



**Northern Ireland  
Safety Group**

# SAFE & SOUND

The Newsletter of the NISG www.nisg.org.uk Vol.5 Issue 11 November 2005

## Chairman's Round-up

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Welcome to our November edition of the magazine and as usual it is packed with interesting information.

October was a very busy month in the Irish H&S calendar with the NISO annual conference being held in the Citywest Hotel. The speakers and topics were as usual excellent and provided food for thought. The Annual Safety Awards dinner was also held in the hotel and six of NISG organisations successfully won awards. Congratulations must go to all the organisations who entered the scheme for their hard work and dedication.

As a committee we are continually reviewing our systems of operation, and

are currently in the process of developing an action plan, which we will share with you at our January meeting. The action plan aims to improve the organisation. However as a group I would appreciate it if you have any suggestions on how we can improve our service for you or members, that you speak to any of the committee members, or send a quick email.

We are also currently looking for topics for our meetings during 2006 and would appreciate your ideas for topics, presenters, or sponsors, please let us know.

Believe it or not it is that time of year again when the Executive committee

is looking for new committee members. If you feel you have the time, commitment and are interested in becoming more involved within the organisation please speak to a committee member.

Next months meeting is the final meeting for 2005, and is scheduled for 19 December in the HSENI Training Resource Centre at Ladas Drive. The Safety Awards will be presented by Peter McKie, Chairman, HSENI and the speaker will Mr be Allan Henry who will be covering the topic 'Noise at Work'.

I look forward to seeing you all there.

**Liam Kelly  
Chairman**

### CALLS FOR EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY INSURANCE REFORM

Britain's manufacturers have called for a renewed drive to address deficiencies in the system of Employers' Liability Insurance (ELI).

Findings from a survey conducted by manufacturers' organisation, the EEF show:

- Wild swings in the level of premiums remain, with a maximum reported increase and decrease of 273% and 73% respectively.
- Whilst large firms are tending to benefit from reductions in

premiums, small and medium size firms are bearing the brunt of the ELI increases.

- Despite a commitment from the insurance sector that premiums should reflect risk exposure and assessment, 73% of companies with an externally verified safety management system believed this did not result in a more favourable premium.

The EEF believes that fundamental weaknesses remain in the way the current ELI system

operates. Spokesman, Gary Booton, said "A System which has financial compensation rather than rehabilitation and return to work as its focus is not one serving the best interests of society. In particular, whilst government has produced a number of documents supporting the concept of rehabilitation, it has failed to grasp the nettle and show leadership in this area."



## HSENI UPDATES HSENI UPDATES HSENI

### HSENI THROWS ITS WEIGHT BEHIND SMOKING BAN

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland today announced its backing for the smoking ban in all enclosed public places and workplaces which Health Minister, Sean Woodward, announced yesterday.

Professor Peter McKie,

HSENI Chairman and Chair of the 'Working for Health' Implementation Group said:

**"All of us who are concerned with the health of people at work welcome this announcement. It is good news for both the public and for people at work**

particularly hospitality workers. All employees have the right to work in an environment which is safe and which does not harm health"

He added "Workplace exposure to passive smoke is an important preventable

cause of ill health I welcome the proposals unequivocally.

Our health, the health service, workplaces and the economy all stand to benefit".

### SAFETY ALERT CONCERNING OLDER SLURRY TANKS

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) has issued an alert concerning older block-built slurry tanks on farms. Some of those built in the 1960's / 70's may be structurally suspect. The warning comes after the recent collapse of a slurry tank where a worker was rescued after being submerged in slurry.

The tank involved had been constructed using concrete blocks and was divided into two by a central wall to support the slats. An opening 600mm x 600mm (2ftx2ft) had been cut in the wall to allow the slurry levels to equalise on either side of the wall. Over time, a crust of slurry built up in and blocked the opening. When additional water was added, to assist

mixing of the slurry, the liquid level rose higher on one side of the wall than the other and caused it to collapse. The slats, along with a worker who was standing there, fell into the tank.

