

NISO Safety Observer
March 2022; Issue 62

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Newsletter of the National Irish Safety Organisation

March 2022 - Issue 62

Welcome to the March 2022 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 28 January 2022 last and the next edition for NISO members is scheduled for May 2022. The last edition of Safety Observer was distributed on 16 December 2021.

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NISO NEWS

31st Annual Occupational Safety Awards

Visit safetyawards.ie for entry deadlines, entry forms and guides, and the most up-to-date awards information on the All Ireland Safety Awards 2022.

NISO/NISG All Ireland Safety Quiz

The NISO/NISG All Ireland Occupational Safety Quiz is back for 2022! Check out the upcoming date for the quiz heats in your region. Find out more [HERE...](#)

Regional AGMs

Fully paid NISO members are invited to attend NISO's regional AGMs. Find out the upcoming AGM date and venue in your region [HERE...](#)

CPD Certificate in Workplace Safety Management Part 1

The first course in the recently launched NISO/Technological University Dublin CPD Certificates/Diploma in Safety Management in Work programme commences in March 2022 - 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

Transitional Protocol launched by government

The Government has launched the “Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19” which is a revision of the Work Safely Protocol. This new document places more emphasis on guidance and best practice to support the safe return of physical attendance in the workplace.

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

Returning to the office after COVID-19 absence

A senior psychologist with the HSA recently joined the Claire Byrne show on RTE Radio 1 to discuss retuning to the office after almost two years of working from home and the anxiety that some workers and employers may be experiencing. This interview and article looks at potential stressors when returning to the office and also offers advice.

<https://bit.ly/3vbL3Bd>

Prison officers’ work stress increased during pandemic

A survey by the Irish Prison Service has found that stress levels among prison officers jumped during the pandemic. The survey found that 25% of respondents reported “high stress levels” at work prior to the pandemic which increased to 59% during the pandemic.

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

Unvaccinated paramedics removed from frontline

Paramedics who have not been vaccinated against COVID-19 are to be removed from frontline duties involving direct contact with patients. The policy is being adopted after health service management conducted a risk assessment which concluded that paramedics are “category A healthcare workers” and as such “vaccination requirements apply”.

<https://bit.ly/3uBm1Lv>

Calls for better quality masks for workers

An Irish trade union has written to all major retail employers and the Minister for Health calling for the provision of free antigen tests and high quality masks for workers in retail and healthcare. The union has said that changes to government guidelines around close contacts and isolation periods have put more workers at risk of contracting the virus.

<https://bit.ly/3oDEi7g>

Once-off mass testing to control workplace outbreaks

New guidance from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) has revealed that once-off mass testing of all employees may be needed to determine the size and scope of workplace outbreaks of COVID-19. There would also need to be ongoing and additional measures to contain an outbreak and testing of close contacts where appropriate, according to the guidance. An outbreak is declared over when no further cases of new infection are identified for a period of 28 days.

<https://bit.ly/3oHwS2O>

IRISH NEWS

NISO/TU Dublin Launch CPD Certificates/Diploma Programme

NISO, in conjunction with our strategic partner, Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin), has launched a series of CPD Certificate courses covering 12 subjects which can also form part of a CPD Diploma in Safety Management at Work. The courses are certified by TU Dublin, one of Ireland’s largest universities. This programme offers a particularly flexible curriculum whereby students can design their own route to qualification at Level 7.

<https://bit.ly/3t7uGmq>

Construction Action Plan for 2022–2024 launched

The Construction Safety Partnership, an advisory committee to the Board of the HSA, has published its latest Action Plan for 2022–2024. The aim of the new Construction Safety Action Plan is to reduce the level of fatalities, serious injuries and ill health in the construction sector and has identified five critical areas for attention. Over the last ten years, from 2012–2021, there were 95 fatalities in the construction sector.

<https://bit.ly/35k759S>

New HSA Strategy Statement and Programme of Work

The Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, Damien English TD, has launched the HSA's new Strategy Statement for 2022–2024 and the Programme of Work 2022. The Strategy statement 2022–2024 sets out continued goals to promote, regulate and influence the areas across its wide and varied mandate. The Programme of Work 2022 details the key priorities for 2022 including focusing on high-risk sectors and addressing occupational health hazards.

