

## HEALTHY WORKPLACES MANAGE DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES CAMPAIGN



The 2018-19 European Agency for Safety and Health at Work Campaign aims at raising awareness of the risks posed by **dangerous substances in the workplace** and **promoting a culture of risk prevention to eliminate or effectively manage these risks**.

For the purpose of this campaign, a dangerous substance in the workplace is any substance, in gas, liquid or solid form, including an aerosol, fume or vapour, that poses a risk to workers' health or safety.

Dangerous substances continue to be a major safety and health issue

in workplaces. According to a recent EU survey, 38% of enterprises reported that chemical or biological substances in the form of liquids, fumes or dust were present in their workplaces (biological agents are not included in the scope of the campaign topic). 18% of the surveyed workers in the EU reported being exposed to chemical products or substances for at least a quarter of their working time.



These dangers may be present in our workplaces. Ask yourself

- **Are you aware of them?**
- **Have you assessed the risk from them?**
- **Are your current controls effective/adequate?**
- **Do you need to do more?**

The Campaign commences on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and will run for 2 years.

Additional support available [www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing](http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing)

Use our new A- Z search feature for the chemical FAQ and risk assessment form.

Campaign website <https://healthy-workplaces.eu/>

### In this Edition:

- European campaign 2018-2019
- Safety Representative Network
- Risk Assessment Terminology
- HSA Work Programme 2018
- Driving & Drugs
- Learn & Share
- What's New
- Pregnant Employees

## ARE YOU A SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE?

The National Health and Safety Function (NHSF) is establishing a **support and networking programme** for our Health and Safety Representatives. The programme consists of a one day workshop held at multiple locations nationally, followed by ongoing education and support.

We aim to make contact with our Safety Representatives through local Safety Committees over the coming weeks. However if you are a Safety Representative and you want to find out more please contact us directly by emailing [lily.conway@hse.ie](mailto:lily.conway@hse.ie)



## RISK ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY



This section provides us with an opportunity to share the common requests logged to our [helpdesk](#).

Managers undertaking risk assessments have sought clarification over certain terms used in the new risk assessment forms.

**Most common queries:**

**Source of Risk:** This is the source from which the risk was identified e.g. incident, risk assessment, audit/inspection

**Primary Impact Category:** e.g. Harm to Person (left column of Impact matrix)

**Risk Owner:** Is the person with accountability and authority to manage the risk

**Risk Coordinator:** The person supplying expertise when necessary on the subject matter of the risk being assessed

**Risk Assessor:** The person/s completing the risk assessment.

Further definitions can be found in the recent [guidance on completing of the risk assessment form](#) and are available in the [Integrated Risk Management Policy](#).

## HEALTH AND SAFETY AUTHORITY (HSA) PROGRAMME OF WORK, 2018

In February, the HSA published details of key priorities and inspection targets in their [Programme of Work, 2018](#). The HSA plan to complete a total of 140 healthcare inspections on the following topics:

- \* Manual handling (30)
- \* Patient handling (30)
- \* Night and shift work (30)
- \* Work-related violence and aggression (30)
- \* Work related stress (20)

See our [Fast Fact “When the inspector calls”](#) to get an overview of what preparation is required by a service pre-inspection, what a HSA inspection involves and how to manage the findings.

**Ergonomics and Manual Handling:**

The HSA aims to deliver a series of three seminars on the use of practical ergonomic risk assessment tools to increase the knowledge and understanding of occupational health risks related to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and their management.

They also intend to complete 60 inspections of MSD risk management in healthcare.

**Safety Representatives:**

The HSA will be promoting the resources available to safety representatives and during inspections will undertake a survey to ascertain the resources made available to safety representatives at places of work.

They will also promote the importance of the engagement of safety representatives with employees.

This is opportune in view of the National Health and Safety Function (NHSF) forthcoming in-house project to provide additional support for our nominated safety representatives (see front page).

## DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS

Did you know that The Road Traffic Act, 2016 has been updated?

The legislation came into force in April 2017 and employees who drive for work should be aware of the changes.

It states that a person **must not be impaired** (through alcohol, drugs or any combination of both) **while in charge of a mechanically propelled vehicle**.