Ken Logan, Principal Health and Safety Inspector and HSENI's construction specialist said: **"It is vital that this type of incident is not repeated. If this worker had been working alone he would have lost his life. The agricultural industry must learn lessons from this incident by addressing the following issues: - Older tanks with dividing walls (of block-wall construction) and limited openings are potential death traps during mixing and emptying operations if slurry is allowed to build up at one side. It is**

**important to realise that some of the older designs may be suspect and weakened by long term exposure to slurry and effluent. If you have a slurry tank of this description you must take action by having its structural stability assessed by a suitably qualified person.**

The remedial actions identified must be implemented as soon as possible with an interim management plan put in place to ensure that people are not put at risk in the meantime.

If the remedial action involves substantial reconstruction of the tank (i.e. over 10% of the tank is reconstructed), the reconstruction must

comply with The Control of Pollution (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 (SSAFO) and the original parts of the tank must remain fit for purpose. Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) must be notified, before the tank is brought back into use, by means of the appropriate Notification form signed by a chartered civil or structural engineer".

Mr Logan added: "Further information on safety in agriculture is readily obtained by visiting our Information and Advice Centre at 83, Ladas Drive, Belfast, contacting our freephone Helpline on 0800 0320 121 or visiting the HSENI website [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk)".

### NEW ASBESTOS ADVISORY SERVICE

HSENI announced a new regional Asbestos Advisory Service aimed at providing information and advice to small businesses, the voluntary and community sector and to householders on how to live safely with the asbestos that is to be found in many of our commercial, public and domestic premises.

In welcoming the new initiative Professor Peter

McKie, Chairman of HSENI said: **"Asbestos presents us all with many challenges. However having access to the independent and authoritative advice and information that this new service will provide is key to ensuring that we can make informed decisions on how we can all live more safely with the asbestos that forms part of the fabric of the**

**buildings in which we work, live and play."**

He added: **"There has never been a more pressing need for simple, practical and independent advice on how we can safely manage this material. HSENI has recognised the increasing demand for this new service which will complement the extensive legal and licensing measures that**

**are already in place to control the risks from asbestos in the workplace."**

The Asbestos Advisory Service can be contacted on the Helpline 0800 0320 121 or by emailing [asbestos@detini.gov.uk](mailto:asbestos@detini.gov.uk). HSENI is also producing leaflets for distribution, covering the background on asbestos and giving advice on dealing safely with asbestos.

## RoSPA CALLS FOR SWITCH TO LIGHTER NIGHTS TO SAVE LIVES

With deaths on Britain's roads expected to rise again after the clocks go back this weekend, RoSPA today urged the Government to switch to a system that would bring lighter evenings all-year-round.



The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents believes around 450 deaths and serious injuries would be avoided on the country's roads each year simply by altering the way clocks are changed in autumn and spring.

The Society wants the

Government to bring in a three-year time trial to prove how lives could be saved. Under the current system, road casualty rates increase after the clocks are moved at the end of October, with the arrival of darker evenings and worsening weather conditions. In 2004, road deaths rose from 269 in October to 300 in November and to 323 in December. Pedestrian deaths went up from 56 in October to 76 in November and 78 in December and the overall casualty rate for road accidents also increased.

The RoSPA plan is for Single/Double Summertime. Rather than reverting to Greenwich Mean Time in October, the clocks would stay one-hour ahead until spring when they would be put forward another hour in March. This would result in

darker mornings, but an extra hour of evening daylight throughout the year. Once the initial adjustments had been made the clocks would still be moved backwards and forwards by an hour in autumn and spring, but would always stay ahead of GMT.

Kevin Clinton, RoSPA Head of Road Safety, said: "We will continue to lobby the Government urging it to support the scheme for lighter evenings all-year-round. Studies show that vulnerable road users such as children and the elderly are more at risk during dark evenings than in the morning."

All road users need to take extra care in the coming weeks as visibility and weather conditions deteriorate. Motorists should watch their speed

as the nights become darker, and be aware that they are less likely to see vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. People should check their lights and brakes and have their cars serviced for the winter. Parents should ensure children wear bright clothing, preferably with fluorescent or reflective strips. They should check cycles to make sure reflectors are clean and fit new batteries to lights. Children should be reminded that it will soon be dark on their way home and that it will be difficult for motorists to see them.

For further information visit the [Road Safety](#) section of the RoSPA web site.

