

NISO Safety Observer
October 2023; Issue 75

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Newsletter of the National Irish Safety Organisation

October 2023 - Issue 75

Welcome to the October 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 5 September 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 for further details

CPD Certificates in Safety Management at Work

Certified by Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin). For upcoming CPD Certificate courses and dates visit 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/

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IRISH NEWS

Guidance published for workers exposed to sensitive content

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the State Claims Agency (SCA) have published guidance on occupational exposure to sensitive content. The guide is designed to assist organisations employing people in roles which expose them to sensitive content as part of their assigned duties or other employees who are unexpectedly exposed in their role. Content moderators, employed by social media companies, are frequently exposed to such material. The new guide outlines employers’ duties to carry out hazard identification and risk assessment for all known hazards including exposure to graphic material.

<https://tinyurl.com/49kz2z3p>

“Irish farms the most dangerous workplace by some distance”

At the BeSafe International Farm Safety and Farmer Health Conference, the Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with special responsibility for Farm Safety, Martin Heydon, emphasised farm safety issues in Ireland. Highlighting national statistics on farm safety from 2013 to 2022, Minister Heydon noted that farming accounted for approximately 40% of all fatal workplace incidents, which is hugely disproportionate given that farmers only account for 6% of the total workforce. The conference provided an opportunity to showcase issues and approaches that are being worked on under BeSafe - A Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine funded project - and how this research can make an impact in various ways such as on the farm, supporting policy or strategy development.

<https://tinyurl.com/2j4p242y>

HSA campaign focused on working at height in agriculture

The HSA launched a two-week inspection campaign focusing on working at height in agricultural settings in September. The campaign focused on both small and large farms nationwide. Between 2013 and 2022 there were 191 fatalities on Irish farms - of these fatalities, working at height and falls has led to 22 deaths. So far this year, there have been two confirmed fatalities as a result of working at height on Irish farms.

<https://tinyurl.com/2s4y7yjz>

Study looks at key risks and hazards for farmers

Research around key risks and hazards for farmers is being undertaken by a researcher from the Atlantic Technological University, Sligo. The research, which is ongoing, is looking at an effective intervention strategy to support decision-making factors of Irish farmers to reduce injury, illness and fatalities. The results of the research so far has found that the majority of farmers thought that health and safety training for livestock handling and agricultural vehicles is most useful and that confined spaces and diseases training were deemed least useful.

<https://tinyurl.com/yppr8dry>

Pharmacists experiencing high levels of burnout

The first report of its kind on the pharmacy profession has found a quarter of pharmacists are likely to leave the industry completely amid high levels of burnout. The report found that 73% of pharmacists in the community and 57% of hospital pharmacists have experienced burnout. Staff shortages was reported as a major stressor in the industry.

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

Vital conversations on menopause in the workplace need to continue

Conversations around menopause in the workplace have been ramping up recent years and it's vital this continues, according to a menopause coach. Symptoms, which occur due to hormonal changes, can vary greatly in severity including hot flushes, sleep problems, brain fog, anxiety and mood changes, among other symptoms. Approximately 570,000 women are currently in the menopausal or perimenopausal stage in Ireland and approximately 350,000 of these women are in paid employment.

<https://tinyurl.com/ca9bkra9>

Improved safety measures at market after incident

A mart in Co. Monaghan has improved its safety features following an incident in which a heifer jumped into a rostrum. A video circulated widely around social media at the time showing a heifer jumping from the sales ring into the rostrum where three people were standing, including mart staff. Fortunately there were no injuries during the incident.

<https://tinyurl.com/53d3p6kz>

UK NEWS

Waste management company fined £3m

A waste management company has been fined £3 million following the deaths of two workers in separate incidents in 2019 and 2020. The Health and Safety Executive investigated both incidents and subsequently prosecuted the waste management firm. The company pleaded guilty to breaches of health and safety legislation in both cases and was fined £1 million for the 2019 incident, £2 million for the 2020 incident and was ordered to pay combined costs of £21,054.

