

NISO Safety Observer July 2021; Issue 57

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Newsletter of the National Irish Safety Organisation

July 2021 - Issue 57

Welcome to the July 2021 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 29 April 2021 last and the next edition for NISO members is scheduled for July 2021. The last edition of Safety Observer was distributed on 31 May 2021.

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NISO
ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING
2021

**HEALTH & SAFETY
TRAINING**

**NISO CERTIFICATE
IN SAFETY, HEALTH
& WELFARE
AT WORK**



NISO NEWS

NISO Annual General Meeting

The NISO Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday, 22 July 2021 at the Green Isle Hotel, Clondalkin, Dublin 22 at 14.00hrs. Find out more [HERE...](#)

H&S Training

NISO is continuing to hold both online and classroom-based health and safety training. View upcoming course dates and book online [HERE...](#)

NISO Certificate in Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

NISO's flagship 13-week introduction to health and safety course, commencing autumn 2021. Further information [HERE...](#)

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COVID-19 NEWS

Anger over return to work confusion

An employers' representative group and a workers' union have both expressed anger over the lack of clarity regarding return to work plans. A lack of clarity on unvaccinated staff is among the issues raised by the groups.

<https://bit.ly/35s8CHS>

Workplace outbreaks in the midwest investigated

Following the reopening of many businesses, 28 workplaces in the midwest region are being investigated in relation to COVID-19 outbreaks. The outbreaks have been linked to small retailers, hair salons, beauticians, offices and factories. Employers and staff members are being reminded to follow public health guidelines at all times.

<https://bit.ly/35BstnT>

Fitness to dive post-COVID-19 infection

The HSA has issued a notice advising that any divers who have been diagnosed with, or suspected of having, COVID-19 should consult with an Approved Medical Examiner of Divers prior to returning to diving. Visit hsa.ie for further information on

fitness to dive and diving medicals.

<https://bit.ly/3j337HO>

Return to office working will be “daunting”

CIPD Ireland, the organisation representing HR professionals, is warning that challenges may arise when employees return to the office in the coming months. CIPD has developed a helpful checklist to help employers when devising their new protocols for on-site working which covers topics including anxiety, induction, encouraging hybrid working and collaboration.

<https://bit.ly/35G9mJE>

Unvaccinated cannot be kept out of workplace

According to legal experts, staff will be able to return to the workplace even if they refuse the COVID vaccine and they won't be obliged to tell their employer or colleagues whether they've received the jab. The situation is expected to create a significant business risk and a legal headache. It is predicted that employee's rights will trump an organisation's rights to create a safe environment for other workers and customers in the absence of specific legislation or further government guidance.

<https://bit.ly/2SAnMlr>

IRISH NEWS

Public consultation for HSA strategy statement 2022–24

The HSA has opened a public consultation for its Strategy Statement 2022-2024. The HSA is keen to obtain the views of interested parties and citizens on a range of issues related to the current strategy and the development of the next strategy. Views can be submitted online no later than Friday, 2 July 2021.

<https://bit.ly/3x1uMwU>

Claims by injured prison officers quadrupled in 2020

Irish prison officers were paid €2.7m in compensation in 2020 for criminal injuries inflicted upon them - more than four times the figure paid just 12 months previously. A non-statutory agency under the aegis of the Department of Justice paid the amount based on 110 claims received from personnel. Just 38 claims were made in 2019 leading to costs of €603,000.

<https://bit.ly/3vK0htL>

Warning of “potentially dangerous” silage pit heights

Recent reports of farmers requesting silage pits to be filled to excessive “and potentially dangerous heights” have spurred the Association of Farm and Forestry Contractors in Ireland (FCI) and the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) to issue safety advice on pit height during this busy season. This article outlines the risks and general safety rules when working with silage pits.

<https://bit.ly/3zCAadnp>

Irish farmers have higher mortality rate

Recent research has found that farmers in Ireland experience five times higher cardiovascular issues, three times higher cancer and seven times higher mortality in the working age range than “white collar” workers. Recent research has also indicated that farmers give health issues less attention than aspects of safety implementation.

