

Health and Safety

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AUTHORITY NEWSLETTER

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matters

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This newsletter is produced regularly

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Code makers!

The largest single farm safety enterprise ever attempted in this country is underway by the Health and Safety Authority at a cost of more than €1.5 million. Over 160,000 packs containing the new Agriculture Code of Practice have been dispatched to farmers nationwide.



Code Makers from Left to Right: Gavin Lonergan, Communications Manager, Mary Sherry, Chairperson IFA Farm Family Committee, Pdraig Walshe President IFA, Pat Griffin, Senior Inspector.

Every farmer in the country has received a copy of the pack which contains the new Code of Practice for Preventing Injury and Occupational Ill Health in Agriculture, Risk Assessment Document and copies of a farm Safe System of Work Plan (SSWP).

Compliance with the Code of Practice involves all three documents and these are all contained in the pack along with a copy of the Authority's acclaimed Farm Safety DVD.

The pack will be supplemented by a massive communications campaign to begin in early 2007 and a nationwide programme of farm safety courses. Senior Inspector Pat Griffin was central to the development of the 'agri pack' and dvd.

The Code was formally launched by Agriculture Minister Mary Coughlan and Labour Affairs Minister Tony Killeen at this year's National Ploughing Championships.

Ready for REACH challenge

With the conclusion of the EU negotiations on the REACH regulation, the Health and Safety Authority is set to launch the next stage of its implementation programme for this new legislation.

REACH is an acronym for the Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals.

The Authority will oversee the implementation and enforcement of the REACH regulation, which is designed to manage and control the potential hazards and risks to human health and the environment from the manufacture, import and use of chemicals within the EU.

Since 2005, the Authority has established a totally new section within the Authority to address REACH and related chemical legislation as well as establishing a REACH helpdesk, email: reachright@hsa.ie and a complete information service on the web at: www.reachright.ie.

A national programme of awareness raising involving industry and business and community leaders will commence in January 2007 and this will be followed by a national media and advertising campaign as well as regional seminars to further raise awareness. One of the main target audiences for the awareness raising is small-to-medium enterprises who may not have had obligations under existing chemical legislation but will under REACH.

Sharon McGuinness is the Assistant Chief Executive of the Health and Safety Authority's Chemicals Policy and Services division under whose remit the national REACH programme has been developed and will be run.

"Reach is good for business and for all those who use chemicals. By creating a single regulatory system for chemicals in Europe, REACH will reduce risks to human health and the environment; increase transparency and efficiency as well as European competitiveness and innovation".

Christmas mini bike warning



The Health and Safety Authority and the Director of Consumer Affairs, have issued a joint safety warning on the risks posed by cheap mini-motorbikes. The warning comes at a time of year when many of the mini motos, pocket bikes, mini bikes, mini motorbikes and mini ATVs are being purchased as Christmas presents.

Anyone thinking of buying a mini-motorbike or who has already bought one should be wary and mindful of safety risks associated with cheap mini-motorbikes. Tests conducted have shown the following serious safety risks: frames and durability are weak, chain guards are inadequate (risk to clothing and limbs), shielding around hot parts is inadequate (risk of burns), petrol fumes are inhaled by the driver because of poor structural design, the petrol line is not shielded properly near the engine (risk of fire), the petrol line leaks, brakes are weak or work poorly, poor electrical connections can cause a fire, sharp edges can cause injuries, mopeds lack speed limiters and operating instructions are not supplied.

Because of their relatively low price and small size, mini-motorbikes appear to be targeted at children. They may seem harmless, but parents should be aware that a mini-motorbike is not a toy, even if it appears to meet safety requirements.

Tom Beegan, CEO said the Authority was concerned at the dangers posed in particular by cheap versions which often did not comply with regular safety standards. "This is a time of year when parents are buying or putting aside such vehicles as Christmas presents, people should be aware of the potentially lethal device they are purchasing?"

Ladders – when can they be used?

The Safety Health and Welfare (Work at Height) regulations 2006 contain specific requirements on the use of ladders. The regulations do not ban ladders but require that careful consideration to be given to their use. Ladders should only be considered where the use of other more suitable work equipment such as mobile elevating platforms, towers scaffolds or temporary stairs is not appropriate. Ladders and stepladders should only be used as for light work that is low risk and of short duration.