<https://tinyurl.com/3628b4mv>

Company fined £1.2m after worker crushed to death

A company has been fined more than £1.2m after a man was crushed to death during maintenance work at a Leicestershire quarry. The man died after becoming trapped at the quarry when he was working on a nightshift maintenance team that was repairing a feed hopper at the quarry. He was standing on a conveyor that had not been effectively isolated - through cutting the power - before the repair work started. The conveyor was then inadvertently switched on, fatally crushing the 26-year-old. A Health and Safety Executive investigation found that a test button on the conveyor electrical panel was inoperative and that the issue appeared to have existed for many years before the incident. The company pleaded guilty to breaching health and safety legislation and was fined £1.275m and ordered to pay costs of £200,000.

<https://tinyurl.com/24cju726>

Companies fined combined £120k after man is injured

Two construction companies have been fined a combined total of £120,000 after a ground worker suffered horrific injuries when heavy drainage pipes fell on top of him. The man sustained several fractures to both sides of his pelvis as well as a fractured vertebrae and bleed on the spine following the incident. An

investigation by the Health and Safety Executive found that both the man's employer and the principal contractor failed to ensure that the operation was properly planned, appropriately supervised and carried out in a safe manner. Both companies pleaded guilty of breaches of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998.

<https://tinyurl.com/ycksz8m9>

Haulage company fined £100k after worker fatality

A haulage company in Wales has been fined £100,000 after a worker fell from a loading bay and died. The 63-year-old man, who was from Hungary, has been preparing a load of trailers in his lorry ahead of departure from an industrial estate. The man was trying to reach the top of his lorry with one foot on the loading bay and the other on the back of another lorry. The man fell approximately 1.25 metres onto the concrete floor below when the adjacent lorry was driven away. He sustained severe head injuries and died in hospital. A Health and Safety Executive investigation into the incident found that the company had carried out a risk assessment that identified the risk from falls and introduced control measures, but these had not been used in practice. The company pleaded guilty to breaches of health and safety legislation and was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay costs of £8,400.50.

<https://tinyurl.com/vwnk6j65a>

HSENI "Drive Danger Out" campaign

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) Agriculture and Food Team (AFT) has announced a programme of workplace transport inspections focused on the food industry. The inspections are being undertaken as part of the HSENI industry-wide "Drive Danger Out" campaign which commenced in September 2023 and are set to continue until March 2024. Typically, an inspection will consider different aspects under the headings Safe Site, Safe Vehicle and Safe Driver.

<https://tinyurl.com/3fphw8r>

Music industry "unregulated" for young, female DJs

Irish DJ Annie McManus has said women have to "constantly fight" for their right to safety in the music industry. The former BBC Radio 1 DJ, known by her stage name Annie Mac, was giving evidence at the Misogyny in Music inquiry at the UK House of Commons' Women and Equalities Committee in London. McManus described the experiences of women in the music industry saying

that “it is infuriating the amount of women who have stories of sexual assault who have buried them and carried them” out of fear that their careers would be compromised.

<https://tinyurl.com/yc2cvenn>

EUROPEAN NEWS

Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023–2025

The next EU-OSHA Healthy Workplaces campaign, safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023–2025, is set to launch on 23 October 2023. The campaign aims to increase knowledge about the importance of occupational safety and health in the digital era and to ensure that a human-centred approach to digitalisation in the workplace is implemented. Further information, flyers and resources are available from healthy-workplaces.osha.europa.eu/en.

<https://tinyurl.com/3vx4p4nc>

Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards

The 16th Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards in occupational safety and health aims to recognise organisations making outstanding and innovative contributions to safety and health by preventing risks associated with digital transformation in the workplace. Information on how to enter the awards is available from osha.europa.eu.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p8xjtcx>

Abuse at work: who bears the brunt?

Women and frontline workers in Europe are the most exposed to the risks of adverse social behaviour at work. This includes bullying, harassment, violence, verbal abuse or threats and unwanted sexual attention. Such “violence in the workplace” can have significant impacts on health - mental (burnout, exhaustion, anxiety and depression) as well as physical. A 2021 Eurofound survey found that on average, 12.5% of workers in the EU experienced some form of adverse behaviour and the proportion of women enduring it was consistently higher than for men. The research found that frontline workers and those who deal with customers are twice as likely to experience adverse social behaviour as those who do not. The researchers concluded that when it comes to public policy, prevention as well as protection – including supporting victims – is key.

