

NISO Safety Observer
September 2021; Issue 58

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The Safety Observer



Newsletter of the National Irish Safety Organisation

September 2021 - Issue 58

Welcome to the September 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 30 July 2021 last and the next edition for NISO members is scheduled for November 2021. The last edition of Safety Observer was distributed on 30 June 2021.

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The NISO Observer Newsletter is sent to **NISO Members** and **email subscribers only**. Please forward this newsletter on to any colleagues or friends who may wish to read or subscribe to the mailing list.

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



**HEALTH & SAFETY
TRAINING**

**Annual
NISO Conference
& Trade
Exhibition 2021**



NISO NEWS

NISO Certificate in Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

NISO's flagship 13-week health & safety course, commences autumn 2021.

Further information [HERE...](#)

H&S Training

NISO is continuing to hold both online and classroom-based health & safety training.

Further information [HERE...](#)

Annual NISO Conference & Trade Exhibition

The Annual NISO Conference & Trade Exhibition is scheduled for 4 November 2021 in the Great Southern Killarney, Co. Kerry [Subject to Government guidance].

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

30th Annual Safety Awards

The 30th Annual Occupational Safety Awards Dinner is scheduled for 4 November 2021 in the Great Southern Killarney, Co. Kerry [Subject to Government guidance].

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

The NISO Observer Newsletter is sent to **NISO Members and email subscribers only**. Your colleagues may have to subscribe to the NISO mailing list to receive email communications from National Irish Safety Organisation. Please forward this newsletter on to any colleagues or friends who may want to subscribe.

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COVID-19 NEWS

COVID-19 outbreaks linked to workplaces

More than a third of recent COVID-19 outbreaks occurred in the workplace with increasing numbers of younger workers testing positive. The national lead for testing and tracing for the HSE said that workplace outbreaks accounted for 35.1% of recent cases. During the period from 13 July to 9 August, 114 outbreaks or clusters were recorded, of which 41 were in workplace settings.

<https://bit.ly/2W3ehmv>

Calls for clarity on workplace reopening

An Irish business association has said that greater clarity in the Work Safely Protocol will be essential to avoid problems and confusion with workplace reopening. Matters related to the vaccination status of employees and the right to privacy that protects personal information were some of the issues the association raised.

<https://bit.ly/385dy6N>

2,000 pubs and restaurants checked for compliance

During the two-week period following the reopening of pubs and restaurants on 16 July 2021, just over 2,000 checks for compliance of the latest COVID-19 safety rules have taken place. The Health Service Executive (HSE) carried out 2,212 checks for compliance and the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) conducted 165 checks. The

HSE found just 3% non-compliance rate while the HSA found a 4% non-compliance rate.

<https://bit.ly/3mAn1eO>

Remote working accident liability

Employers have submitted a number of issues to Government on the National Remote Work Strategy. The extent of employers' liability should an accident occur in a remote-work location, whether a home office or co-working hub, was among the issues raised. Legislative change may be needed under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, to ensure that both employers and employees have a clear understanding as to their responsibilities, rights and duties,

<https://bit.ly/3mw2M1T>

IRISH NEWS

Workplace deaths increased by 13% in 2020

The HSA has published its Annual Review of Workplace Injuries, Illnesses and Fatalities 2019–2020 which has revealed that the number of people who died in work-related incidents last year increased by 13% to 53. More than half of those who died last year were self-employed with 18 of those working in agriculture, forestry and fishing, seven in construction, two in wholesale and retail trade and one in accommodation and food service.

<https://bit.ly/3z56wuU>

Farm Safety Action Plan 2021–2024 launched

The Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC), an advisory committee to the Board of the HSA, has published its latest Action Plan for 2021–2024. The Farm Safety Action Plan 2021–2024 aims to reduce the level of fatalities, serious injuries and ill health in the agriculture sector.

<https://bit.ly/3keSlx3>

Defence Forces face legal challenge over working hours

The association representing Defence Forces' officers is taking ten test cases of alleged breaches of the Working Time Directive (WTD) to the High Court, having failed to secure engagement from military management and the Department of Defence on the implementation of this health and safety legislation. The association has mounted a legal challenge under the terms of the EU legislation for the first time, citing many officers are working "60, 70 and 80 hours a week".