## HSENI TRAINING AND RESOURCE CENTRE

### Conference Facilities

HSENI's Training and Resource Centre is located on the ground floor of its Belfast Headquarters and is available at no charge to not-for-profit organisations engaged in promoting health and safety to run their own events and for employers' representative groups, unions and students etc. as an extension to the services already on offer through HSENI's Information and Advice Centre. HSENI's premises, including the Centre, are compliant with Disability Discrimination Act requirements.

The facility is specially designed to be self-contained and is equipped

with the following:-

- a conference room provided with a smart board, overhead projector and microphones;
- video conferencing system;
- theatre style layout capacity 70 (numbers may need to be limited based on catering requirements);
- board room style layout capacity 24;
- computer equipment to run presentations;
- induction loop system;
- a kitchen, crockery & cutlery, which allows the option of either bringing in your own food and beverages or ordering from outside caterers;
- convenient car

parking;  
toilet facilities.

A more comprehensive list of presentational and video conferencing equipment, kitchen equipment, crockery, caterers and information on directions and car parking is given on [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk). Please note that the Centre does not have facilities to keep food hot or cold so you should arrange delivery for immediate use.

In addition, delegates can also take the opportunity to visit the Information and Advice Centre which provides a comprehensive range of health and safety information resources for customers. The Centre facilities include:-

- a wide range of reference materials in electronic and traditional formats;
  - a video lending library;
  - Internet access for research of health and safety information.
- For further information please contact HSENI's One-2-One Advisory Service at 83 Ladas Drive, Belfast, BT6 9FR, tel 028 9024 3249.



## WESTLIFE CONCERT FIREWORKS - COMPANY FINED

A fireworks accident at a Westlife concert in Ipswich has cost a company £6000 after a court appearance.

Rocket Pyrotechnics Ltd of Dartford pleaded guilty to offences under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 at Ipswich Magistrates Court. The case follows an investigation by Ipswich Borough Council.



The display, held in July 2004, was the finale to the concert in Chantry Park. It was found that the company had failed to secure in place two suitable racks of Class 4

fireworks, causing the explosives to topple over and shoot out into the crowd of Westlife fans. The fireworks injured a member of the public and a security guard and burst through the metal fencing surrounding the concert.

Karen Dunne, Senior Environmental Health Officer at Ipswich Borough Council, said: 'Fireworks of this nature at any fireworks display must be buried, staked or secured in place in some way to prevent them from falling over, otherwise the consequences can be fatal.'



## Hearing Conservation Seminar

Alan Henry, Aearo Limited's Northern sales representative will be conducting a Hearing Conservation Seminar on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2005 to the Northern Ireland Safety Group.

Unlike most injuries, noise induced hearing loss is something few people take seriously. Only those who have suffered already or those who have been taught, really understand the consequences of loss of hearing. Alan will explain the dangers of noise; what is dangerous noise and the different products

available to protect your hearing.

Aearo Limited is a leading manufacturer of Personal Protective Equipment. Amongst their products are E-A-R hearing protection products, which include the famous Classic roll-down earplugs to banded hearing protectors and Peltor hearing defenders and communication headsets.

Alan Henry holds the NEBOSH certificate in Occupational Safety and Health and is also fully trained by the Institute of Acoustics in assessing workplace noise.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Event:** NISG Meeting  
**Date:** 19 December 2005  
**Time:** 2.00 for 2.15pm  
**Venue:** HSENI Training Resource Centre, Ladas Drive, Belfast  
**Topic:** Noise at Work  
**Speaker:** Mr Allan Henry

**Event:** NISG Meeting  
**Date:** 16 January 2006  
**Time:** 2.15 for 2.30pm  
**Venue:** TBC  
**Topic:** TBC  
**Speaker:** TBC

## NISG Officers and Committee

<b>President</b>	Wilson Lambe
<b>Chairman</b>	Liam Kelly
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	Jim Leitch
<b>Publicity</b>	Nicky McClintock
<b>Past Chairman</b>	David Cooke
<b>Committee</b>	Bill McAllister Heather McKinstry Brian Walker Nicola Ward John Gordon Mike Keating Priscilla Woods Colin McDowell Tom Stephenson Jim Pow
<b>Secretary</b>	Zoe Moran

## NISG Contact Details

**NISG Secretary**  
 71 Victoria Rise,  
 Carrickfergus, BT38 7UZ  
 Ph/Fax 028 9336 8928  
 email [info@nisg.org.uk](mailto:info@nisg.org.uk)

## Patrons:

