

NISO Safety Observer  
September 2023; Issue 74

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Newsletter of the National Irish Safety Organisation

September 2023 - Issue 74

Welcome to the September 2023 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 1 August 2023 last and the next edition for NISO members is scheduled for mid November 2023. The last edition of Safety Observer was distributed on 30 June 2023.

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## **NISO NEWS**

### **NISO Annual Health & Safety Conference**

The NISO Annual Conference is taking place on 13 October 2023 in the Great Southern, Killarney, Co. Kerry. Visit [niso.ie](https://niso.ie) for updates.

### **NISO Certificate in Safety, Health & Welfare at Work**

Commencing September 2023  
(Athlone, Castlebar & Dublin/Online)  
Visit [niso.ie/product/nisocert/](https://niso.ie/product/nisocert/)

### **CPD Certificates in Safety Management at Work**

For upcoming CPD Certificate courses and dates visit  
[niso.ie/product/cpd-cert/](https://niso.ie/product/cpd-cert/)

### **Upcoming H&S Seminars**

New Supports Available from the HSA and Temporary Traffic Management at Roadworks: Latest Standards.  
Visit [niso.ie/shop/](https://niso.ie/shop/)

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## IRISH NEWS

### **Union welcomes HSA’s health and social care section**

The Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) has welcomed the establishment of a new Health and Social Care Advisory Committee of the HSA. The union said the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment has confirmed that the committee will be established before the end of year. The INMO said that it has long called for such a committee in light of the often dangerous conditions that nurses and midwives work in.

<https://bit.ly/3DZF1qm>

### **New measures may reduce injury claims and insurance costs**

New legislation has come into effect as part of the Government’s Action Plan for insurance Reform which may reduce claims and the cost of insurance for businesses. The law aims to rebalance the duty of care between occupiers such as businesses, community groups and organisers of events and visitors, recreational users and trespassers. The CEO of an insurance reform campaign group said that if the legislation is implemented meaningfully it has the possibility to change the liability landscape and reduce the number of minor slips, trips and falls going through the courts.

<https://bit.ly/47B08gs>

### **60% increase in farm safety inspections in 2022**

The HSA conducted 1,069 inspections in the agriculture, forestry and fishery

sectors in 2022, an increase of 669 inspections (around 60%) on 2021, according to the HSA's annual report for 2022. Of the inspections carried out last year, the HSA issued 511 written notices to farmers, foresters and fishers, along with 17 improvement notices. According to the HSA report, the construction and farming sectors account for almost three-quarters of all work-related fatalities. Farming recorded 13 fatalities in 2022 making it the sector with the highest number of fatalities.

<https://bit.ly/3KLox97>

### **Two thirds of people back stronger H&S rules**

Almost two thirds of people recently surveyed think the health and safety of employees is the most important responsibility for corporates and one which requires greater rules and regulations. Women are stronger backers of the need for tighter rules and regulations in nearly all areas than men. Support for tighter regulation across all business areas is stronger among those aged 55+ than among younger cohorts.

<http://tinyurl.com/ym55b33k>

### **Cashless ticketing system a “health and safety measure”**

A spokesperson for the National Ploughing Championships has said that the decision to employ a cashless ticketing system for this year's events is “100% a health and safety measure” which was identified as a result of attendance figures in 2022. The organisers stated that “there are huge health and safety measures involved in bringing 100,000 or more people into a field”. The statement followed criticism of the new system by a Rural Independent TD who claimed that the ticketing system is a “decision to push a cashless agenda”.

<https://bit.ly/3PbNu0p>

### **Firefighters face higher risk of dying from cancer**

Firefighters are almost four times as likely as members of the wider population to die from prostate cancer, 3.2 times as likely to die from leukaemia and 2.4 times as likely to be killed by cancer of the oesophagus. The data is the product of a peer-reviewed study which found that the fatality rate is so high because “firefighters are getting these cancers 20 years before other people would normally and so doctors aren't expecting to see them and they are being missed”. Representatives of a trade union have said that regular screening and investment in equipment are among the measures needed to address the far higher than usual cancer death rates among firefighters.

<https://bit.ly/47GhZCP>

### **Farmers urged to ask advisors about H&S issues**

Social pressure from other farmers and advisors “positively” influences attitudes to health and safety on farms, a new study has found. Research carried out as part of the “Teagasc Be Safe” project studying farmer behaviour also highlighted that farm advisors sometimes fear losing the trust of farmers if they discuss issues of farm safety with them. The results of the research revealed that advisors are reluctant to discuss these issues with farmers if they feel the farmer does not regard them as important.