<https://bit.ly/37UuGME>

Farm safety inspections almost halved in 2020

There have been only been 79 farm safety inspections and investigations carried out by the HSA in 2021 according to figures from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The number of inspections carried out in 2019 was 1,737 while

897 were completed in 2020. The number of inspections is significantly lower as the HSA's resources have been partly diverted to COVID-19 pandemic control efforts from early 2020.

<https://bit.ly/3AXYjt0>

Psychiatrists report increased levels of burnout and stress

According to the findings of a new medical study, consultant psychiatrists face an increased risk of burnout because of widespread public misunderstanding of the role of mental health services for children and teenagers. The university study revealed that 56% of psychiatrists believed the public perceive the HSE's child and adolescent mental health service as a "catch-all service" which resulted in them often receiving inappropriate referrals resulting in "demoralisation and stress" among staff.

<https://bit.ly/37Vo40i>

Worker found smoking by "large oxygen cylinders"

A nursing home inspection by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) has found that fire safety at the home was "not compliant" with the required standard. An employee of the nursing home was seen smoking next to a number of "large oxygen cylinders" during the visit by the inspector. The unannounced inspection found a number of flaws with fire safety and COVID-19 regulations.

<https://bit.ly/3sNFbe1>

Rise in violent crime against pharmacists

A new study has revealed that, while overall crime against pharmacies fell slightly last year, there was a concerning increase in the levels of violence being encountered by pharmacy staff. Forty per cent of crime victims suffered at least one violent incident last year, up over a third since 2019.

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

Sleep deprivation impacting surgeons

Irish surgeons working "on call" are sleep deprived which is leading to diminished work performance, according to a new study. The study, which focused on the effects of being on-call, found that surgeons were already sleep deprived before their shifts began, and were even more sleep deprived afterwards. Crucially, it established that sleep deprivation impacted surgical performance. Researchers have called for mandatory rest periods, such as those for pilots in the aviation industry.

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

Tiredness and stress causing farm accidents

A new study has found that tiredness and stress are "key causes" of farm accidents. The study by researchers from the University of Aberdeen, who interviewed 15 Irish farmers in the course of the project, found the lapses in situation awareness, related to stress and fatigue, were a main contributory factor in farming accidents.

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

Two thirds of farmers overweight

A recent study of male farmers' diets and weight management showed that 62% of farmers in the study were overweight or obese. Half of farmers in the study considered they were "about the right weight" but based on BMI calculations, they were actually classified as overweight or obese. The study also covered other lifestyle factors and behaviours.

<https://bit.ly/3AS9vHk>

UK NEWS

Boss and driver jailed over faulty brake death

A haulage company owner has been jailed for 15 years and a lorry driver sentenced to six years after two men died when their car was hit by a 30-tonne HGV with faulty brakes. The court was told that the driver had used an app to report on numerous previous occasions that the brakes were faulty in the weeks leading up to the accident and that the investigation following the accident revealed a shocking picture of a company culture with a complete disregard of safety and maintenance.

<https://bit.ly/382mlXg>

Legal action launched over collapse of funfair ride

Two people have launched personal injury claims against the operators of a funfair in Co. Antrim following the collapse of one of its rides. The theme park is being sued for "negligence in and about the maintenance of their machinery". The theme park operators claimed that incident was caused by the misuse of equipment by teenagers, however the two claimants have written to the Health and Safety Executive requesting an immediate investigation to determine the "actual cause" of the incident.

<https://bit.ly/3mr5WEe>

EUROPEAN NEWS

Launch of EU OSH Strategic Framework 2021–2027

The European Commission officially launched its ambitious new Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work, with the goal of keeping workers safe and healthy in a rapidly changing world. Its focus is anticipating and managing change, improving the prevention of workplace accidents and illness and increasing preparedness for potential future health crises.

<https://bit.ly/3D6VxmW>

Fatalities following Germany chemical plant explosion

Five people who were still missing a day after a huge explosion at a German chemical park are unlikely to be found alive, the site operator has said. Two people were already confirmed dead in the incident, which also injured 31 others. The cause

of the blast at the waste incineration site remains unknown.

<https://bit.ly/3zcTII6>

ELA launches campaign to protect seasonal workers

The European Labour Authority (ELA) has launched the “Rights for all seasons” campaign, which runs from June to October 2021, to raise awareness of the need to promote fair and safe working conditions for seasonal workers employed across EU countries, particularly in the agri-food sector.