<https://tinyurl.com/43sryjbx>

US NEWS

Multinational agrees to pay \$6bn settlement

A multinational has agreed to pay \$6 billion to settle nearly 260,000 lawsuits accusing it of selling defective combat earplugs that caused hearing loss in hundreds of thousands of current and former US military service members. A spokesperson for the multinational said the agreement was not an admission of liability and that it was prepared to continue to defend itself in the litigation if certain agreed terms of the agreement were not fulfilled.

<https://tinyurl.com/2x9hpf3b>

US surgeons taking their own lives at an alarming rate

Surgeons have some of the highest known rates of suicide among physicians. Of 697 physician suicides reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) national violent death reporting system between 2003 and 2017, 71 were surgeons. Many more go unreported. One surgeon who lost a friend to suicide and silently grappled with an illness shares her own experiences and her endeavours to help physicians who are struggling in silence.

<https://tinyurl.com/y6tbukf8>

WORLD NEWS

Keep an eye on your eye health at work

An estimated 13 million people live with vision impairment linked to their occupations according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). In a new joint report from the ILO and IAPB they state that more needs to be done to protect workers' eye health. More than 90 per cent of vision impairment cases are either preventable or treatable through existing, highly cost-effective interventions, according to the study. This underscores the need for coordinated global, national, and workplace initiatives to protect workers' well-being, since eye health is an integral part of workers' health.

<https://tinyurl.com/y67zrzem>

Ten workers killed in gas accident in Inner Mongolia

Ten people have been killed and three others were injured in a gas accident at

a workshop in China's northern Inner Mongolia region. The incident happened at a wholesale shop for coal and manufactured products covering the production of ammonia, sulphur, carbon monoxide and hydrogen. The cause of the accident is unknown. Accidents due to gas and chemical explosions are not unusual in China following years of breakneck economic growth.

<https://tinyurl.com/3s3y3jdn>

FATALITIES AND ACCIDENTS

Teenager dies after falling from tractor in Galway

Gardaí are appealing for information following the death of a 16-year-old boy who fell from a tractor in Co. Galway. The teenager was rushed from the scene with serious injuries to a Dublin hospital but sadly later died from his injuries.

<https://tinyurl.com/y67xhcw8>

Man dies in Co. Galway cattle mart incident

A man in his late 60s has died following an incident at a cattle mart in Co. Galway in which a bullock jumped out from the sales ring into the crowd at the mart. The man was rushed to hospital after the incident and was later pronounced dead. The HSA is investigating the incident.

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

Firefighters respond to medical emergency on stack of bales

Firefighters and paramedics responded to an incident which occurred on top of a stack of straw bales on a flatbed trailer in Co. Dublin. It is understood that a man in his 40s had been on top of the bales tying them down with straps when he suffered a medical emergency. A telepoint belonging to the business on the premises where the incident occurred was used to assist paramedics getting to the man who became unwell. It is understood that the man was taken to hospital for treatment.

<https://tinyurl.com/22phejpf>

IN THE COURTS

Office worker awarded €50k over workstation

A county council has been ordered to pay more than €50,000 to an office worker for failing to provide a suitable workstation so that she could gradually increase her working hours after developing back trouble. The Workplace

Relations Commission (WRC) heard it took the local authority more than three years to buy a suitable ergonomic chair for the worker and that other equipment still had not been provided. The WRC adjudicator ordered the county council to pay her two years' salary in compensation, a sum of €50,255.

<https://tinyurl.com/2c9bw8pn>

STATISTICS

Twenty-three people have been killed in workplace accidents since 1 January 2023 - Correct at 3 October 2023. Source: www.hsa.ie

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

PUBLICATIONS

Chemical Safety at Home and in the Garden

New publication from the HSA, *Use Chemicals Safely at Home and in the Garden*. Some chemicals found in the home and garden may cause harm depending on how dangerous they are and how long or how often you are exposed to them.

<https://tinyurl.com/43u8z26y>

The impact of drones on OSH

The EU-OSHA has published a new discussion paper on unmanned aerial vehicles (or drones) in workplaces and the implications for safety, health, privacy and liability and tackling emerging risks. The paper explores OSH concerns when working with drones, pinpoints research gaps and offers actionable recommendations for stakeholders to resolve workplace issues and promote continued progress in this field.