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

Work-related deaths fall to 30-year low

Annual statistics from the HSA have shown that 38 people died in work-related fatalities in 2021 compared with 54 fatalities in 2020, a 30% drop. The number represented the lowest figure recorded since the HSA was established more than 30 years ago.

<https://bit.ly/368aY2f>

HSA conduct farm safety campaign

The HSA conducted an intensive, two-week farm safety inspection campaign in the last week of January 2022 which focussed on the safe management of livestock during calving season where the risk of injury to farmers increases significantly. Over the last 10 years, 196 people have lost their lives in farming related work activity in Ireland. Of these fatalities, 38 involved livestock, with three fatalities due to working with cattle happening in 2021 alone.

<https://bit.ly/34rvQkx>

HSA conduct docks and ports inspection campaign

The HSA launched a two-week Docks and Ports inspection and awareness campaign during February 2022. The campaign focussed on the management of transport operations and vehicle risks particular to docks and ports. In the ten-year period 2012–2021 there were 16 fatalities at docks and ports in Ireland.

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

362 accidents in meat plants in a year

New figures have revealed that 362 accidents were reported to the HSA in meat processing plants over an almost 12-month period, between 1 December 2020 and 30 November 2021. The most common cause of incidents involved lifting or carrying items.

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

Reports outlines meat plants safety breaches

Inspection reports from the HSA outline the safety breaches found during inspections of meat plants. Breaches include COVID-19 curtains being rolled up and removed, animals escaping from a holding area, exposure to chemical vapours, fumes or mists

and exposure to noise amongst others.

<https://bit.ly/3JMs3gO>

New quad safety legislation

This article takes a look at the new safety legislation regarding all terrain vehicles (ATVs) or quads that will soon be coming into force and breaks down what this means for quad users. There were 12 deaths associated with the use of quads between 2008 and 2017.

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

Thousands of assaults on nurses and doctors reported

Figures provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE) from their national incident management scheme show that staff working in acute hospitals and community healthcare organisations reported assaults 34,602 times between 2015 and 2021. Frontline staff working in the Ireland East Hospital Group - which consists of 11 hospitals - have made 3,500 assault reports in the last seven years. Assaults include physical, verbal or sexual attacks on staff, while incidents are categorised into harmful, not harmful, near misses, dangerous occurrences or complaints.

<https://bit.ly/3Jm6pzO>

New Farm Safety Training Scheme launched

The Government has announced the launch of a new Agri-Environment Training Scheme (AETS) for farmers. The initiative is a voluntary training scheme open to all farmers to improve their knowledge of agri-environment initiatives and farm safety. A proposed budget of €7m is available for the scheme.

<https://bit.ly/34DOTbg>

Increased demand for occupational health support

Two of Ireland's leading occupational health experts have outlined the challenges that could face employers as they navigate a safe return to work, saying "The demand for occupational health support has never been greater". They also noted that business owners and managers are under increased pressure to ensure they are compliant and meet the health and safety obligations to their employees.

<https://bit.ly/3p34J6D>

PIAB welcomes legislation enhancing and extending services

The Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB) has welcomed a Cabinet decision to approve the development of new legislation to significantly enhance and extend its services. The new measures are part of the Government's reform programme to reduce costs associated with personal injury claims and thereby reduce insurance costs.

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

UK NEWS

Gas network fined £5m following explosion

A gas networks company has been fined £5m for safety breaches after a fire and gas explosion at a residential premises resulted in the death of the homeowner. The company pleaded guilty of breaches of the Health & Safety at Work Act. An investigation found that the source of the gas escape was from a fractured six inch cast iron main running under the carriageway to the front of the property.

<https://bit.ly/34TQSZa>

BBC pays out for 11 asbestos cancer deaths

The BBC has paid £1.64m in damages over the deaths of 11 former staff who died from cancer after working in corporation buildings riddled with asbestos. It has made the payouts to families of make-up artists, engineers, riggers, set builders, studio managers and television producers. All 11 died of mesothelioma, a rare cancer caused by prolonged exposure to asbestos.

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

Farmer sentenced after walker killed by cattle

A farmer in the UK has been sentenced for safety breaches after an 83-year-old man was fatally attacked by cattle. The deceased was following a public right of way with his wife when they were attacked. The farmer pleaded guilty to breaching health and safety legislation and received a prison sentence of 12 weeks, suspended for 12 months, and was fined a total of £878 and ordered to pay costs of £7820.30.