<https://bit.ly/38avhJW>

Ten dead in Croatia after bus driver fell asleep

A bus swerved off a road and crashed in Croatia killing 10 people and injuring at least 44 others after the driver apparently fell asleep. The bus was travelling from Frankfurt in Germany to Pristina in Kosovo, transporting workers and tourists. Authorities said the bus driver was detained after he apparently lost control of the vehicle after briefly falling asleep.

<https://bit.ly/2W9zAmN>

Calls for fatigue risk management strategy for drivers

The European Transport Workers’ Federation (ETF) is calling on employers to introduce company-wide fatigue risk management strategies to combat driver fatigue following the publication of a report which found that a third of drivers have fallen asleep while driving at least once in the past year. The EU-wide study also found that 60% of truck drivers and 66% of bus and coach drivers regularly feel tired while driving. The report authors warn that driver fatigue could actually be a much greater problem than the research suggests.

<https://bit.ly/3B2sa3k>

US NEWS

Tough vaccination rules for US government workers

US president Joe Biden has announced sweeping new pandemic requirements aimed at boosting vaccination rates for millions of federal workers and contractors. Federal workers will be required to sign forms attesting they have been vaccinated against COVID-19 or else comply with new rules on mandatory masking, weekly testing, distancing and more. The strict new guidelines are aimed at increasing sluggish vaccination rates among the huge number of Americans who draw federal paycheques – and to set an example for private employers around the country.

<https://bit.ly/3go4tum>

WORLD NEWS

Bangladesh factory fire claims 52 lives

Bangladesh police have arrested the owner of a factory where 52 people died in a

fire. Police said that the owner of the food factory and four of his sons were among eight people detained over the fire that broke out and raged for more than a day. A separate inquiry has been launched into the use of child labour at the facility as it emerged that children as young as 11 had been working there.

<https://bit.ly/3sFdKD8>

Fourteen construction workers killed in China

The bodies of fourteen workers who became trapped when a tunnel under construction flooded have been recovered. The rescue effort involved divers, remote-controlled submarines and other high-tech equipment, while workers on the surface rushed to pump out water from the tunnel. While the cause remains unclear, reports said an abnormal noise was heard and bits of material started falling off one side of the two-tube tunnel.

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

FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS

Man dies at Dublin waste management facility

A man in his 20s has died following a workplace accident at a waste treatment facility in Dublin. The HSA and An Garda Síochána are investigating the incident.

<https://bit.ly/2UEZY74>

Teenager dies following quad bike accident

A sixteen-year-old boy has died following a quad bike accident on a farm in Co. Tipperary. An Garda Síochána and emergency services attended the scene and the teenager was taken to hospital in Limerick where he later died. The HSA has been notified and is investigating the incident.

<https://bit.ly/2WjC5SR>

Man killed in workplace accident in Co. Kildare

A man in his 30s has died following a workplace accident at an industrial plant in Co. Kildare. The man was pronounced dead at the scene. An Garda Síochána and the HSA are investigating the incident.

<https://bit.ly/388JFm1>

Man killed in crash at roadworks in Co. Wicklow

A man in his 60s has died following a road traffic collision in Co. Wicklow. The man was carrying out works on the road when he was seriously injured. He was taken to hospital in Dublin where he later died. An Garda Síochána and the HSA have launched separate investigations into the incident.

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

Man dies following workplace accident in Cork

A man in his 40s has died following a workplace accident in Cork. It is understood

that the man suffered crush-type injuries while working with heavy machinery. An Garda Síochána and paramedics attended the scene but the man died before he could be taken to hospital. The HSA is investigating the circumstances of the incident.

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

Man dies in Co. Wexford workplace accident

A man in his 50s has died in a workplace accident in a warehouse in Co. Wexford. The man was crushed beneath plastic sheeting. An Garda Síochána and emergency services attended the scene and the HSA has launched an investigation into the fatality.

<https://bit.ly/2XKB47b>

Longford couple survive slurry incident

A Co. Longford farming couple narrowly escaped a near-fatal incident involving slurry fumes which left both of them unconscious. Fortunately others were present on the farm who found the couple lying unconscious and alerted emergency services. The incident has prompted a warning to farmers to be mindful of such dangers when agitating slurry.