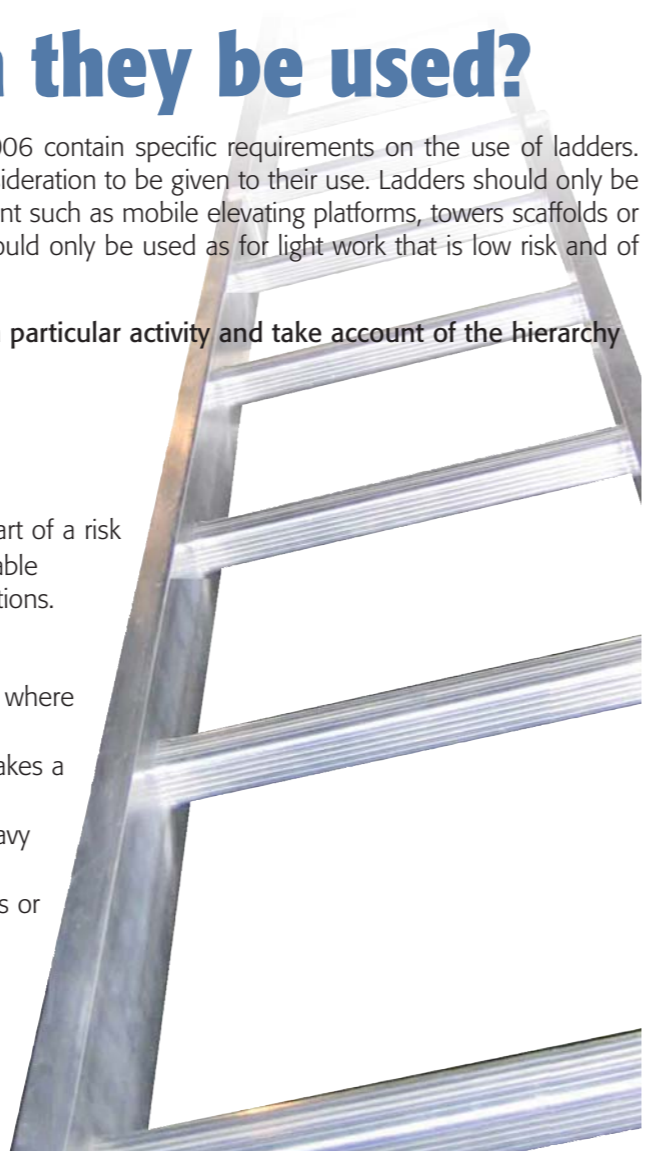
You must select the most appropriate work equipment for a particular activity and take account of the hierarchy of controls:

- * first, to avoid work at height where possible;
- * then to prevent falls from height; and, failing that,
- * to reduce the consequences of a fall.
- * Where work at height is necessary you need to justify, as part of a risk assessment whether a ladder or stepladder is the most suitable access equipment compared to other access equipment options.

only use a ladder or stepladder:

- * where the work is of short duration – ladders are not suitable where they are in one position for 30 minutes or more;
- * where the risk is low, i.e. because the nature of the work makes a fall unlikely or where a fall would be unlikely to cause injury for 'light work' - ladders are not suitable for strenuous or heavy work.
- * for work that does not involve carrying heavy or awkward tools or equipment.
- * where a handhold is available both for climbing the ladder and in the working position;
- * where you can maintain three points of contact (hands and feet) at the working position

And where it complies with EN 131 is marked accordingly



Retirement news

Our colleague **Bob O'Brien** moved on to a new chapter in his life on 28th July 2006, and has been missed by his colleagues not only in the ADR Policy Unit, but in other areas of the organisation. Bob joined the Authority (then Department of Labour) in December 1975 as an Inspector under the Factories Act. He was promoted into the Hazardous Substances Assessment Unit [HSAU], in 1983 where he worked for a number of years on chemical registration, classification and labeling matters. He was seconded to the Authority when it was established in 1989.



When working in the Occupational Hygiene Unit [OHU], he spent 3 summers in Geneva contributing to the ILO committees which prepared two conventions on the use of Asbestos and Chemical Agents in the workplace. In 1990 he chaired the EC Co-ordination Committee during Ireland's Presidency, as the European spokesman at the ILO Tri-Partite Committee meetings on the Chemical Agents convention. That same year, the committee was the recipient of the Albert Biere Award from the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) for their work on the Chemical Agents Convention.

Bob spent a brief period in the Process Industries Unit [PIU] before immersing himself in the work of Dangerous Substances/ADR Unit from 1997, [more recently named the ADR Policy Unit]. Bob worked closely on developments at international level on the ADR Framework, ADR Checks and Safety Advisers Directives supporting ongoing updates to relevant legislation to implement ADR provisions in Ireland under the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Regulations. He was also principally involved in management of the ADR Driver Exam Scheme and ADR Driver Trainer Approval procedures for many years. Bob played a very significant role in the summer of 2004 assisting in drafting national legislation on Transportable Pressure Equipment.