<https://bit.ly/3qkyKOG>

Move to restrict workplace non-disclosure agreements

Research conducted for legislation to restrict the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDSs) has shown that they are widespread in Ireland. The Seanad has heard that some women have received severance payments of as little as €5,000 and are then “forever silenced” by being forced to sign NDSs for abuse, bullying or discrimination they were subjected to in the workplace.

<https://bit.ly/3gQ8IVy>

Annual tractor risk assessment checks

According to the HSA a thorough risk assessment of one’s tractor is crucial every year. Before starting work, the HSA advises on conducting a five-minute check to ensure your machine’s safety. This article highlights the main tractor safety checks for operators.

<https://bit.ly/3zJq0Wp>

New legislation to expand sick pay and leave rights

Greater sick pay rights are to be extended to all workers from next year, with employers told to guarantee a minimum number of paid sick days annually from 2022, under plans to be considered by the Government. However, it has been reported that it will be several years before a promised statutory sick pay regime is fully in place in order to give employers time to adjust.

<https://bit.ly/3zNqKd1>

Farm safety discussions could save lives

A nationwide study funded by Teagasc and the HSA has shown that establishing discussion groups where farmers can discuss safety procedures with their peers is significantly more effective than simply providing farmers with information on the topic. The findings of a four-year study on promoting health and safety through discussion groups found that such groups can have very positive outcomes.

<https://bit.ly/2Shed0D>

Amended quad safety regulations

The HSA has said that amended regulations on the safe use of quad bikes will come into effect later this year. The purpose of amending the regulations is to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries that are associated with the use of quad bikes in the workplace and include a legal requirement for the wearing of head protection while using a quad.

<https://bit.ly/3zPvZJe>

Plan to boost Gardaí health and wellbeing

A new three-year plan has been launched by An Garda Síochána to help boost the health and wellbeing of its members. The plan will see the introduction of additional supports as well as the strengthening of existing ones. The initiatives include the introduction of the 24/7 Wellbeing App, a Garda National Wellbeing Office and a new easy-to-follow protocol for post-traumatic incidents.

<https://bit.ly/3gJXJaK>

Tractor drivers using phones to be sacked

The Association of Farm and Forestry Contractors in Ireland (FCI) is calling on its members to enforce a zero-tolerance approach to using mobile phones while driving tractors this summer. In an online statement the group stated that “There needs to be zero tolerance to using mobile phones while driving tractors – and all Irish farm and forestry contractors need to enforce this rule as a priority now.”

<https://bit.ly/3zLdaqP>

UK NEWS

Airline fined £1.8m after worker crushed

A major British airline has been fined £1.8 million for “significant failings” in the general management of supervision and monitoring, risk assessment and training. The case came about after an employee, who was pulling a train of dollies (vehicles

for transporting baggage) in the centre of a road way between two lanes, was struck by a tug and knocked under another passing vehicle with dollies loaded with luggage. She sustained serious crush injuries. The airline admitted breaches of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

<https://bit.ly/3x6ks6S>

Mental health trust fined £1.5m over 11 deaths

A mental health trust has been fined £1.5m for safety failings over the deaths of 11 patients. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) action was taken against the trust after the deaths between 2004 and 2015. It was found that certain breaches of safety laws, including the failure to remove ligature points, were a significant cause in the deaths.

<https://bbc.in/3d5d0kl>

Craft brewery accused of culture of fear and bullying

A fast expanding craft beer firm has apologised to former employees who accused the company and its co-founder of fostering a “culture of fear” in which workers were bullied and “treated like objects”. In an open letter circulated on Twitter, 61 former workers alleged the brewery of cutting corners on health and safety, espousing values it did not live by and creating a “toxic” culture that left staff suffering from mental illness.

<https://bit.ly/3iV6VKO>

Vaccine mandatory for care home workers

The British government is to announce that care home workers will be required to have mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations. Consultation will also begin on whether other health and care workers should also have the vaccine. The move came after concerns that some parts of the UK had a particularly low uptake of vaccines for care home staff.

<https://bit.ly/3jd79x0>

EUROPEAN NEWS

New EU workplace safety rules to reflect pandemic

The European Commission plans to update its rules on worker safety to reflect the shift millions of employees made to working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission said it will review EU rules on workplace safety, from emergency exits to ventilation and use of workstations and screens, and will update

limits on exposure to insulator asbestos and for lead and cobalt used in renewable energy technology and battery production.