<https://bit.ly/3zxMr0x>

IN THE COURTS

Father awarded €375k for contracting lung disease at work

The family of a man who allegedly contracted lung disease from working in chewing gum production has settled a High Court action against his employer for €375,000. The father of two had been a senior operator and worker in the factory for 15 years before his death in 2013. His wife and children this week settled their action in relation to his death. The claims were all denied in the case. It was allegedly part of the deceased's duties to mix powdered Aspartame, an artificial sweetener with Polyvinyl Alcohol and talc. It was claimed that as a result of the work he inhaled injurious quantities of toxic chemical dust and was subject to sustained dust exposure. The judge was told a full defence was filed in the case where all claims were denied and it was contended the claim was statute barred. A €375,000 was approved by the judge.

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

Cemetery caretaker awarded €95k for back injury

A cemetery caretaker who injured his lower back while attempting to empty a rubbish bin has been awarded more than €95,000 by the High Court. The caretaker sued a county council over two incidents involving his work emptying bins. The council denied the claims. The judge found that the council was negligent in relation to the first accident in 2014 in which the man injured his lower back but that it was not negligent in relation to the second accident in 2015 in which he injured his right

shoulder. The caretaker was awarded him €95,379, including €26,827 for loss of earnings and €9,197 for loss of pension entitlements.

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

Delivery driver awarded €65k after fall in takeaway

A delivery driver who suffered a hip injury when he slipped and fell on the wet floor of a Dublin takeaway restaurant has been awarded €65,000 by the High Court. The injured party had worked part-time for the takeaway for eight years as a delivery driver dropping off orders to customers when the incident happened in 2017. It was claimed there was failure to take any adequate care for his safety and failure to manage or conduct work activities in a safe manner. It was also claimed the driver was obliged and required to work in a dangerous and hazardous work environment and the floor was allowed to be wet and slippery. The judge said that it was clear his injuries from the fall were in the moderate to severe category and, if anything, he had downplayed his injuries.

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

Freight transport firm faces trial over crew member death

A freight transport firm is to face trial over the death of a Filipino seaman who was crushed to death by a falling cargo container in Dublin Port. The deceased, a crew member of a container ship, died after a steel container dropped on him in November 2018. Following an investigation by the HSA charges have been brought against a port service provider and an employee of that firm. The water transport firm and a staff member are accused of putting workers at risk and as a consequence, an able bodied seaman suffered personal injury and died. The case has been adjourned for books of evidence to be completed by the Director of Public Prosecutions who has directed trial on indictment in the circuit court, which has wider sentencing powers.

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

Garda attacked with stiletto awarded €15k

A community garda has been awarded over €15,000 compensation for injuries she suffered when kicked repeatedly by a woman wearing stiletto high heels. The garda suffered injuries to her left knee and thighs when attempting to stop a street fight outside a hotel 11 years ago. She went to a hospital afterwards for treatment, attended her GP on a number of occasions and eventually had to have a surgical procedure to her left knee. The judge said the garda had suffered injuries to her knee during what had been an unsettling incident for her and awarded €11,000 compensation against the Minister for Public Expenditure together with special damages of €4,139.

<https://bit.ly/2Wc14YV>

Company fined €7.5k in HSA prosecution

A company operating a number of pubs has been fined €7,500 in a HSA prosecution

for exposing two staff members to the risk of inhaling asbestos fibres. Dublin Circuit Criminal Court heard that a company director, along with two staff members, had removed a small number of “unstable” ceiling tiles over a common courtyard area being redeveloped by another company due to a fear that they may fall on staff or customers. The company pleaded guilty to failing to conduct work activities in such a way as to ensure in so far as was reasonably practicable the safety, health and welfare of its employees.

<https://bit.ly/2W2lqmP>

STATISTICS

Twenty-one people have been killed in workplace accidents since 1 January 2021 - Correct at 24 August 2021. Source: www.hsa.ie

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

PUBLICATIONS

Get moving at work

New info sheet from EU-OSHA which outlines the current health recommendations for sedentary workers and contains simple tips for employers and workers, such as taking frequent micro breaks, walking during phone calls, stretching breaks in meetings and “dynamic sitting”, with specific advice for drivers.

