

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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Trans Atlantic success

A ground breaking trans-Atlantic partnership has had its first success with a Dublin based company became the first European concern to land a prestigious international health and safety award.

GE Security, based in Citywest, 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).

The VPP award marks the achievement, by a company, of excellence in health and safety management. The VPP programme was developed by OSHA in the early 1980's to encourage companies to go beyond their legal obligation in protecting workers health and safety. In 2004 under the terms of a partnership arrangement between OSHA and Health and Safety Authority the VPP was introduced here as a pilot initiative. Ireland is the first country in Europe to operate the programme outside the United States.



Pictured l to r: Tom Beegan, CEO of the Health and Safety Authority and Ruben Berumen, Vice President, Global Supply Chain, GE at the recent VPP award ceremony

VPP is recognised as the 'gold standard' in health and safety and is particularly well regarded by US companies here. GE is the first Irish based company to achieve the VPP star and is one of five companies participating in the Irish pilot programme. When the first phase of this programme is complete as many as ten further companies will begin working towards achieving the award.

Tom Beegan congratulated GE Security on achieving the award and described the firm and its work force as 'trailblazers'. He said the Health and Safety Authority had been drawn to VPP because it marked a progressive and co-operative approach to health and safety in the workplace. The Health and Safety Authority have been particularly impressed with the level of employee involvement in working towards the star award.

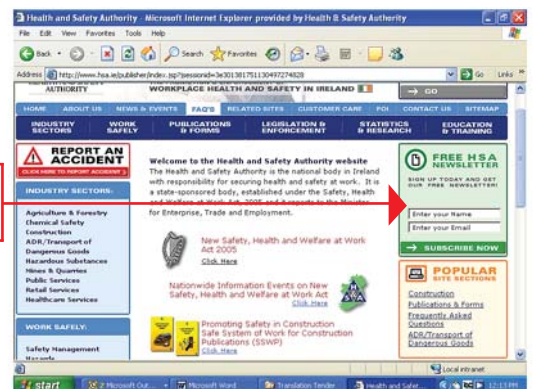
VPP sites report fewer workers fatalities, injuries and illnesses and are generally better places in which to work, he said. "We are best known as the enforcer of health and safety legislation but VPP demonstrates us working side by side with private companies willing to make the commitment and do what it takes to make their workplaces among the safest in the world- not because they have to, but because they want to," he said.

'Matters' wired to the world

This is an historic document. – the first edition of Health and Safety Matters that is wired to the world. From now on each edition of this newsletter will be available to you on the web.

Forget waiting for the postman now that 'Matters' will be just a click away. If you already get 'Matters' by mail why not make the change now and get wired.

It's really simple, go to the website www.hsa.ie and sign on for your newsletter. Then just sit back as your newsletter drops into your electronic letterbox for you to browse at your leisure. We plan to make it really easy for 'Matters' readers as future editions will be in headline from which you can access articles and information of particular interest to you.



Health and Safety Authority Public Consultation Seminars

on Code of Practice Risk Assessment Document for the Agriculture sector.

The Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, came into effect on 1st September. This permits employers, with three or less employees, and self-employed, persons, including farmers, to meet their requirements regarding preparation of a Safety Statement by preparing and implementing a Risk Assessment prepared under a Code of Practice for the particular sector.

Public Consultation Seminars on the Content and Format of a draft Code of Practice Risk Assessment Document for the Agriculture sector will take place at the following Venues and Dates:

Tuesday 15th November: Ardboyne Hotel, Navan, Co Meath.

Wednesday 16th November: Clanree Hotel, Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

Tuesday 22nd November: Teagasc Centre, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.

Wednesday 23rd November: Munster Arms Hotel, Bandon Co. Cork.

All consultation seminars commence at 8.00 pm.

The consultation seminars are being organized in conjunction with the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee to the Health and Safety Authority.

The Code of Practice Risk Assessment Document may also be viewed on the Health and Safety Authority Web Site www.hsa.ie or from any HSA office, nationally. Any observations, comments or suggestions can be forwarded to the Health and Safety Authority up to 10th December, 2005.

National Ploughing Championships

The 2005 National Ploughing Championships were held at Dick & Maureen Forrest farm in Mogeely Midleton Co. Cork on the 27th, 28th and 29th September and HSA were there.

The event attracted record crowds of up to 150,000 over the course of the three-days. The Championship provided the Authority with an excellent opportunity to engage face to face with the farming community, and promote our safety message.

The Health and Safety Authority provided visitors to our marquee with the opportunity of speaking to our excellent team of Inspectors and Admin staff on a one to one basis. Over 3,000 Farm Safety Self Assessment documents and Farm Safety Handbooks were distributed along with a variety of other publications on safety and health.

The Authority ran a free draw for a weekend away and a children's colouring competition to which we received an excellent response. Winners will be announced shortly.

The Health and Safety Authority will be taking a stand at the 2006 National Ploughing Championships. Details as follows:
27th/28th September - 75th Year of the National Ploughing Championships followed by the 29th/30th September - World Ploughing Contest all at Grangeford, Tullow, Co. Carlow.

