



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH NEWSLETTER

OSH NEWSLETTER OF THE NHSF, HUMAN RESOURCE
DIRECTORATE ISSUE 03

WHAT'S NEW



New Online Health & Safety Helpdesk Launched.

The National Health & Safety Function has introduced a new service to allow staff to make health and safety support requests online at their own convenience. The development is part of our efforts to modernise and improve our services.

All Health & Safety queries should be brought to the attention of Local Management in the first instance. If you require further

assistance or clarification why not contact us via our new online Health & Safety Helpdesk. To access the Health & Safety Helpdesk click [here](#).

The Health & Safety Function provides a variety of services in this area including health & safety training, safety audits and advice on chemicals, office and environmental safety to name but a few.

Please do not use the online service in relation to Clinical, Infrastructural or Fire safety risks, instead please contact your local representative in these areas.



Phone the Helpdesk on: 1850 420 420.

Open during the hours of: 10.30 – 12.00 and 14.00 – 15.30



Visit our web page:

www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing



Log your health & Safety requests directly at:

<http://pndchssdweb02.healthirl.net/Health.WebAccess/ss>

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HEALTH AND SAFETY AUTHORITY UPDATE

In its Strategy Statement 2016 –2018, the HSA has set a priority of increasing their focus on work related health risks and will develop a 3 year Occupational Health Plan. More workdays are now lost due to work related ill health than to workplace accidents. In the healthcare sector they are planning to undertake 500 inspections with a focus on homecare work activities and the management of hazardous agents.



HEALTH & SAFETY AUTHORITY STRATEGY UPDATE CONT'D

It is also planned to publish sector specific guidance on dental practice, safety and health in homecare and provide an update on the HSA Healthcare Audit Tool. Their strategy also states that they will encourage workers to take on the role of safety representatives. See our FAQ's and guidance documents on safety representatives at <http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing>.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY FUNCTION

Our Aim

To provide a high-quality, centralised support resource that motivates, enables and empowers managers and staff to discharge their legal and moral duties with regard to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Management.

How will this be achieved?

The NHSF brings together the highly committed and dedicated staff working in health & safety, creating a strong dynamic function that combines expert resources and best practice and strives to deliver the highest possible standard of service across key health & safety support areas. The National Function is comprised of the following teams:

Information and Advice, Policy, Audit & Inspection and Training.

What's Different?

The National Health and Safety Function falls under the Human Resource Directorate. The Function brings about a number of important innovations and a change in emphasis in the way support is delivered nationally including:

- The establishment of a Helpdesk as a single point of contact for all support requests. This will allow the tracking of emerging issues and key risk areas. We have improved the helpdesk by launching our new self service option
- The promotion of the concept of self-help for front-line duty-holders and the development of a tool-kit of reliable and consistent information, refer to our website for more information www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing
- A reduced emphasis on classroom-based face-to-face training in favour of a national blended learning strategy (greater use of e-learning and web-based training), supporting a new policy on statutory OSH training
- The introduction of best practice based OSH policy development and approval processes with engagement of all relevant stakeholders
- An increased emphasis on assurance, benchmarking and quality improvement, through Key Performance Indicators and the introduction of a structured audit and inspection programme that aims to examine OSH management at all levels



In addition we:

- ◆ Collate information from your helpdesk queries/requests to identify trends and react appropriately
- ◆ Established a mandatory process for all Health and Safety Authority (HSA) correspondence which are required to be logged to the Helpdesk for monitoring purposes
- ◆ Work closely with other HSE colleagues to enable a more cohesive approach to Safety, Health and Wellbeing
- ◆ Develop/promote strategies to assist employees manage their own health and wellbeing e.g. Stress Management Campaign of 2015-2016

LEARN & SHARE – SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS INCIDENT

WHAT HAPPENED:

The incident occurred in a clinic room of a ward in the hospital. The floor of the clinic room was being wet-mopped during the ward's busiest period.

An employee went into the room after completing a patient drugs round and fell badly on her right knee causing a multiple fracture of her kneecap. Her knee was operated on and she was discharged two days later. She was fitted with a leg brace and was able to walk only with the aid of crutches for around 4 months. It was 10 months before she could return to work on "light duties".

She now has reduced movement in her right knee and can no longer kneel on it. She may still have to undergo further surgery. The hospital was found negligent and was fined and ordered to pay costs.

THE LEARNING:

The subsequent investigation report concluded that this incident was completely avoidable.

There was no thorough risk assessment completed, resulting in the employee suffering a serious and painful injury.

The hospital could have:

- Scheduled the floor cleaning for a much quieter time
- Used signage and/or restricted access to the wet floors until they had completely dried
- Considered replacing any high risk floor surfaces
- And lastly considered providing staff with anti-slip footwear

If slips and trips were taken more seriously and proper controls introduced the number of injuries would reduce.

In 2014, 1,400 slips, trips and falls were reported to the Health & Safety Authority. 24% of those incidents led to the injured person missing over a month from work.

Have you completed a slip, trip and fall risk assessment?

The Safety Advisory/Guidance Note is available on the website www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing, which will help you complete your risk assessment. Ref: HSE UK Report.



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DO YOU WORK ON A COMPUTER/ DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE)?



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THE PROCESS:

Firstly we suggest that all Managers complete the online DSE User Module on HSEland. Managers are responsible for ensuring “DSE Users” are identified. An employee may be a DSE user if he/she:

- normally uses the DSE for continuous periods of more than one hour per day
- if the DSE is generally used by the employee on a daily basis

If any of your staff are users you should ensure that all these employees complete the aforementioned e-learning programme on HseLand.

A risk assessment form should then be completed by the manager with the employee. This form will help identify if any health and safety issues need to be addressed to reduce the risk of injury or ill health. The manager can then implement any additional controls and/or provide any equipment required.



Visit our website <http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing> to find out more or click on the links below:

[FAQ Display Screen Equipment](#), [DSE Risk Assessment](#).

YOUNG PERSONS IN THE WORKPLACE

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 1 of Part 6:



Protection of Children and Young Persons defines a young person as a person who has reached 16 years of age but is less than 18 years of age.

The key reason for this legislation is that these young persons are more at risk of injury or ill health when at work due to lack of experience, absence of awareness of existing or potential risks and/or lack of maturity.

Therefore when undertaking risk assessments additional controls may have to be implemented when young persons are involved in the work activity. These additional controls may include additional training, instruction and/or supervision.

Young persons must be informed of any risks identified by the assessment, and any preventive and protective measures taken. Young persons must not be employed if the risk assessment shows that the work is beyond the physical or psychological capacity. Complete your risk assessment. Further information on Young Persons can be obtained in our [FAQ 017:00 Sensitive Risk Groups—Young Persons](#).

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

We are keen to share stories of good safety and health practice within our organisation. If you are involved in any safety and health initiatives that support your safety management programme within your service then we would like to hear from you. If you have any short articles (approx. 100–200 words), please submit for consideration to: lily.conway@hse.ie