<https://bit.ly/3hb1EwI>

School prosecuted after mountain rescue team called

A group of schoolchildren had to be rescued by a mountain rescue team after becoming stranded in winter conditions. Their school has been sentenced for its failures to adequately manage the risks posed by the trip. Despite reviewing the local weather report, which stressed the dangers to those ascending above the snow line, the school decided the trip should still go ahead as planned. Many of the children did not have suitable equipment for the winter conditions. The adults leading the trip had no formal qualifications in mountain leadership or any experience or mountain environments in winter conditions. The school pleaded guilty to breaching Health and Safety legislation and was fined £30,000 and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £181 and costs of £4,574.90.

<https://bit.ly/3li4LPA>

Company fined for spread of asbestos

The Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) has successfully led a prosecution against a recycling and skip hire company resulting in fines totalling £10,500. The company pleaded guilty to six health and safety offences which related to the removal of asbestos containing materials at a former factory site.

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

HSE UK publishes its 2021 statistics

The Health and Safety Executive UK has published its “Health and Safety at work - Summary statistics for Great Britain 2021”. The report covers topics including workplace injury; work-related ill health; work-related stress, depression or anxiety; work-related MSDs and more.

<https://bit.ly/3Hfec0O>

PPE at Work legislation update

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work (Amendment) Regulations 2022 (‘the PPER 2022’) were laid before the UK Parliament on 10 January 2022. Employers responsibilities to workers regarding the provision of PPE are changing in the UK in April 2022.

<https://bit.ly/3M5ni3U>

Clarkson’s Farm condemned for unsafe photo

Jeremy Clarkson’s agricultural series, Clarkson’s Farm, has been condemned by farming safety groups over a photo promoting the second series. The image showed his co-star lying in the weight box of a tractor, which safety groups described as “disappointing” in light of the number of deaths through fatal injury that occur in farming.

<https://bit.ly/3rHXh2r>

EUROPEAN NEWS

Three workers killed by falling crane

Three workers have died in Turin, Italy, after a crane they were mounting toppled over and into a street, injuring passers-by. The large blue crane toppled across a road between two six-storey buildings.

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

Better H&S for delivery drivers in EU proposals

A proposal from the European Commission could help ensure that so-called “gig economy” delivery drivers receive the same guarantees as employees on health and safety, sick pay and working hours, with knock-on benefits for road safety. The Commission is seeking for labour regulations in the future to class workers for online digital platforms as employees and not as self-employed.

<https://bit.ly/3p5Hbho>

WORLD NEWS

One dead, 70 workers missing after landslide

A landslide at a jade mine in northern Myanmar has killed at least one person, injured 25 and left dozens missing. Scores die each year working the country’s

lucrative but poorly regulated jade trade which uses low-paid migrant workers. Around 200 rescuers were working to recover bodies following the disaster.

<https://bit.ly/3BA7GR7>

Changes need to protect teleworkers' health

New analysis from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) sets out recommendations for safe and productive teleworking. The ILO and WHO have called for measures to be put in place to protect workers' health while teleworking. A recently published technical brief on healthy and safe teleworking published by the two UN agencies outlines the health benefits and risks of teleworking and the changes needed to accommodate the shift towards different forms of remote work arrangements.

<https://bit.ly/3LKL0ae>

FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS

Woman dies in farm accident in Co. Laois

A woman in her 60s has died in a suspected farm accident in Co. Laois. It is understood that the woman was struck by a telepost on the farm. Emergency services rushed to the farm but the woman died of her injuries at the scene. The HSA and An Garda Síochána are investigating the incident.

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

Man dies after being struck by falling tree

A council worker in his late 50s has been killed by a falling tree while out working to clear debris caused by recent storms. It is understood the father of two was working with a colleague clearing trees when the incident took place. The HSA has launched an investigation into the incident.

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

Construction worker dies in Co. Wexford accident

A construction worker has died on a construction site in Co. Wexford. Emergency services were called to the scene and CPR was performed on the man but he was pronounced dead at the scene. The man was involved in moving and dismantling shutters when he was crushed by a large metal shutter used to hold concrete. The HSA has launched an investigation into the accident.

