

NISO Safety Observer  
September 2019; Issue 42

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## The Safety Observer



Newsletter of the National Irish Safety Organisation

September 2019 - Issue 42

Welcome to the September 2019 edition of **The Safety Observer**, the newsletter of the National Irish Safety Organisation. The Safety Observer contains information that is current, informative and useful to subscribers. We keep you up to date on what is happening in occupational safety and health. NISO Update, the quarterly magazine, was circulated on 19 July 2019 last and the next edition for NISO members is scheduled for mid October 2019. The last edition of Safety Observer was distributed on 28 June 2019.

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## NISO NEWS

### NISO Annual Conference 2019

The 55th Annual NISO Health and Safety Conference and Trade Exhibition is taking place this year on 11 October in the Galmont Hotel, Galway. This year, our panel of renowned speakers will speak on the theme "SHWW - 30 Years On".

**Register before 6 September to avail of great Early Bird**

**discounts:** <http://bit.ly/2ZJAiDc>

Visit our dedicated conference website for more details:

<https://safetyconference.ie/>

### NISO Certificate in Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

13 weeks / 2 hours per week

Commencing September 2019

Athlone, Castlebar, Cork, Dublin, Limerick, Waterford.

**Find out more** [HERE...](#)

**Book Online:** <http://bit.ly/2vRjc9n>

### Upcoming Safety Training

**VDU/DSE ASSESSOR** 3 September

**Manual Handling Basic** 5 September

**Manual Handling Instruction** 16, 17, 18, 19 & 23 September

**First Aid Response** 16-18 October

**Safe Pass Dublin** 17, 20, 27 & 30 September

**Book Online:** <http://bit.ly/2vRjc9n>

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In this issue... Safety news... Fatalities & Accidents... In the Courts... Inquests... Statistics... Publications... Reports... Safety Commentary/Opinions... Training and Events

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## **IRISH NEWS**

### **Ergonomics Workshop - Practical Risk Assessment Tools**

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is holding workshops on practical ergonomics risk assessment tools to identify and manage risks of musculoskeletal disorders in the workplace. The workshops will be held in Dundalk, Dublin, Athlone and Limerick during October 2019. Registration open from Monday, 2 September, on [hsa.ie](http://hsa.ie).

### **HSA Publishes 2018 Annual Report**

The HSA's 2018 Annual Report shows that there were 39 work-related fatalities reported to the HSA in 2018, compared to 48 in 2017, a decline of 19%. The single biggest danger last year came from vehicles in the workplace, with 17 lives lost across all industries last year. The farming sector suffered 15 work-related deaths in 2018, compared to 25 in 2017, a decline of 40%, while construction had five work-related deaths.

<http://bit.ly/2MM1w9H>

### **Number of construction incidents down in 2019**

The HSA has reported 2 deaths and 164 non-fatal workplace incidents in construction-related jobs from January to June 2019, putting the industry on track to have its lowest recorded workplace fatalities on record. During the same period in 2018, 3 fatalities and 278 non-fatal incidents were recorded.

<http://bit.ly/2L3iA9f>

### **Scale of prison officer injuries revealed**

A new recording system has revealed that a much larger number of prison officers are injured by inmates than was previously reflected in official statistics. Figures for injuries incurred during “restraint interventions” have been recorded since 2017. This new system for recording interventions helps to more accurately captures the scale of prison officer injuries.

<http://bit.ly/2YTPD3q>

### **57 assaults on ambulance staff since 2017**

A new report has found that 57 ambulance staff members have been physically assaulted since 2017. Twelve paramedics have been forced off duty as a result of the attacks during this period.

<http://bit.ly/2GRCiSV>

### **Safety flaws in Ireland’s construction regulations**

A UCD professor has raised concerns about a central flaw in Ireland’s 2014 Building Control (Amendment) Regulations and says that Ireland has not learned lessons from the Berkeley and Grenfell tragedies. The professor has expressed that the current regulations are not fit for purpose and that many buildings are being occupied illegally because enforcements are not happening.