For further details log onto the National Ploughing Association website: <http://www.npa.ie>



Pictured l to r: Maura Kavanagh, Pauline Chatham and Pat Griffin of the Health and Safety Authority

Laois is safe and sound

Laois is safe, and sound and that's official, or at least it will be for the next twelve months.

The midlands county is the focus of an impressive focus on health and safety that began in October and will run right through until October 2006. Laois County Development Board, through its Safe Environment Task Group is running the Keep Laois safe Campaign targeting a separate health and safety issue each month.

The Health and Safety Authority is supporting the venture and helped kick off the campaign by choosing the county town, Portlaoise, as the location for the launch of European Safety Week. Authority CEO Tom Beegan and Chairman Jim Lyons travelled down to Portlaoise to launch the effort.

Portlaoise was chosen of the location for the launch because of the county's commitment to the promotion of a healthy and safe environment for all. Indeed, Laois looks like setting a headline for other counties to follow.

Among the topics to be covered during Laois's year as the national capital of health and safety will be, Safety in Business (March 2006), On the farm (April) and Construction (June).



Pictured l to r: Larry Kavanagh, Cathaoirleach of Laois County Council, Jim Lyons, Chairman of the Health and Safety Authority and Tom Beegan, CEO of the Health and Safety Authority

Our new 'Chemistry' set!

The European Commission has proposed a new Regulation dealing with the risks of both new and existing chemical substances, manufactured or imported into the EU. The new regime involves processes of Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals, known by the acronym REACH.

The Health and Safety Authority, as the National Competent Authority for REACH in Ireland will introduce the New REACH Unit to its establishment in the coming months. REACH will include requirements to register all chemicals on a phased prioritised basis and within certain quantity thresholds. The new proposal places much greater emphasis on public health and protection of the environment than the current legislation.

A new European Chemicals Agency, to be located in Helsinki, will be established which will monitor, support and coordinate the measures to be implemented in the Member States by the National Competent Authorities.

The role of the HSA for the administration of REACH in Ireland will include:

- Provision of advice and information to relevant stakeholders and the general public through a helpdesk and information campaigns
- Performance of compliance checks of registrations submitted by industry under REACH
- Evaluation of technical dossiers submitted by industry to fulfil their registration duties; in particular proposals for further testing for effects of a substance on human health or the environment
- Detailed evaluation of the effects of particular priority hazardous chemicals
- Drafting of decisions on requirements for further information if a chemical poses a particular risk
- Participation in the process of authorisation of certain hazardous chemicals
- Participation in the process of restrictions on the manufacturing, marketing and use of certain hazardous chemicals
- Participation in EU technical working groups and committees
- Enforcement of the REACH Regulation in Ireland

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dublin Circuit Criminal Court imposes €100,000 fines

On 18th October 2005 Dublin Circuit Criminal Court imposes fines totalling €100,000 on Gerard F May Roofing following an investigation into the death of an employee in December 2002. The employee fell from a roof at St MacDaras School, Dublin due to lack of edge protection.

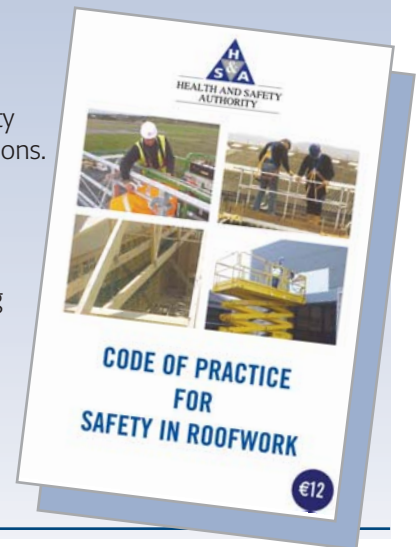
Gerard F May Roofing pleaded guilty to failing to ensure the safety, health and welfare of its employees and for failing to provide a guardrail to prevent an employee from falling. In passing sentence Judge Desmond Hogan said: "it was an unfortunate accident of which the terrible consequence was the demise and extinguishment of a life".

Code of Practice for Safety in Roofwork

The Code of Practice is the result of a joint initiative between the Health and Safety Authority, the Construction Industry Federation and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. It aims to improve the level of safety with which roof work is carried out. In particular, it aims to reduce the incidence of falls from or through roofs during their construction and after they have been constructed.

The Code of Practice gives practical guidance on how to work safely on roofs, including the maintenance of roof-mounted plant and services and how to design and plan for safe working. It covers new buildings, repair, maintenance, cleaning work and demolition. It also gives guidance for those not directly involved in roof work.

The Code of Practice is available to download from the Authority's website: www.hsa.ie



GET INFORMED AND GET SAFE!

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 came into effect on 1 September. The Health and Safety Authority has produced a range of publications designed to assist employers and employees understand the main provisions of the new Act. The publications are:

THE SHORT GUIDE — FREE

Guide to the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 — €20

A poster/wallchart outlining the main provisions — Free

These are now available from the Authority's website at www.hsa.ie or by Locall 1890 289389