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

COVID-19 infection and long COVID - guide for managers

This guide from EU-OSHA sets out the steps that managers should take to give their workers the best chance of getting back to work and staying in work following a COVID-19 diagnoses. It covers making contact with the employee, arranging a phased return and discussing adjustments to the worker’s duties and schedules to enable them to cope. The guide also outlines the support that is available for managers from occupational health services and human resources.

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

Employers’ Liability, Public Liability and Commercial Property Insurance Report 1

The Central Bank has published the first National Claims Information Database (NCID) Employers’ Liability (EL), Public Liability (PL) and Commercial Property Insurance Report in an effort to improve transparency in the insurance claims environment.

<https://bit.ly/3zd2WPa>

Digitalisation and its impact on musculoskeletal disorders

A new discussion paper from EU-OSHA looks at the effects of digitalisation and new forms of work in the context of work-related MSDs, including exposure to

biomechanic stressors and psychosocial risks.

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

GUIDANCE

Top tips for farmyard safety

According to the HSA, falls and collapses accounted for 14% of farm fatalities over a 10-year period. This article outlines some useful safety guidance to help eliminate the risk of needless slips, trips and falls on the farm that can often lead to tragedy.

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

Golden rules for handling cattle on farms

The HSA has compiled a list of “Golden Rules in Handling Cattle” under the headings resources and facilities, handling of animals and management.

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

Are you storing bales correctly?

Incorrect storage of bales can not only cause harm to people working near them and harm to the environment, but can also be in breach of Cross Compliance Regulations. This article provides useful advice on storing bales correctly and safely.

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

RESOURCES

HSA COVID-19 Templates, Checklists and Posters

The HSA has added new checklists to its suite of COVID-19 resources, which includes two employer checklists (Returning to the Office and Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RADTs)) and one employee checklist (Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RADTs)).

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

Guidance for Working Remotely

New webpage from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, “Guidance for Working Remotely”, featuring information on Employer Checklists, Health and Safety, Employment conditions, Data Protection and more.

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

Remote Working Checklist for Employers

This checklist has been prepared by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to provide employers with a quick way to navigate the adoption of remote working arrangements. Checklist categories include Employment Conditions and Internal Policies, The Organisation of Working Time, Health and Safety, Mental Health, Equality Issues and more. English and Irish language versions available.

<https://bit.ly/3zg6z6T>

Advice to decrease physical inactivity at work

The OSH WIKI page from EU-OSHA, “Recommendations and interventions to decrease physical inactivity at work”, describes some of the health risks associated with long periods of uninterrupted sitting at work and outlines some of the prevention recommendations and interventions.

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

SAFETY COMMENTARY/OPINION

Farm accident survivor: “I certainly thought my number was up”

A Co. Cork farmer recalls his remarkable survival story after an accident on his farm almost two years ago, which saw him slipping on a wet day and getting caught in a Power Take Off (PTO), which caused serious physical damage to his chest and stomach, with broken limbs and heavy bleeding and blood loss. The Emergency Medicine and Retrieval Specialist who attended the scene also explains the timeline of events following the accident.

<https://bit.ly/3Bfqt2J>

The inside story of a workplace COVID cluster

A detailed review and a cautionary tale of one restaurant’s experience of a COVID-19 cluster in December 2020.

<https://bit.ly/37PVptF>

SAFETY IN VIDEOS

Workplace ventilation bill launched

People Before Profit’s Paul Murphy speaks to reporters about launching a bill making it a legal requirement for workplaces to ensure they are well ventilated, which would apply to schools, colleges and bars.

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

MCIB REPORTS

Report into a fatal incident involving a vessel off Hook Head, Co. Wexford, by the Marine Casualty Investigation Board.

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

TRAINING AND EVENTS

Training scheduled at NISO Training Centre, Dublin 12 OR Online

[DSE-VDU Risk Assessor Course](#) (ONLINE) NISO Certificate (1 day); 7 September; 5 October 2021 [BOOK NOW](#)

[Manual Handling Basic](#), NISO Certificate (half day); 27 September [BOOK NOW](#)

[Safety Representation](#) (ONLINE), NISO Certificate (2 day); 12-13 October 2021 [BOOK NOW](#)

[Mobile & Home Working Assessor Course](#) (ONLINE) NISO Certificate (1 day); 19 October [BOOK NOW](#)

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](#)

National Events [subject to Government guidance]

[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

