**SAFE PASS COURSE**

Course Length: 1 day March 6th / March 20th / April 3rd

**OCCUPATIONAL FIRST AID COURSE FETAC Level 5**

Course Length: 3 days  
March 23rd, 24th, 25th / May 2009 18th, 19th, 20th

**OCCUPATIONAL FIRST AID REFRESHER/ RE-CERTIFICATION COURSE FETAC Level 5**

Course Length: 1 day March 25th / May 20th

**VDU/DSE ASSESSORS COURSE**

Course Length: 1.5 days May 11th, 12th

**NOISE MEASUREMENT COURSE**

Course Length: 4 days (2 days on week 1 and 2 days on week 2) Date TBC.

**NISO / NISG ALL IRELAND TABLE QUIZ 2009**

South East, Dooley's Hotel, Waterford  
20 March, 8.00pm  
[southeast@niso.ie](mailto:southeast@niso.ie)

North East, Fairways Hotel, Dundalk, Co Louth  
25 March, 7.30pm  
[northeast@niso.ie](mailto:northeast@niso.ie)

East, Green Isle Hotel, Newlands Cross, Dublin 22  
26 March, 7.30pm  
[east@niso.ie](mailto:east@niso.ie)

Mid West, Greenhills Hotel, Limerick  
27 March, 8.00pm  
[Midwest@niso.ie](mailto:Midwest@niso.ie)

South, Oriel House Hotel, Ballincollig, Co Cork  
3 April, 7.30pm  
[south@niso.ie](mailto:south@niso.ie)

**NISO / NISG ALL IRELAND QUIZ FINALS**

Brandon Hotel, Tralee, Co. Kerry. 25 April at 2.00pm

**NISO NATIONAL AGM**

Brandon Hotel, Tralee, Co. Kerry. 25 April at 12 noon

**NISO OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH CERTIFICATE 2009**

NISO Ballymount, Dublin 12  
Next commencing date: Autumn 2009

Cork Institute of Technnology  
Next commencing date: Autumn 2009

Institute of Technology, Tralee  
Next commencing date: Autumn 2009

Athlone Institute of Technology  
Next commencing date: Autumn 2009

Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, Galway Campus  
Next commencing date: Autumn 2009

Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, Castlebar Campus  
Next commencing date: Autumn 2009

Limerick Institute of Technology  
Next commencing date: Autumn 2009

Tullamore  
Next commencing date: Autumn 2009

Longford  
Next commencing date: Autumn 2009

Dundalk Institute of Technology  
Next commencing date: Autumn 2009

Waterford Crystal Leisure & Sports Centre  
Next commencing date: Autumn 2009

Other Venues: Some venues and dates to be confirmed