<https://bit.ly/3E34YWe>

### **Attention needs to be paid to the safety of “senior” farmers**

Particular attention needs to be paid to the safety of “senior” farmers, according to the HSA. Age has always played a significant factor in farm accidents with the over-65s age bracket and minors accounting for a large percentage of fatalities in the past. A significant proportion of those killed in farm accidents in 2022 were aged 65 and over.

<https://tinyurl.com/mdw7u55e>

### **Majority of workers have experienced or witnessed discrimination**

According to a new study, the majority of workers in Ireland say they have been the victim of or have witnessed discrimination at work. The study found that 20% of respondents said they have personally experienced discrimination at work while 32% said they have witnessed it. One in five said they have both witnessed and been a victim of discrimination in the workplace. Pay inequality, age and gender discrimination were the leading forms of inequality according to the survey.

<http://tinyurl.com/2zebv466>

## **UK NEWS**

### **Work-related fatality figures published**

One hundred and thirty-five workers were killed in work-related incidents in Great Britain in the last year according to figures published by the Health and Safety Executive. The industries with the highest deaths were construction (45), agriculture, forestry and fishing (21), manufacturing (15) and transportation and storage (15). Agriculture, forestry and fishing had the highest rate of fatal injury

per 100,000 workers of all the main industrial sectors, followed by waste and recycling.

<https://tinyurl.com/592s8ztt>

### **More than five killed every year on farms in Northern Ireland**

An average of more than five people every year died on Northern Ireland's farms in the past decade. New figures from the Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI) show 53 people were killed between January 2013 and December 2022.

<https://tinyurl.com/mvt3caee>

### **Worker dies after being injured at site of new football stadium**

A 26-year-old worker has died during construction work at a new football stadium. Work at the site has been suspended "until further notice" with both police and the Health and Safety Executive in attendance. The building contractors and the football club both released statements following the fatality.

<https://tinyurl.com/4mw5ac9z>

### **Manufacturer fined £1m after worker loses eye**

A Welsh company that manufactures kitchen and toilet paper has been fined £1 million after an employee was seriously injured when he was struck in the face by a crane hook. The accident occurred when the employee was attempting to free a paper reel, which had become stuck on the exit rails of a paper machine, by using an overhead. During the operation, part of the crane contacted the spinning reel causing the crane hook to swing violently striking the man in the face. The company pleaded guilty to a breach of health and safety legislation and was fined £1 million and ordered to pay costs of £13,446.50.

<https://tinyurl.com/457byx5b>

### **Fast food chain apologises as staff alleged they were harassed**

The CEO of the UK branch of a major fast food chain has apologised after more than 100 workers, past and present, alleged they had been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to racism or bullying. The CEO said that the company had "fallen short" in some cases after the corporation spoke to dozens of workers. The findings from the report bore a close resemblance to a similar report in 2019 in which 1,000 women reported that they had been subjected to sexual harassment and abuse while working at the restaurant chain. Both reports found that managers failed to act on some complaints and that

predatory employees were moved to different sites rather than being fired.

<https://tinyurl.com/4jcu97m6á>

### **People at increased risk of burnout**

According to research by a major union in the UK, people are facing more intense working days than ever with less time for their private lives and an increased risk of burnout. More than half of workers polled (55%) reported that work had become more intense and demanding. The union's work intensification study said the shift was in part due to technology as well as a decline in workers' autonomy over how they spend their time. Several common factors have combined to create a "perfect storm" for work intensity including the use of technology and surveillance to enforce unsustainable productivity targets and staff shortages caused by low pay and excessive workloads.

<https://tinyurl.com/3mkf3tk8>

### **Restaurant fined £800k after employee is stuck in freezer**

A sandwich chain in the UK has been fined £800,000 after one of its employees was left fearing for her life while stuck in one of its freezers. The employee became trapped in the walk-in commercial freezer, which typically has its temperature set at -18c, for two and a half hours. The employee had to be treated for suspected hypothermia after she was found "in a state of distress" by a colleague. After she was rescued, an investigation found there was no suitable risk assessment for employees working in temperature-controlled environments. The sandwich chain pleaded guilty to an offence contrary to the UK's Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 4th the Magistrates Court.

<https://tinyurl.com/3dc96yxh>

### **Oil and gas firm fined £535k following injury**

An oil and gas firm has been fined £535k after a worker sustained life changing injuries following the uncontrolled collapse of a crane. An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks of the work and had failed to maintain the crane braking systems and equipment in a safe condition before work commenced. The firm pleaded guilty to breaching sections of health and safety legislation.