<https://bit.ly/3h7abB1>

Brothers injured in workplace accident

Two brothers have been seriously injured in a workplace accident on the site of a harbour redevelopment project in Donegal. It is understood both men fell from a height. The HSA and An Garda Síochána have launched investigations into the incident.

<https://bit.ly/3p5A9sN>

IN THE COURTS

Meat factory fined €400k following worker fatality

A Co. Kildare meat factory has been fined €400,000 following guilty pleas to breaches of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. The case arose following an incident in which an employee was fatally injured when he was struck and crushed by a mobile forklift while he was walking across an open yard at his workplace. A HSA investigation concluded that all the appropriate safety measures were not in place at the time of the incident.

<https://bit.ly/3JN4JiG>

Family settles action against airport

The family of a worker who fell from a loading bay at an Irish airport and later died have settled their action. The settlement was against an airline which had previously been fined €250,000 for a health and safety breach in relation to the death of the 55-year-old father of two. Liability was conceded by the defendants. The full charge specified there was a failure to ensure adequate measures were in place to protect people from the risk of a fall from a height and that there was a failure to implement its written procedures dealing with driver access to loading bays.

<https://bit.ly/3v8VLZ2>

Co. Louth company fined €225k following accident

An Irish cement supplier in Co. Louth has been fined €225,000 after pleading guilty to breaches of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. The case arose following an incident in which an employee was seriously injured when the articulated tractor and trailer unit he was operating toppled over whilst he was tipping a load in a fuel storage yard. An investigation by the HSA found that all appropriate safety measures were not in place at the time of the incident.

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

County Council fined €90k for H&S breaches

A County Council has been fined €90,000 after pleading guilty to breaches of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. The case arose following a HSA investigation into an incident in which an employee sustained a serious injury. The injured party was an observer in the work crew carrying out the work at the time of the injury.

<https://bit.ly/3v7IZet>

Foreman fined for asbestos exposure

A site foreman has been fined €12,500 for failing to notify two staff members of the presence of asbestos while carrying out work on a building site in Dublin City centre. The foreman pleaded guilty to placing at risk the safety, health or welfare of persons at the work site. A HSA inspector gave evidence that a subcontracting team found an

asbestos warning under a roof tile. The team had already removed approximately 80% of the roof tiles at this stage. The construction company had already been fined €100,000 for failing to carry out an asbestos risk assessment in this part of the building works.

<https://bit.ly/3p6vU0c>

Irish chef suing London restaurant for RSI

An Irish pastry chef has sued Heston Blumenthal's Fat Duck restaurant £200,000 over repetitive strain injury claims. The chef said she was forced to make 550 whisky wine gums a day at the restaurant and can no longer properly cook, drive or lift heavy objects. The restaurant has denied liability. After a brief hearing the case was adjourned by the judge who directed a case management conference for May 2022 before a trial of the compensation claim.

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

Factory worker's unfair dismissal claim dismissed

A factory worker's claim for unfair dismissal has been dismissed by the Workplace Relations Commission. The worker was dismissed after he put the health of his colleagues in danger when he spat in his workplace during the early days of COVID-19. The man had been seen spitting on the ground as managers tried to ensure that workers remained socially distanced at the firm's turnstile clock-in clock-out gates. It was found that his employer acted in a reasonable manner by dismissing him "in a situation where he put the health of others in the workplace in danger".

<https://bit.ly/36mg8HU>

Engineer settles High Court action over stag attack

An engineer who was attacked and injured by a stag during the course of his work for an electricity company has settled his High Court action. The employee was going to check a mast when a stag attacked him on a forestry path in Co. Tipperary. It was claimed that Mr Corcoran had been permitted to work alone in a mountain area during the deer mating season when it ought to reasonably have been known that it was dangerous and unsafe to do so. It was further claimed there was a failure to have in place any warning device, panic alarm, "man down" system or automatic distress message system for persons working alone in isolated areas. The terms of the settlement are confidential.

<https://bit.ly/3IbEEd3>

Security guard sues after exposure to ammonia fumes

A security guard who claims he was exposed to ammonia fumes at a meat processing plant has sued in the High Court. The man, who has not worked since the alleged incident seven years ago, said he became overwhelmed and dizzy as he took readings in the factory compressor room. The claims are denied by the defendants. They also claimed there was contributory negligence as the man returned to the room after reporting the incident. It is claimed there was an alleged

failure to provide a safe place of work and an alleged failure to provide adequate training or instruction. The case continues.