Bob O'Brien has left his mark on the organisation. His technical expertise and rigorous attention to detail in his work, his good humour, polite demeanour, and helpfulness have assisted in making many a long work day more bearable. Best of luck in his retirement and with completing 'Operation Conservatory'.

Bob moved to the ADR Unit in 1997 where he worked until his retirement on July 28, 2006.



Leaving

Michael O'Neill the Authority's Legal Adviser will be leaving the Authority soon for pastures new. He is joining the newly created Garda Ombudsman Commission as their Head of Legal Affairs. Michael has given 6 years of service to the Authority and has been instrumental in bringing about many positive changes during that period in the criminal and civil enforcement functions of the Authority. He has provided invaluable assistance to the Authority and its staff over the years and we wish him all the best in his new job.

Simple Safety Toolkit

The Health & Safety Authority conducted intensive research into the health and safety practices in micro-business. This research identified a number of key accident flash points. Such as manual handling, falling objects etc.

From this research and analysis of the results the Health & Safety Authority has developed a very practical toolkit for micro-business. This toolkit is called "Simple Safety" and was developed with micro-business owners in mind, to enable them to introduce safe work practices for the owner manager and employees.

Simple Safety can be implemented quickly without any specialist expertise with the main objective being a reduction in workplace accidents. The benefits are real and include, a greater awareness of Safety, reduces absenteeism and increased staff morale.

The series focuses on retail, food and drinks sectors. Recognising the day to day pressures on owner managers, the series is basic, simple, practical and cost effective.

Full details are available on www.simplesafety.ie, so why not log on and implement Simply Safety in your workplace.

Food and drink sector- Slips, trips and falls



- 1 Clean as you go
- 2 Keep floors and access routes clear
- 3 Wear correct footwear
- 4 Do not rely on others to tidy your things up
- 5 Report any spills immediately
- 6 Walk, do not run
- 7 Report trailing cables.

Name	Signature	Date	Name	Signature	Date

Authority makes it three

The Health and Safety Authority's ground breaking trans-Atlantic partnership has just notched up another success with Cork based Janssen Pharmaceutical becoming just the third company in Europe to land a prestigious international health and safety award.

Janssen Pharmaceutical has been given the prestigious Star award under the Voluntary Protection Programme (VPP) presented by the Health and Safety Authority in partnership with the United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).



From left to right: Mary Dorgan ACE, Bryan Mahally Managing Director Janssen, Micheál Martin Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment, Anne-Marie Hayes Board Member.

The award was presented to the company on Friday (Nov 17th) at a ceremony at the Sheraton Hotel, Fota island (Cork) by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Micheál Martin and Mary Dorgan, Assistant Chief Executive with the Authority.

Janssen joins fellow Cork Pharmaceutical outfit Pfizer and Dublin's GE in the exclusive VPP club with electronics giant Dell expected on board in early 2007. At the Janssen presentation ceremony Minister Martin urged the Authority to use the success of VPP thus far to promote the programme among indigenous Irish industry.

Platforms or "man-baskets" on fork lifts and tele-handlers

Recently, several fatal and serious non-fatal injuries have occurred where workers have fallen from non-integrated platforms or "baskets" attached to fork-trucks and tele-handlers. Such platforms may only be used exceptional circumstances.

Integrated working platforms contain controls within the platform that are integrated into the controls of the truck or tele-handler. The design of an integrated platform must relate to the combination of the specific truck/tele-handler and the working platform, not simply to the working platform in isolation. Non-integrated platforms do not have controls within the platform and may not be designed for a particular truck/tele-handler. FLT's or tele-handlers are not specifically designed to carry people, therefore they are unlikely to be the most suitable work equipment for work at a height.

Non integrated platforms may only be used in exceptional circumstances and where it is not reasonably practicable to use purpose-designed access equipment such as an MEWP. Planned or routine work of whatever duration is not considered to be exceptional use.

FLT's or telehandlers fitted with integrated working platforms that have been designed to carry people may be used for work at height.

Relevant legislation:

- Regulation 6 (2) (c) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Work at Height) Regulations, 2006
- Paragraph 39 of the Safety, Health and Welfare (General Application) (Amendment) Regulations 2001, amending the Fifth Schedule to the Safety Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 1993
- The Safety in Industry Acts, 1955 and 1980 (Hoists and Hoistways) (Exemption) Order, 1985