<https://tinyurl.com/4f3kxdes>

## **EUROPEAN NEWS**

### **Five railway workers killed by train in Italy**

A speeding work train slammed into a group of workers doing overnight track maintenance in northern Italy killing five of the workers. A local mayor said there were indications that the crew of the train, which is believed to have been travelling at 100 kilometres per hour, was unaware there were workers on the tracks. Two workers who avoided being hit were treated for shock at a hospital.

<http://tinyurl.com/bdhwpewj>

### **Swiss billionaire jailed over asbestos-related deaths**

A Swiss billionaire has been sentenced to 12 years in jail on aggravated manslaughter charges connected to the deaths of hundreds of people due to asbestos exposure in what has been hailed as the most significant trial in Italy over workplace deaths. The industrialist and former main shareholder of a cement production company was sentenced after being found guilty of causing the death of 392 people in Casale Monferrato. Of the victims, 60 were factory workers while the rest were living in the town or surrounding area. In addition to the jail sentence, the judges ordered him to pay €50m in provisional damages to Casale Monferrato's local authority as well as €30m to the Italian state and €500m to a local association for relatives of victims of asbestos.

<https://tinyurl.com/5n6pzrrm>

### **EU to drop ban of hazardous chemicals**

The European Commission is poised to break a promise to outlaw all but the most essential of Europe's hazardous chemicals, leaked documents have shown. It was expected that between 7,000 and 12,000 hazardous substances would be prohibited from use in all saleable products in an update to the EU's Reach regulation. The EU's executive is now on the brink of a climbdown under heavy pressure from Europe's chemical industry and right-wing political parties. The industry-led backlash is causing internal disquiet over the threat to public health and policymaking.

<https://tinyurl.com/4sybudjb>

### **Survey reveals 3 out 4 pilots have dozed while flying**

A new survey has revealed that some European pilots are suffering from exhaustion and taking "microsleeps" while operating aircraft to cope. Around 75% of respondents said they had taken a "microsleep" in recent weeks. Respondents also said that airlines didn't manage fatigue risk well and it was



difficult to file fatigue reports. The report highlights concerns about pilots' fatigue levels and says that airlines should be doing more to manage this.

<https://tinyurl.com/f574zid6>

## **US NEWS**

### **The state of mental health at work isn't good - new studies show**

New studies show that mental health and wellbeing at work continue to decline in 2023. Anxiety is the highest reported mental health disorder in the U.S. with 42.5 million Americans suffering from this illness. According to the third annual Wellness Barometer Survey on the state of workforce wellbeing, financial distress has skyrocketed amid economic uncertainty, affecting employee wellbeing and organisational success.

<https://tinyurl.com/2c3rv5ms>

### **At least 6 injured after crane collapse in NYC**

At least six people were hurt when a construction crane caught fire in New York City and its arm collapsed on to a street below. The arm struck the top floor of an adjacent skyscraper as it fell sending a shower of debris to the ground. Authorities said the injured included four civilians and two firefighters. None of the injuries are reported to be life threatening.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p9yrnn5>

### **OSHA's authority to set workplace safety standards affirmed**

A federal appellate court has affirmed the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) constitutional authority to set workplace safety standards. In a decision affirming a district court ruling, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati ruled that the Occupational Safety and Health Act passes constitutional muster and that OSHA is within its designated authority to regulate safety in the workplace.

<https://tinyurl.com/yck83mxh>

## **WORLD NEWS**

### **Thailand fireworks warehouse blast kills at least ten**

A large explosion at a fireworks warehouse in southern Thailand has killed at least 10 people and wounded many more, officials have said. At least 118 people were injured and residents of more than 200 households were affected.

<https://tinyurl.com/459ara2y>

### **16 killed after crane collapses in India**

A huge crane has collapsed at a highway construction site in western India killing at least 16 workers. Among those who were injured, at least three were rushed to hospital. It has been reported that the crane was being used to install precast box girders while building a highway and high-speed rail bridges.

<https://tinyurl.com/9hncnbtk>

## **FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS**

### **Five-year-old boy dies following quad bike accident**

A five-year-old boy has died in a farm accident in Co. Kerry. An Garda Síochána and emergency services attended the scene but the child sadly died from his injuries.

<https://tinyurl.com/5ywtzy9r>

### **Man killed after falling from truck in Carlow**

A man in his 20s has died after falling from a truck while working in Carlow. An Garda Síochána are investigating the incident and the HSA has been notified.

<https://tinyurl.com/mtc72mrv>

### **Man killed in workplace accident in Cork**

A man in his 50s has died following a farm accident in Co. Cork. Emergency services attended the farm shortly after the incident and the man was pronounced dead at the scene. A spokesperson for the HSA confirmed that an investigation into the fatal incident has been launched.