<https://bit.ly/2U808TR>

One third of lorry drivers fall asleep at the wheel

According to a new report by the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), fatigue is now the norm among professional drivers on European roads. The report found that 60% of truck drivers and 66% of bus drivers said they had to drive while fatigued on a regular basis and that one third of truck drivers reported falling asleep while driving.

<https://bit.ly/3A9A3o1>

WORLD NEWS

Fire in Indian chemical factory kills 18 people

At least 18 people, including 15 female workers, have died in a chemical factory fire in India. The workers were trapped inside the factory unit when the fire broke out and spread rapidly, leaving them no escape route as the automatic door was closed.

Following a court order the local police have arrested the director of the company, charging him and two associates with culpable homicide not amounting to murder, and negligent conduct with respect to combustible materials and explosive substances.

<https://bit.ly/3wR3VDD>

FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS

Man dies in workplace accident in Co. Kildare

A man in his 30s has died in a workplace accident in Co. Kildare. The HSA has been notified of the death and has launched an investigation into the incident.

<https://bit.ly/3j7rK67>

Man dies after accident in Co. Wexford

A 48-year-old man has died in an industrial accident in Co. Wexford. An Garda Síochána and the HSA have launched separate investigations into the incident. It is understood that the man was airlifted to hospital in Dublin following a collision but later died from his injuries.

<https://bit.ly/2U2uxTp>

Teenager killed in workplace accident in Co. Waterford

A teenager has died in a workplace accident in Co. Waterford. It is understood the teenage boy was fatally injured in an accident involving a dumper truck. An Garda Síochána and the HSA have launched investigations into the incident.

<https://bit.ly/2SokzeR>

Teenage girl dies in accident in Dublin

A teenage girl has died after suffering serious injuries during a training session in a Co. Dublin equestrian centre. The fire brigade and ambulance service attended the scene and she was taken to hospital where she later passed away. The HSA is investigating the incident.

<https://bit.ly/2T4NrsJ>

Teenager critically injured in Co. Clare farm accident

A teenage boy is in a critical condition in hospital following a farm accident in Co. Clare. He was treated at the scene before being rushed to hospital in Limerick for treatment. The HSA has launched an investigation into the incident.

<https://bit.ly/3h04p4S>

Two injured after trailer disconnects from tractor

Two people were admitted to hospital after a trailer disconnected from the tractor pulling it and ploughed into their car. It is understood the two occupants of the vehicle received non life-threatening injuries. Investigations into the incident are ongoing.

<https://bit.ly/3zKBycf>

IN THE COURTS

Five sue for injuries after hotel lift plummeted

A husband and wife who were injured when a lift in a Kerry hotel plummeted three floors to the basement have settled their High Court actions. The terms of the settlements are confidential. Three cases relating to the incident remain. A number of companies are being sued over the incident with claims including that there was a failure to install a proper functioning lift from the car park to the hotel. Liability for the incident was conceded in 2019 and the cases are now before the court for assessment of damages only.

<https://bit.ly/3w2LASS>

€27k awarded for victimisation following complaint

A Dublin university has been ordered to pay €27,500 for victimising a former female employee two days after she made a complaint of sexual harassment against her male boss. The former employee told the Workplace Relations Commission that she was dismissed from her employment two days after she made the complaint, which the adjudicator found significant. The university argued that she was not victimised or dismissed but that she failed to pass her probation due to performance issues. Speaking to an Irish newspaper following the case, the former employee said that she does not believe it is safe to report sexual harassment at work.

<https://bit.ly/3qgEKrH>

STATISTICS

Fourteen people have been killed in workplace accidents since 1 January 2021 - Correct at 16 June 2021. Source: www.hsa.ie

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

PUBLICATIONS

Employees with Disabilities

This new publication from the HSA is an employers guide to implementing inclusive health and safety practices for employees with disabilities.

<https://bit.ly/3dn8gGS>

Safety for Seasonal Workers in Horticulture

These guidelines from the HSA will serve as a useful resource for those non-Irish national employees but also for everyone in the horticulture industry, whether self-employed, an employer or an employee.