<http://bit.ly/2Yu2vlt>

### **Over 65s and children most vulnerable on farms**

Dr. Sharon McGuinness, CEO, Health and Safety Authority, has expressed serious concerns over the age profile of farm accident fatalities involving tractors. Of the 61 people who died in tractor deaths in the last decade, 28 were aged 65 and over and six of the fatalities were children. Dr. McGuinness said that we now need to get the message across about how lethal tractors can be.

<http://bit.ly/2HpBZiv>

### **Over 50 incidents on Irish railways in 2018**

More than 50 incidents on Irish railways, including nine fatalities, were

examined by inspectors from the Railway Accident Investigation Unit (RAIU) last year. The latest annual report of the RAIU shows a total of 52 preliminary examinations of serious accidents and other incidents on the rail network were conducted during 2018 – 12 more than the previous year.

<http://bit.ly/2ZxfJJH>

### **HSE reports 279 staff assaults to date in 2019**

A total of 279 HSE staff members have been assaulted in Irish hospitals so far this year. Of the 279 assaults, the majority were on nurses and midwives at 249 assaults. In 2018, 948 assaults were reported.

<http://bit.ly/323INv4>

### **Oireachtas has paid €64k for PI claims since 2015**

The Oireachtas Commission has paid a total of €64,000 in damages and legal costs since 2015 for personal injury claims arising from incidents in Leinster House. None of the claims against the Oireachtas were brought by TDs or Senators, the commission said in its response. Three of the claimants said they had tripped and fallen within the complex. A further two claims involved lift incidents. The sixth claim was described only as a personal injuries claim.

<http://bit.ly/2NDH6iQ>

## **UK NEWS**

### **Ten biggest H&S prosecutions of 2018**

Here is a round-up of the ten biggest health and safety prosecutions in the UK in 2018. Each of the prosecutions on the list include fines of £1 million and over.

<https://ubm.io/2ZHxjvv>

### **HSE releases annual workplace fatality figures for 2018/19**

The UK's Health and Safety Executive has released its annual figures for work-related fatal injuries for 2018/19. It has also released the number of people known to have died from asbestos-related cancer, mesothelioma, in 2017. The provisional data revealed that 147 workers were fatally

injured between April 2018 and March 2019 (a rate of 0.45 per 100,000 workers). This is an increase of six workplace fatalities since 2017/2018.

<http://bit.ly/2GXkyWm>

### **Construction company and employee sentenced after fatality**

A construction company and one of its employees have been sentenced for health and safety breaches after another worker was struck by an excavator and was killed. The company was fined £1m and the employee was given a 6 month custodial sentence, suspended for 12 months, and ordered to pay costs of £15k. Both parties pleaded not guilty to breaches of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act of 1974.

<http://bit.ly/2YAYk7p>

### **Over 60s account for a quarter of workplace fatalities**

Data from the recently published Health and Safety Executive's Statistics on Workplace Fatalities reveal that a quarter of fatal injuries were sustained by workers aged 60 and over. Thirty-seven of the 147 workplace fatalities in 2018/19 were in this age group, despite the fact that this age group make up only 10% of the UK workforce.

<http://bit.ly/2KnF1Wv>

### **Property giant fined £1.3m following death of passerby**

A property management company that failed to inspect, maintain or even notice insecure structures on the roof of a shopping centre has been fined £1.3m after a tank cover broke free in high winds, striking and killing a 29-year-old female passerby. The judge found that the company had serious health and safety failings despite multiple opportunities to identify and correct necessary maintenance work.

<http://bit.ly/31NtQvP>

### **Three injured during demolition of Didcot power plant**

The Health and Safety Executive is investigating the demolition of the towers at Didcot power station after three people were injured during the explosion. The demolition comes three years after four workers were killed at the site.

<http://bit.ly/2MqenhJ>

## **WORLD NEWS**

### **Wall collapse kills 16 workers in India**

A 60ft-high wall has collapsed on a cluster of huts in western India, killing at least 16 workers living there, a fire official said. The victims were migrant workers and their families who were sleeping when the wall collapsed on them.

<http://bit.ly/2Z7atAv>

### **Fourteen Russian sailors killed in submarine fire**

Fourteen Russian sailors were killed when a fire broke out while their deep-water research submarine was carrying out a survey of the sea floor near the Arctic, the Russian defence ministry has reported. A Russian media outlet cited an unnamed military source as saying the submarine was nuclear-powered but Russian officials made no comment on the type of vessel involved.

<http://bit.ly/2Z2B5TI>

### **Fishing vessel sinks off Honduras coast killing 27**

At least 27 fishermen have died after their fishing vessel sank during bad weather off the Honduras coast. Nine people remain missing and 55 others have been rescued.

<http://bit.ly/2YYDLlr>

## **GENERAL SAFETY NEWS**

### **Man electrocuted while trying to recover a drone**

A man in his 20s was treated for serious burn injuries after he was electrocuted while trying to recover a drone that got tangled in power lines. A spokesperson for ESB said that the incident is a stark reminder to the public of the dangers of interfering with any electrical wires or poles including flying drones, kites or anything that could come into contact with the wire.

<http://bit.ly/2KSwN7O>

## **FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS**

### **Man killed in workplace accident at port**

A man in his 50s has died after the truck he was driving was hit by another vehicle at an Irish port. The death is understood to be the fourth on Irish docks in the last year. It is understood that the deceased was having a refrigeration unit loaded onto the back of his truck when he was struck by another vehicle. An Garda Síochána and the HSA are investigating the incident.

<http://bit.ly/2Pkobwb>

### **Man killed in Co. Westmeath farm accident**

A man in his 60s has been killed in a farm accident in Co. Westmeath. The man was pronounced dead at the scene. It is understood that the incident involved livestock. The HSA is investigating the fatality.

<http://bit.ly/328Gdmn>

### **Man dies in farm accident in Co. Limerick**

A man in his 40s has died following a farm accident in Co. Limerick. The man was seriously hurt after a wall collapsed during construction works at the property. Emergency services attended the scene but he was pronounced dead shortly after. The HSA has been notified of the incident.

<http://bit.ly/32d0g3l>

### **Farmer killed in Co. Roscommon farm accident**

A farmer in his 50s has died following a farm accident in Co. Roscommon. It is understood that the accident occurred while the farmer was patching bales in the yard. An Garda Síochána is investigating the fatality.

<http://bit.ly/30jsEjN>

### **Chemical incident at Cork plant**

A full scale emergency response was triggered following reports of a chemical spill in an industrial estate on the outskirts of Cork city. It is understood that there was a spillage of nitric acid during truck loading operations. No injuries were reported.

<http://bit.ly/2Hglchw>

### **Woman airlifted to hospital following farm accident**

A woman in her late 60s had to be airlifted to hospital following a farm accident involving cattle in the midlands. The injuries are not believed to be life threatening.

<http://bit.ly/2KWB8Xy>

### **Farmer injured during Co. Meath protests**

A protest that was underway outside a meat factory in Co. Meath has been suspended following an incident in which a farmer participating in the demonstration was struck by a vehicle. It has been reported that the farmer suffered a broken hip and broken ribs and has been scanned for internal injuries following the incident. It is expected that the HSA will conduct a full investigation at the site of the incident.

<http://bit.ly/2HiOOeu>

## **IN THE COURTS**

### **Garda awarded €975k following crush injuries**

A garda whose legs were crushed when a man rammed him with a stolen car and then drove over his legs has been awarded €975,000 by the High Court. The garda was on duty with three other gardaí in August 2015 when he was deliberately crushed between a stolen car and a garda vehicle, breaking his legs. The driver of the stolen car pleaded guilty to causing serious harm to the garda and was jailed for seven years in February 2016. The injured garda attended the criminal court in a wheelchair in February 2016 and the court heard he was expected to be out of work for “a very long time”.

