

# Health and Safety

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AUTHORITY NEWSLETTER

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# matters

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This newsletter is produced regularly.

For further details contact the editor, Niamh Parnell at [niamh\\_parnell@hsa.ie](mailto:niamh_parnell@hsa.ie) or 01 6147067

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Tom Beegan, CEO,  
Health and Safety Authority

## Consultation - the name of the game

Charting the course of occupational health and safety and cutting edge legislation are just two of the areas at the centre of a massive consultation exercise being undertaken by the Health and Safety Authority.

The Authority's new three-year strategy and legislation to accompany the new Health and Welfare at Work Act have and are being developed with the help of widespread consultation among stakeholders, staff and the general public.

The Strategy, soon to be presented to Minister Tony Killeen, has been compiled after an extensive exercise during which scores of submissions were received by the Authority and strategy events held involving staff stakeholders.

Meanwhile the Authority's regional committees have been conducting a series of meetings at which stakeholders were invited to assist in the process of developing cutting edge regulations dealing with on the spot fines, testing for intoxicants in the workplace, code of practice for enterprises with less than three employees and joint Safety Agreements.

CEO Tom Beegan says the consultation exercises have been worthwhile for the Authority and in ensuring the full involvement and input of all those involved in occupational health and safety.

## 71 Work-related deaths in 2005

Figures released by the Health and Safety Authority show 2005 was the worst year for work-related deaths. 71 work-related deaths were reported in 2005 compared to 49 in 2004.

The construction sector remains the most dangerous with 23 deaths. The rise of non-national workers in this sector is an area of concern to the Health and Safety Authority. Agriculture is the next most dangerous sector with 17 deaths compared to 13 people in the same sector in 2004.

The most common fatal accident trigger was 'fall, collapse or breakage of material' (16 fatalities), followed by 'falls from height' (9 fatalities) and 'loss of control of other transport or handling equipment' (9 fatalities). Five fatalities were animal related.

The most common non-fatal accident triggers reported to the Authority in 2005 for all sectors were handling, lifting and carrying (31.2%), and slips, trips and falls (15.1%). These have been the two most common accident triggers every year since 2000.

Dublin and Cork had the highest number of workplace deaths (9 fatalities) followed by Donegal with 6 fatalities.

Economic sector	Number of cases	Fatalities by County			
A. Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting	17	Cavan	4	Limerick	2
B. Fishing	2	Clare	2	Longford	1
C. Mining, Quarrying	6	Cork	9	Louth	4
D. Manufacturing	7	Donegal	6	Mayo	2
F. Construction	23	Dublin	9	Meath	4
G. Wholesale, Retail, Repair	7	Galway	3	Offaly	1
I. Transport, Storage, Communication	4	Kerry	2	Tipperary	5
K. Real estate, Renting, Business	1	Kildare	5	Waterford	1
L. Public administration, Defence	2	Kilkenny	1	Westmeath	1
O. Community, Social, Personal Services	2	Laois	3	Wexford	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	Leitrim	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>

# Plan to cut farm deaths

**A new farm safety project was launched on 18th November 2005 as a joint initiative between the Health and Safety Authority and Teagasc. The three-year project will support the National Farm Safety Plan aims of cutting farm accidents by 50%.**

The initiative will allow farmers with three or less employees to complete and implement a new 'user friendly' Farm Risk Assessment rather than writing a safety statement. Currently, fewer than 30% of farmers have completed any form of safety risk assessment.

The initiative currently being piloted among dairy and tillage farmers in counties Cork (West), Clare, Donegal, Meath, Tipperary (North), and Wexford involves a short safety and health training course on the new risk assessment document. Following evaluation, the initiative will roll out at national level during 2006. Tractors and machinery account for 45% of farm deaths over the winter months. Being crushed, rolled-over or getting caught in power drives are the major causes. Falls and collapsing loads account for 27% of deaths. In this category falling from ladders or through fragile roofs are the major causes. Animal attacks make up 12% of deaths mainly due to being struck by cattle. Other causes include tree felling (8%), electrocution (2%) and drowning in slurry (2%).

The Health and Safety Authority will be carrying out inspections in areas with accident levels. Participation at these short courses will be seen as a commitment in managing safety and health and will result in these farms not being targeted for inspection.

