

Even a single death is one too many

Last year was marked by the introduction of the new Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. Both employers and employees now have significant responsibilities under the Act. One of the core aims of this new legislation is to create a positive safety culture in all workplaces, across all sectors, so that the number of injuries and fatalities are reduced. Workplace safety should be a priority for all employers in 2006. Unfortunately the figures yet again show that this message may not be getting across to everyone. So far this year we have already lost 10 people due to work related fatalities.



Workplace fatalities in 2006 **, broken down by economic sector:

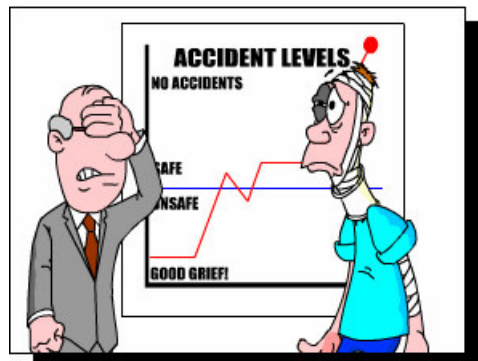
- Agriculture, forestry, hunting – 4
- Mining, quarrying – 1
- Manufacturing – 1
- Construction – 1
- Wholesale, retail, repair – 1
- Transport, storage, communication – 1
- Community, social, personal services – 1

** Figures taken from period of January 1st to April 10th 2006.

There were 73 work-related deaths in Ireland in 2005. This figure was up from 49 in 2004. The figures, issued by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) indicate that the same industry sectors remain the most dangerous: construction and agriculture. The most common causes of workplace fatalities were:

- Fall, collapse or breakage of material
- Falls from height
- Loss of control of transport or handling equipment

Last year the most common causes of non-fatal accidents reported to the authority 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.



Agriculture

The HSA have announced, as part of their Farm Safety Campaign this year that 500 proactive examinations nationwide are to take place in a bid to cut the death toll within the farming community.

The HSA figures show the following trend in Ireland's farm fatalities:

- This year alone (2006) there has been 4 deaths
- In 2005, a total of 18 deaths occurred in the farming sector
- 5 of these fatalities were animal-related
- Over the past 3 years, 50% of fatalities involved people over the age of 65 years.
- Children were involved in some 20% of Irish farm deaths
- Over 3,000 accidents cause injury each year on Irish farms

Included in the HSA Farm Safety Campaign 2006 are the following:

- Continued national television advertising campaign
- A safety advertisement in marts nationwide
- Distribution of a farm safety DVD
- Rolling out the Authority's Farm Self assessment system