<http://bit.ly/2KJVy72>

### **Waiter sues restaurant over slip 10 years previously**

A waiter, who is now in his 70s, has sued in the High Court claiming that he slipped and twisted his ankle on a bar floor 10 years ago. The man claims that the accident has left him suffering from chronic regional pain syndrome. He has sued the owner of the bar and restaurant where he was working at the time of the accident for failure to ensure that the floor was in

a safe condition. Video footage of the the man walking without a limp was shown to the court. All the claims have been denied and the case is still in progress.

<http://bit.ly/31WOpWH>

### **Family of postman awarded €250k following death**

The widow of a 39-year-old postman who died after being knocked off his bicycle while on his post round has settled a High Court action over his death for €250,000. The bereaved sued her husband's employer over the accident eight years ago. It was claimed that there was an alleged failure to provide a safe system of work and a failure to ensure the postman would be safe while carrying out his work delivering post. The claims were denied.

<http://bit.ly/2Zd1jCv>

### **Case against State “back on” for Air Corps mechanic**

A former member of the Air Corps who alleges that he and some of his former colleagues suffered as a result of exposure to dangerous chemicals at a Dublin airfield has said that their fight is “back on” after a Supreme Court victory earlier this week. On Monday, a five panel Supreme Court hearing unanimously found in favour of the former member meaning the State must now disclose documents outlining the chemicals that they may have been exposed to while working at the airfield between 1990 and 1999. A 2016 inspection by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) identified a number of shortcomings at the airfield with corrective actions then taken by the Defence Forces in relation to how it handles chemicals. The case continues.

<http://bit.ly/2ZnO1DQ>

### **Terminally ill stone cutter settles case against employer**

A 51-year-old man with a terminal illness and who sued his employer over alleged exposure to silica dust has settled his High Court action. His counsel told the High Court that he began working as a grinding machine operator and stone cutter with the company in 2006. It is claimed he was allegedly exposed to dangerous and consistent levels of silica dust and other airborne particles. The claims were denied and it was contended by

the company that there was contributory negligence on the part of the plaintiff as it was alleged he should have been wearing a face mask. Approving the settlement the judge praised the two legal sides for bringing the case to court so quickly.

<http://bit.ly/2Z81pvR>

### **Airport security worker sues over fall from truck**

An airport worker who fell about 10 feet to the ground from an oil tanker cab as she conducted a security search has sued in the High Court. She has claimed that the accident happened as she was getting down from the tanker cab when she fell backwards from the second step to the ground and bashed her head.

Her counsel told the court the airport security search operative suffered a laceration to her head and also had pain in her back and has not worked since the accident six years ago. Her claim includes €228,000 in past and future loss of earnings.

<http://bit.ly/2ze36bN>

### **Farmer sues over combine harvester hand injury**

A 35-year-old Cork farmer who suffered “horrific injuries” when his hand was sucked into a combine harvester as he tried to free grain clogging up the machine has sued in the High Court. The farmer told the court that after his hand became trapped his employer tried to manually reverse the mechanism with a wrench but was unsuccessful and it was nearly an hour before his hand was freed after firemen cut through the auger of the machine. Mr Hurley has claimed he was allegedly requested to unclog the combine harvester in dangerous and hazardous circumstances and the auger of the harvester was allegedly activated in circumstances in which injury was likely to be caused. He has further claimed there was an alleged failure to train or supervise him adequately. The claims are denied.

<http://bit.ly/2Z6SryZ>

### **Man gave nine variations of workplace accident**

A man who gave nine variations of an accident he suffered at work has had his €60k damages claim dismissed by the Circuit Civil Court. The man had been hired as an industrial cleaner but had been asked to carry

out labouring work instead of cleaning duties at the time of the accident. He claimed that he had been carrying a large piece of wood down a staircase with the help of a co-worker when he slipped on pieces of rubble, glass and wood that had been on the stairs. Council for his employers said that various descriptions of the incident had been included in the claimant's medical reports, his notice of particulars and other documents submitted to the court. The judge dismissed the case.