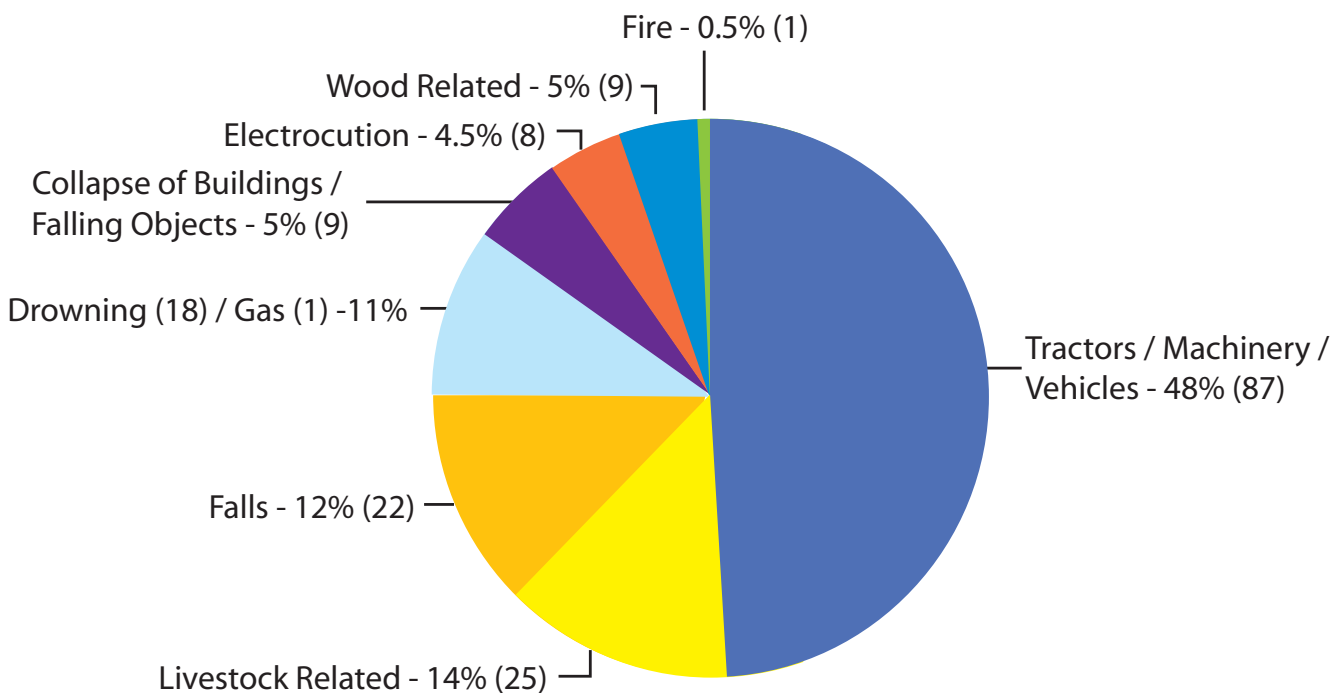
This development has been warmly welcomed by Minister for Agriculture and Food, Ms. Mary Coughlan T.D. and Minister for Labour Affairs, Mr. Tony Killeen T.D.



*Pictured from l to r: Tom Beegan, CEO of the Health and Safety Authority, Minister for Agriculture and Food, Mary Coughlan T.D., Minister for Labour Affairs, Tony Killeen T.D. and Jim Flanagan, Director of Teagasc.*

## Fatal Farm Accidents 1996 -2005

A total of 180 fatal farm accidents occurred in the 10-year period since 1996 to 2005. The following chart gives the causes.



Most farm accidents are tractor and machinery related (48%). Being crushed, rolled-over or getting caught in power drives operated in stationary positions are the major causes. Livestock related injuries account for 14% of farm deaths mainly due to being struck by cattle. Other causes include falls mainly from heights (12%) and drowning/gas (11%).

# NEWS IN BRIEF

On 24th January the Health and Safety Authority successfully obtained a High Court order to close a construction site in Waterford because of serious concerns in relation to unsafe work practices.

Ms. Justice Mary Lafoy granted the Authority an order, under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 against Andrew Hally with addresses at Cappoquin and Dungarvan, Co. Waterford and in relation to a housing development project at The Brewery, Dungarvan. The issue involved the renovation of a number of single-storey terraced local authority houses

During a routine inspection of the construction site on the 19th January 2006 particular concerns were raised by Inspectors in relation to the dangers of working at heights including partially erected scaffolding on part of the building, no scaffolding at all on the gable ends of the building, no toe boards, men working on incomplete platforms, incomplete handrails and scaffolding erected on uneven ground and no safe means of access. The presence of a 240-volt electricity extension lead, creating a risk of electrocution, was also observed.