<https://bit.ly/3xZtank>

MSDs and psychosocial risks

This new discussion paper from EU-OSHA investigates the effect of psychosocial risks on return to work with a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD). The paper concludes that the important factors for a successful return to work include holistic risk assessment of physical and psychosocial risks, a planned return-to-work programme and a positive and supportive working environment.

<https://bit.ly/2Ti63FL>

Migrant workers at COVID-19 and MSDs risk

A new EU-OSHA discussion paper has found that Europe's migrant workers face higher exposure to COVID-19 and MSDs. Migrant workers are more likely to be employed in jobs that involve contact with other people and cannot be performed from home. The paper details exposure risk by sector and country and recommends measures to protect migrant worker's health during the pandemic and beyond.

<https://bit.ly/35JbSyl>

Use of rapid antigen detection (RADTs) in the workplace

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has published a new paper entitled "Considerations on these rapid antigen detection (including self-) tests for SARS-CoV-2 in occupational settings". This document outlines the public health considerations for the use of RADTs in occupational settings in the EU/EEA and provides information on such tests in an occupational safety and health at work context.

<https://bit.ly/2STOtYL>

Final draft of IS for psychosocial risks published

The first global standard to provide employers with practical guidance on how to manage psychosocial risks to staff in the workplace has been finalised. ISO 45003:2021 was published last week and focuses on the mental health in "health and safety" and offers timely guidance on how to protect the psychosocial wellbeing of staff, as millions of workers get set to head back to the workplace after more than a year of working from home. The International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) has made the new standard available for free as part of its COVID-19 response.

<https://bit.ly/3jeogyD>

RESOURCES

COVID-19 risk assessments at work

The EU-OSHA has improved its risk assessment tool, OiRA, to help businesses secure healthy workplaces during the time of COVID-19. Among the improvements includes two new modules which allow risk assessments of work scenarios related to deliveries and working on a client's premises. Companies' approaches to COVID-19 testing and vaccination have also been integrated into this upgraded version of the risk assessment tool.

<https://bit.ly/2UAr1Ab>

RESEARCH REPORTS

Irish attitudes to skin cancer “worrying”

According to new research by the Irish Cancer Society, a third of Irish people are “not at all worried” about skin cancer. Describing the research as “worrying”, the society highlighted that skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in Ireland and claims 230 lives each year. The Irish Cancer Society is encouraging people to be more Skin Smart and offers lots of resources and information on its website.

<https://bit.ly/3zPUdTK>

SAFETY IN VIDEOS

Irish Rail issues video of level crossing incidents

Irish Rail has released footage showing a number of motorists damaging their vehicles and the barriers at level crossing by going straight through them. The footage has been released as part of Irish Rail’s level crossing safety campaign after 60 incidents were recorded last year and 31 incidents recorded so far this year.

<https://bit.ly/3gF3tl6>

TRAINING AND EVENTS

Training scheduled at NISO Training Centre, Dublin 12 OR Online

[Manual Handling Basic](#), NISO Certificate (half day); 29 July [BOOK NOW](#)

[DSE-VDU Risk Assessor Course](#) (ONLINE) NISO Certificate (1 day); 7 July; 8 August [BOOK NOW](#)

[Safety Representation](#) (ONLINE), NISO Certificate (2 day); TBC

[Mobile & Home Working Assessor Course](#) (ONLINE) NISO Certificate (1 day) TBC

Regional Courses

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

Nationwide: Commencing 14 September 2021; Online; 18.30-20.30hrs. [BOOK NOW](#)

Athlone (AIT): 20 September 2021; Online; 19:00 – 21:00hrs. [BOOK NOW](#)

Limerick (LIT): 21 September 2021; Online; 19:00 – 21:00hrs. [BOOK NOW](#)

Safety Awards Entry Deadlines

Standard Entry Deadline: 2 July 2021 at 17.00hrs

Late Entry Deadline: 30 July 2021 at 17.00hrs (additional fee applies)

National Events [subject to Government guidance]

[NISO Annual General Meeting](#), Clondalkin, Dublin 22; 22 July 2021

[57th Annual NISO Conference](#), Killarney, Co. Kerry; 4 November 2021

[Trade Exhibition of H&S Products and Services](#) Killarney, Co. Kerry; 4 November 2021

[30th NISO/NISG All Ireland Safety Awards Presentation](#), Killarney, Co. Kerry; 4 November 2021

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