<http://tinyurl.com/veskrnxm>

## **IN THE COURTS**

### **Two firms sent to trial over workplace fatality**

Two firms have been sent forward for trial over the death of a father of three during a workplace incident at a quarry and recycling facility in Dublin. The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) directed trial on indictment meaning the case will be heard in a higher court with more severe penalties. A HSA inspector served books of evidence of company representatives and the judge granted a return for trial order for the companies, which have yet to enter to

indicate a plea.

<https://tinyurl.com/bddtm8ub>

### **Family of deceased farmer settles action for €400k**

The family of a farmer who died washing vegetables on his Co. Kilkenny farm seven years ago settled a court action over his death for €400,000. The High Court heard that the 61-year-old man died after a hose carrying high-pressure water whipped around and struck him. A number of other nervous shock actions were settled by the deceased farmer's widow and her three sons as a result of the incident.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p9b4pmb>

### **Company fined €75k after worker loses hand**

A concrete company has been fined €75,000 for breaches of health and safety regulations after an employee's hand was amputated while he was clearing cement from an auger. The company pleaded guilty to a breach of health and safety legislation in that it failed to manage and conduct work activities in such a way to ensure employee safety.

<https://tinyurl.com/3chbd82n>

### **Two farmers fined for H&S offences over farm death**

A 36-year-old full-time farmer died when a wall collapsed in on him while he was helping out a friend and contractor in excavating out a new slatted tank for the storage of slurry on a farm in Co. Clare. The judge imposed a farm of €30,000 on a dairy farmer and contractor after he pleaded guilty to two health and safety breaches connected to the fatality. A fine of €3,000 was imposed on the owner of the farm for a single health and safety offence. The judge also ordered that the HSA's expenses of €1,968 and DPP expense of €1,500 be paid.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p95dvfh>

### **CEO launches probe into treatment of rape survivor**

The CEO of a large fast food chain has launched an investigation into claims that a rape survivor was subjected to "rape taunts" at work. The CEO expressed his shock at hearing the allegations related to an outlet of the restaurant chain. The strong response to the allegations comes as the chain faces a raft of workplace harassment claims in the UK.

<https://tinyurl.com/bdcmr6h8>

## **STATISTICS**

Twenty people have been killed in workplace accidents since 1 January 2023 - Correct at 22 August 2023. Source: [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)  
<http://bit.ly/34bJFyp>

## **SAFETY ALERTS**

### **Electrical hazard protective footwear - potential issue**

The Health and Safety Executive UK has been made aware of a potential issue regarding the testing of boots to an American Standard; ASTM F2412-18Q. The ASTM Standard contains a single test procedure representative of a very restricted working environment. In many cases, these limitations have not been made clear on the packaging or the product instructions. This may result in the wearer believing the product has been tested to protect them in circumstances where it doesn't. Footwear tested to this Standard is not suitable for live electrical working. These may be suitable for use in environments where there is potential for accidental exposure to alternating current (AC) voltages not exceeding 600V AC.

<https://tinyurl.com/d9937y3c>

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **THOR ROI 2023 Annual Report**

The Health and Occupation Report (THOR) Republic of Ireland (ROI) is a report by physicians of work related ill health in Ireland. The report, which is financed by the HSA, gives important information on the type of work-related illnesses, causative agents and the sectors in which it occurs, giving the HSA the ability to identify trends over a period and the possibility to identify new and emerging work-related illnesses.

<http://tinyurl.com/39dzxx66>

### **Exploring the role of supply chains in advancing OSH**

As part of its research programme to improve compliance with occupational safety and health (OSH) regulations, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has explored the potential of supply chains - the relationships between buyers and sellers - to promote OSH. EU-OSHA's

research programme seeks to inspire and assist organisations in complying with OSH regulations. An overarching report entitled “Improving OSH through supply chains: market-based initiatives in the agri-food and construction industries” is available from the EU-OSHA website.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p9ace77>

## **RESOURCES**

### **New indicator on “Serious non-fatal accidents”**

New indicators and functionalities have been added to the EU-OSHA’s OSH Barometer data visualisation tool providing valuable perspectives on occupational safety and health in Europe. Among the new additions is the “Serious non-fatal accidents” indicator, based on Eurostat data, showing those accidents that cause more than six months of sick leave or permanent disability. Additionally the new tool now incorporates bar chart diagrams to display physical risks like noise, temperature and exposure to hazardous substances, enhancing our understanding of potential hazards in the workplace.