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

HSE admits to H&S breaches in hospital

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has admitted health and safety breaches which resulted in injuries being suffered by three nurses who were assaulted at an acute psychiatric unit in Co. Meath six years ago. The failures included a lack of an emergency response team to respond to the activation by employees of their personal alarms and the lack of a security guard or magnetic doors operated by a swipe card system. The case has been adjourned to April 2022. It is believed the case is the first time the HSE has been prosecuted under the Health Safety and Welfare at Work Act as a result of a patient attack on nursing staff.

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

STATISTICS

Two people have been killed in workplace accidents since 1 January 2022 - Correct at 10 February 2022. Source: www.hsa.ie

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

PUBLICATIONS

Retailers Duties when Selling Chemical Products

New publication from the HSA on Retailers duties when selling chemical products, online and in-store.

<https://bit.ly/3Hc4Tic>

Wood working - information sheet

New information sheet from the HSA. Hardwood or softwood dusts generated during work processes can be hazardous to your health. Certain machines, e.g. sanding machines, can generate particularly high levels of dust.

<https://bit.ly/3LX1qYr>

Crystalline Silica Dust - Information Sheet

Information sheet from the HSA - Crystalline silica is widely found in nature. Where concrete, stone or sand based materials are used, there is a potential for exposure to crystalline silica dust.

<https://bit.ly/3t4kfQv>

Safe Working with Diesel Engine Exhaust - Information Sheet

Information sheet from the HSA. Diesel engines power many machines and vehicles including trucks, buses, private vehicles, farm machinery and construction equipment. Such vehicles and equipment are also potential sources of exposure to

diesel exhaust fumes in the workplace. This information sheet will help you understand the composition of the exhaust, its health effects, and ways to assess and prevent exposure.

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

GUIDANCE

Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road 2021

This guide from the HSA is for businesses that are involved in the consignment, loading, unloading and carriage of dangerous goods by road.

<https://bit.ly/3sZI3Fi>

Guidance on Technical Land-use Planning Advice

This guidance document from the HSA is designed to assist planning authorities and COMAH establishment operators.

<https://bit.ly/3H6ZVTO>

SAFETY COMMENTARY/OPINION

How to spot a workplace bully

This article takes a look at the typical workplace bully, their tactics and the type of organisational structure that enables bullying to take place.

<https://bit.ly/3lqqq1h>

MCIB REPORTS

Report of an investigation into the sinking of a vessel off the Co. Wexford coast by the Marine Casualty Investigation Board.

<https://bit.ly/3tkNMG7>

TRAINING AND EVENTS

NISO/Technological University Dublin CPD Certificates/Diploma in Safety Management at Work
CPD Certificate: Workplace Safety Manager Part 1 (5 day); 7–9 & 14–15 March 2022 [BOOK NOW](#)

Training scheduled at NISO Training Centre, Dublin 12 OR Online

[Manual Handling Basic](#) NISO Certificate (half day); 28 February; 28 March; [BOOK NOW](#)

[DSE-VDU Risk Assessor Course](#) (ONLINE); NISO Certificate (1 day); 1 March; 11 April [BOOK NOW](#)

[Mobile & Home Working Assessor Course](#) (ONLINE); NISO Certificate (1 day); 4 April 2022 [BOOK NOW](#)

[Safety Representation](#) (ONLINE); NISO Certificate (2 day); 27–28 April 2022; [BOOK NOW](#)

Webinar: Information on CPD Certificates/Diploma in Safety Management at Work (Technological University Dublin Certified)

Wednesday, 2 March 2022; 11:00hrs–11.20hrs; Online; [REGISTER HERE](#)

All Ireland Safety Quiz Regional Heats

View the upcoming dates and venues [HERE](#)

NISO Regional AGMs

View the upcoming AGM dates and venues [HERE](#)

National Events

NISO National AGM; Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore Co. Offaly; 14 May 2022

NISO/NISG All Ireland Safety Quiz Finals; Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, Co. Offaly; 14 May 2022

NISO Annual Safety Conference; The Galmont Hotel & Spa, Galway; 11 November 2022

NISO/NISO Safety Awards Ceremony; The Galmont Hotel & Spa, Galway; 11 November 2022

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