The Court also heard that given the lack of safety management on the site and the failure of Mr. Hally to engage with the Authority, it was indicated to the Court that the Authority, had no confidence in Mr. Hally's ability or willingness to ensure the health and safety of persons on the site for which he has ultimate control as the person contracted for the completion of the project.

## OTHER CASES

On 14th December 2005 Naas Circuit Court imposed fines totalling 10,000 EUR on Bennett Construction Ltd. The case arose from an investigation into the death of an employee on 5th November 2003 at a construction site at Back Weston, Celbridge, Co. Kildare. The employee was operating a site dumper when he drove into an excavation. He was thrown from the dumper and landed on the ground adjacent to the dumper. The dumper fell to one side pinning the employee to the ground. Among the charges against Bennett Construction were 'being found guilty of failing to provide a safe system of work'.

Fines totalling 5,000 EUR were imposed against John Whelan Ltd. at Limerick District Court on 1st December 2005 following an investigation into the death of an employee on 19th February 2002. The employee was fatally injured when two block party gable walls each approx. 8.2m in height collapsed on him while he was removing scaffold adjacent to one of the cables. Judge Tom O'Donnell found John Whelan Ltd. guilty of failing to provide a safe system of work and safe working conditions, failure to prepare a safety statement, failure to provide adequate supports on block party walls and failure to ensure precautions were taken to prevent the collapse of block party walls.

# WHAT'S NEW?

**The following publications have been updated following the introduction of the new Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005:**

## **Guidelines on Risk Assessments and Safety Statements**

These guidelines are designed to help an employer or self-employed person to manage safety and health at their place of work. Carrying out a risk assessment and preparing a safety statement is not only central to any safety and health management system it is a legal requirement.

## **Workplace Safety and Health Management**

The guidance is aimed at enterprises with a well-defined management structure, where occupational safety and health management can be integrated into the general management system. It provides practical advice and recommendations on how an organisation can develop its occupational safety, health and welfare management system while complying with their legal requirements.

## **Safety Representatives and Safety Consultation Guidelines**

These guidelines are aimed at employers, employees, safety representatives, safety committee members and safety and health practitioners. They aim to give general guidance on the roles of each party in the process of safety consultation and representation, so that accidents and ill-health at work can be prevented.

## **The HSA and You!**

This leaflet gives a brief description of the roles and functions of the Health and Safety Authority and the duties of employer and employees. The leaflet is also available in Irish.



# Schedule of Events

Event	Date
Regional Consultation Meetings	1st quarter 2006
Regional Consultation Meetings	1st quarter 2006
Regional Farm Safety Training Sessions	1st quarter 2006
Media Launch of Cash in Transit Guidelines	1st quarter 2006
Launch of Strategy Statement	1st quarter 2006
Launch of Statistics Report	2nd quarter 2006
Launch of Farm Safety DVD	2nd quarter 2006
Launch of Quarry Regulations	2nd quarter 2006
Launch of Annual Report	2nd quarter 2006
Health and Safety Authority/ESB Conference	2nd quarter 2006
Launch of National Safety Week (Young People at Work)	2nd quarter 2006
Atlantic Alliance Conference	2nd quarter 2006
Farm Safety Week	2nd quarter 2006
Construction Safety Week	2nd quarter 2006
Quarry Safety Week	3rd quarter 2006
National Ploughing Championships	3rd quarter 2006
European Safety Week (23rd to 27th October)	4th quarter 2006
7th Conference of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology	4th quarter 2006

For further information log onto our website [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)

## 'Matters' online

Health and Safety Matters is now available online to over 4,000 subscribers. Since the service went live in January 2006 it has proved to be a highly popular method of staying 'up to the minute' with news and developments from the world of safety and health in the workplace. To avail of this service, simply log onto our website [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie) and sign up for your newsletter. While hard copies of 'Matters' are still being distributed you may wish to withdraw from this service by contacting [communications@hsa.ie](mailto:communications@hsa.ie).

## Questions Answered

We have a comprehensive FAQ's on our website which contains information on a number of workplace categories including: workplace conditions, bullying, stress, safety management, manual handling, asbestos, noise, construction, agriculture, chemical safety, hazardous substances, pregnant at work, working in confined spaces, first aid etc.