<http://bit.ly/33SfpZx>

### **Tourist awarded €67k over museum fall**

An Australian tourist who injured his leg after slipping and rolling down three steps of a stone stairs at an Irish museum has been awarded almost €67,000 damages by a High Court judge. The judge said the museum's Portland stone steps were shiny and slippery and the 70-year-old, who ruptured a leg tendon in the incident, suffered significant trauma, discomfort, inconvenience, expense and upset. The judge found negligence in failing to provide a railing for a person to hold onto the entire way down the seven-step staircase. The claims were denied and the museum contended the stairs were free from defect and there was one handrail. The final award was €66,989.

<http://bit.ly/325Yzo8>

### **PI case dismissed for boy who sustained football injury**

A schoolboy has failed in his personal injury action where he claimed his primary school was negligent in supplying him with a deflated football that caused him to break his wrist during a soccer match. Suing through his mother, the boy claimed that kicking the deflated ball during a soccer match with classmates at break time caused him to fall. The judge in the case said "I think this is a case that can't succeed under any circumstances - and I have no option but to dismiss it."

<http://bit.ly/2KXtNld>

## **INQUESTS**

### **Inquest hears park ranger left suicide note on workplace bullying**

The phrase "Stand up to bullies" was written on the wall of a workplace

canteen where a 43-year-old man took his own life, an inquest has heard. The family of the deceased phoned an out-of-hours service when he failed to return home on the evening of his death. The depot supervisor found the deceased in the canteen at 11.30pm and he was later pronounced dead. CCTV footage at the yard had not been looked at. The inquest has been adjourned until October.

<http://bit.ly/2ZdEfnD>

### **Coroner finds fisherman's death was "unfortunate accident"**

A verdict of accidental death was recorded after a 51-year-old fisherman on board a Spanish-registered vessel in West Cork lost his life following an accident involving a trawler door. The trawler door was being brought on to the vessel for maintenance and inspection when the accident happened. The door slipped and fell into the water which pulled on a combination rope with speed when the deceased was hit on the arms and neck by a hook and shackle. Paramedics rushed to assist the fisherman and he was transferred to Cork University Hospital (CUH) for treatment. He died three days later. A verdict of accidental death was recorded after a few minutes of deliberations.

<http://bit.ly/2HHhMoD>

### **SAFETY ALERTS**

Thirty people have been killed in workplace accidents since 1 January 2019 - Correct at 26 August 2019. Source: [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)

<http://bit.ly/34bJFyp>

### **SAFETY ALERTS**

#### **Use of Portable Medical Oxygen/Entonox (Integral Valve) Cylinders**

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) has issued this revised Safety Alert in relation to the use of CD Portable Medical Oxygen Cylinders and ED Portable ENTONOX® Cylinders, which are medicinal products incorporating a medical device as part of their closure system. This alert includes two potential occurrences when using a Medical Oxygen or Etonox cylinder and important general advice for their safe usage.

<http://bit.ly/327Lw5M>

### **The phenomenon of condensate induced water hammer**

The intent of this safety notice from the HSE UK is to remind operators of major pressure systems involving steam of the risks of steam condensate water hammer following an incident. This notice serves as a reminder to duty-holders about condensate induced water hammer and their responsibilities in terms of the maintenance and operations of steam systems. This notice is concerned with existing installations and assumes that the steam system has been appropriately designed.

<http://bit.ly/2PexihH>

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **The value of occupational safety and health and societal costs of work-related injuries and diseases**

This report details the findings of the second stage of EU-OSHA's project to estimate the costs of occupational injuries, diseases and deaths at European level.

<http://bit.ly/2NvmxVX>

### **New report on reprotoxic chemicals**

The EU legislative framework sets out directives that address occupational exposure to Carcinogenic, Mutagenic and Reprotoxic substances in order to lay down minimum requirements for the protection of the safety and health of workers. In its recently published study, the European Commission assesses a variety of options and generates evidence for a possible amendment of the current legislation regarding reprotoxic chemicals.

<http://bit.ly/2ZvolVo>

## **GUIDANCE**

### **INDG480 Hand-arm vibration in amenity horticulture and how to control the risk**

The guidance is aimed at employers in amenity horticulture and explains

how to protect workers from the risk of hand-arm vibration. The guidance will help employers:

- identify when exposure may cause harm
- understand how to comply with legislation
- take practical steps to control the vibration risk

<http://bit.ly/331BB89>

## **RESOURCES**

### **Major update to ECHA's chemical database**

Several new features and improvements are now publicly available on the European Chemicals Agency's chemicals database. These include new information in substance Infocards, quick links to deeper datasets for each substance and more visibility on nanomaterials.

<http://bit.ly/2MplDuq>

## **SAFETY OPINION/COMMENTARY**

### **Suicide rates in the construction sector**

More than one construction worker a day takes their own life in the UK, which is three times the UK rate for men. This article takes a look at why the suicide rate is so high amongst construction workers.

<http://bit.ly/2Ht1tvc>

## **TRAINING AND EVENTS**

### **Training scheduled at NISO Training Centre, Dublin 12**

All courses listed below available to be delivered in-house, nationwide, on request

[VDU/DSE Assessor Training](#), NISO Certificate (1 day); 3 September

[Manual Handling Basic](#), NISO Certificate (half day); 5 September [Book now](#)

[Manual Handling Instruction](#) QQI L6 (5 day); 16, 17, 18, 19 & 23 September [Book now](#)

[First Aid Response](#): PHECC Certificate (3 day) 16-18 October [Book now](#)

### **Safe Pass Training**

**Dublin:** NISO Training Centre, Ballymount, Dublin12; 17, 20, 27 & 30 September [Book now](#)

### **Promoting Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace**

**National Workshop Series in conjunction with Healthy Ireland** [Learn More](#)

**Sligo:** 3 September 2019; Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Ballinacar, Sligo [BOOK NOW](#)

### **Regional Courses**

[NISO Certificate in Health, Safety and Welfare at Work](#) (13 wks/2 hrs p/wk)

[Dublin: NISO Training Centre](#), Dublin 12; 17 September 2019 [Book now](#)

[Mayo: Castlebar](#): 17 September 2019 [Book now](#)

[Cork](#): 17 September 2019 [Book now](#)

[Westmeath: Athlone IT](#); 23 September 2019 [Book now](#)

[Limerick: Limerick IT, Moylish Campus](#); 24 September 2019 [Book now](#)

[Waterford: Waterford IT](#); 24 September 2019 [Book now](#)

### **National Events:**

[56th Annual NISO Conference](#), The Galmont Hotel & Spa, Galway; 11 October 2019

[Trade Exhibition of H&S Productions and Services](#), The Galmont Hotel & Spa, Galway; 11 October 2019

[NISO/NISO All Ireland Safety Awards](#), The Galmont Hotel & Spa, Galway; 11 October 2019

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**17 SEP 2019 | 6.30PM**

**NISO Certificate in Safety, Health and Welfare at Work**  
One two hour evening per week over 13 weeks in **Dublin**.  
Also at 7pm in the following locations:  
**Cork** (17 Sep); **GMIT Castlebar** (17 Sep); **AIT Athlone** (23 Sep); **LIT Limerick** (24 Sep); **WIT Waterford** (24 Sep).  
**CLICK ME** to register online or call 01 465 9760



**11 OCT 2019 - GALWAY**

**NISO 56th Annual Conference**  
**NISO Annual Exhibition of Safety Products and Services**  
**NISO 28th Annual Awards Presentation and Dinner**  
**CLICK ME** for further information or visit [safetyconference.ie](http://safetyconference.ie)



**OSH TRAINING**

All courses listed available to be delivered in **Dublin**, nationwide or in-house on request.  
**NISO Certificate in Safety, Health and Welfare at Work** | **Safe Pass** | **Health & Safety Representation QQI L5** | **Manual Handling Instruction** | **Manual Handling Basic** | **Risk Assessment** | **Safety Rep** | **VDU/DSE Assessor** | **Introduction to H&S for the Non Safety Specialist**  
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