<https://tinyurl.com/492yrmmp>

## **SAFETY COMMENTARY/OPINION**

### **Teenager recalls being overcome by slurry fumes**

A young farmer who was hospitalised after being overcome by fumes from agitated slurry two years ago is urging farmers to be more vigilant. In this article the 18-year-old farmer recalls the circumstances of the accident.

<https://tinyurl.com/369mw7n2>

### **Menstrual health and the menopause in the workplace**

The British Standards Institution’s (BSI) new “Menstruation, menstrual health and menopause in the workplace - Guide” (BS 30416) is a step in the right direction in changing the narrative on women’s health, but it is only the start of the conversation. The new guide is an accumulation of years of evidence-based research, expert knowledge, lived experience and a willingness to improve the working lives of those experiencing menstrual health and menopause challenges in the UK. The guidance provides workplaces with the opportunity to enhance the working lives of menstruators and reduce the systemic stigma that encompasses the topic of menstrual health and menopause. This article discusses the new guidance in detail.

<https://tinyurl.com/597ruxa9>

### **A perfect storm: funding cuts effect on the HSE**

Years of underfunding, overwork and underpay at Britain's principal workplace safety regulator, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have created a capacity, staffing and skills crisis that threatens its ability to keep people safe at work. This article takes a look at a recent report, *HSE under pressure: a perfect storm*. Using internal HSE and publicly available data, the authors analysed funding, the number and type of investigation, the number of inspectors and their level of experience and how these have changed in recent years.

<https://tinyurl.com/nyjxf4ks>

### **PUBLIC ENQUIRY**

#### **ECHA launches consultation on the draft investigation report on CMR 1A or 1B substances**

The European Commission has requested the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to prepare an investigation report on substances which are classified as carcinogen, germ cell mutagen or reproductive toxicant category 1A or 1B in Part 3 of Annex VI to Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 that may be present in childcare articles. The objective of this call is to consult any interested stakeholder to provide comments on the draft investigation report.

<http://tinyurl.com/yupvi3du>

### **NISO TRAINING AND EVENTS**

#### **Training scheduled at NISO Training Centre, Dublin 12 AND/OR Online**

**Safe Pass;** SOLAS (1 day); Kilkenny 9 September; Clonmel, 7 October [BOOK NOW](#)

**Safety Representation (Hybrid);** NISO Certificate (2 day); 12-13 September; 10-11 October [BOOK NOW](#)

**DSE/VDU Risk Assessor Training (online);** 21 September [BOOK NOW](#)

**Manual Handling Basic** NISO Certificate (half day); Dates TBC

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

13 weeks / 2 hours per week [BOOK NOW](#)

**TUS Athlone:** Technological University of the Shannon; 18 September 2023

(Online / class attendance required on 3 evenings plus exam)

**Castlebar:** ATU Castlebar Campus; 19 September 2023

**Dublin / Online:** 19 September 2023

### **CPD Certificates in Safety Management at Work**

(Certified by TU Dublin) 5 days plus exam

**Workplace Safety Manager;** 2–19 September [BOOK NOW](#)

**Workplace Accident Investigation;** 23–27 October [BOOK NOW](#)

**Behavioural Safety Management;** 27 November–1 December [BOOK NOW](#)

**Workplace Ergonomics;** 27 November–1 December [BOOK NOW](#)

### **Workshop: New Supports from the HSA (Free)**

**Galway:** 7 September 2023 [BOOK NOW](#)

**Kilkenny:** 14 September 2023 [BOOK NOW](#)

**Killarney:** 12 October 2023 [BOOK NOW](#)

**Sligo:** 8 November 2023 [BOOK NOW](#)

**Dublin:** 16 November 2023 [BOOK NOW](#)

### **Seminar: Temporary Traffic Management at Roadworks - Latest Standards**

**Sligo:** 5 October 2023 [BOOK NOW](#)

**Athlone:** 25 October 2023 [BOOK NOW](#)

**Dublin:** 26 October 2023 [BOOK NOW](#)

### **National Events**

**Workshop: New Supports from the HSA (Free)** The Great Southern, Killarney, Co. Kerry; 12 October 2023 [BOOK NOW](#)

**NISO Annual Safety Conference;** The Great Southern, Killarney, Co. Kerry; 13 October 2023 [Further Info](#)

**NISO Trade Exhibition of Health and Safety Products and Services;** The Great Southern, Killarney, Co. Kerry; 13 October 2023 [Stand Bookings](#)

**NISO/NISO Safety Awards Ceremony;** The Great Southern, Killarney, Co. Kerry; 13 October 2023

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