<https://tinyurl.com/3c9wubrx>

GUIDANCE

Psychosocial Risk Assessment: Guidance for Exposure to Sensitive Content

New guidance has been jointly developed by the HSA and the State Claims Agency for exposure to sensitive content. The purpose of the guidance document is to provide evidence-based insights for employers, employees and their representatives on good practice and procedures for assessing,

addressing and recording psychosocial risks related to exposure to sensitive content in workplaces operating in the Republic of Ireland.

<https://tinyurl.com/46ekavhx>

Returning to farming after a back injury

This article looks at what happens if you suffer a back injury and how to ensure that you can return to work safely and as soon as possible.

<https://tinyurl.com/yc2fy82x>

RESOURCES

Exposure to Sensitive Content Risk Assessment Template

Risk assessment template to accompany the newly published guidance on *Exposure to Sensitive Content Risk Assessment*, jointly developed by the HSA and the State Claims Agency.

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

RESEARCH REPORTS

New research into Noise and Vibration

Three major HSE UK research reports have been published in the last 12 months that investigate workplace noise and vibration problems. These reports focus on battery powered tools compared with equivalent traditionally powered tools, chainsaws information from suppliers and static concrete mixing cleaning.

<https://tinyurl.com/ypu56x7n>

SAFETY EVENTS

EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability Conference

The Health and Safety Authority and the Environmental Protection Agency are hosting this conference on the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, focusing on what the future may hold for EU chemicals legislation. Taking place Wednesday, 18 October in Dublin.

<https://tinyurl.com/bdfh6p6a>

OHSI and University of Galway Autumn Seminar

The Occupational Hygiene Society of Ireland (OHSI) is hosting a seminar on General and Local Exhaust Ventilation. A representative from the HSA will

present on the Indoor Air Quality Code of Practice. Taking place Wednesday, 8 November 2023 in the University of Galway.

<https://tinyurl.com/47pk28ks>

IOHA 2024 International Scientific Conference

The International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) 2024 international scientific conference "*Protecting Workers from Health Hazards: Advancing in This Changing World*" will be jointly hosted in Dublin by the Occupational Hygiene Society of Ireland (OHSI) and the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS), 9–13 June 2024.

<https://tinyurl.com/23u87xut>

PUBLIC ENQUIRY

Experts in safety sought for A/V and ICT technologies

The publication and global adoption of IEC 62368-1 has led to increased interest in the activities of IEC/TC 108 at an international level. Active members of NSAI/ETC/TC 11 can influence the future direction of IEC 62368-1 and other safety standards and can use their expertise to review, comment on, and influence new drafts, proposed amendments, interpretation sheets and new work items presented by IEC/TC 108. NSAI/ETC/TC 11 welcome applications from technical experts to join and become active members of the committee.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p9bvdkp>

SAFETY IN VIDEOS

Work Organisation for Farmer H&S video launched

Minister Martin Heydon T.D. recently launched a "Work Organisation for Farmer Health and Safety" video. The video was produced by Teagasc Health and Safety Specialist Advisors in association with FBD Insurance and the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee to the Health and Safety Authority. It focuses on approaches to cut workload on farms to prevent working in a hurry and tiredness on farms which is a major contributory factor in farm workplace injuries and ill health.

<https://tinyurl.com/yy632p3n>

MCIB REPORTS

Report of an investigation into a marine casualty Involving a merchant vessel in the Bristol Channel in 2022 by the Marine Casualty Investigation Board.

<https://tinyurl.com/4wck38rv>

NISO TRAINING AND EVENTS

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

Safe Pass; SOLAS (1 day); Clonmel, 7 & 21 October [BOOK NOW](#)

Safety Representation (Hybrid); NISO Certificate (2 day); 10-11 October; 14-15 November [BOOK NOW](#)

DSE/VDU Risk Assessor Training (online); 25 October; 22 November [BOOK NOW](#)

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

CPD Certificates in Safety Management at Work

(Certified by TU Dublin) 5 days plus exam

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)

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](#)

Dublin; 26 October 2023 [BOOK NOW](#)

Athlone; 27 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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