Gardaí can now request drivers to undergo a preliminary drug test for a number of specified drugs such as Cannabis, Cocaine, Opiates and Benzodiazepines. As new threshold limits have

been set for these drugs, Gardaí will use preliminary drug testing devices at the roadside or in Garda station to test a person's oral fluid.

If any of these drugs are above the specified limits, the driver can be prosecuted for drug driving even if the driving is not impaired.

In addition, you should be aware that the test can also detect Codeine, used in over the counter drugs such as Nurofen Plus® and Solpadeine®. This is not a problem if the driver is not impaired. However codeine and antihistamines may cause

impairment which could affect the ability to drive safely.

Therefore, it is important to follow the advice provided by your Doctor and/or Pharmacist when taking any medicines and always read the patient information leaflet which will advise on recommended dosages and whether the medicine can affect your ability to drive.

People who have been prescribed medicinal cannabinoids (medical marijuana) are supplied with a statutory medical exemption certificate and this should be carried at

all times whilst driving.

The penalty for drug driving is the same as for drink driving—a maximum of €5000 fine and up to six months imprisonment or summary conviction.

Source - Enterprise Risk Network (ERN) Notice: NTMA Legislation Update – 2017 (1)

**ALWAYS ASK—  
IS IT SAFE FOR**



**ME TO DRIVE?**

## LEARN AND SHARE — EMPLOYEE DIES WHEN WORKING WITH LIQUID NITROGEN

The death of a worker who was asphyxiated by liquid nitrogen, in London in 2011, could have been prevented says the **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**. A male employee was working late and while decanting liquid

nitrogen, to freeze blood samples, was asphyxiated. An incident investigation found the local exhaust ventilation (provided to extract dangerous substances; in this case liquid nitrogen) had been switched off. The investigation found that the employee's death could have been prevented if the extraction system had been switched on.

The HSE inspector, Anne Gloor explained: "Liquid nitrogen rapidly expands as

a gas replacing the oxygen in a room and creating a situation where life cannot be sustained. The employee was working alone with liquid nitrogen in a small room without any extraction. If the extraction system had been switched on, the employee would not have died. There should have been a system in place to prevent the extraction being switched off, a proper system of maintaining the equipment and clear arrangements for preventing

lone working with liquid nitrogen."



### Where do you use Liquid Nitrogen?

- Dermatology Units
- Out Patients departments
- Emergency departments
- Labs

**Have you reviewed your safe systems of work?**

# What's New



## National Health and Safety Function



**A– Z Search** function is now available on our website.

### Safety Alerts

Change in Occupational Exposure Limit value (OELv) for Formaldehyde



Display Screen Equipment safety alert reviewed



## Internationally

New **OSH standard ISO 45001** launched more about this standard in the next edition.

EU Campaign 2018/19 Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances

Campaign Guide & Campaign Leaflet



## Health and Safety Authority

Preventing Slips trips and Falls at Work



Choosing Slip Resistant Footwear



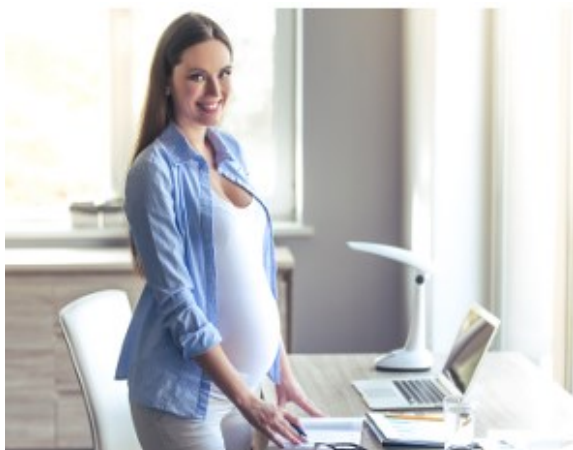
**ON THE WAY:** Look out for the launch of the NEW **Corporate Safety Statement** over the coming weeks.

## EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO PREGNANT STAFF

In some workplaces, there are risks that may affect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers and that of their child. There are specific laws that require employers to protect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers.

Once notified of your employees' pregnancy, you are required to complete a [pregnancy risk assessment](#) with your employee. This process reviews working conditions and exposures, identifying control measures to ensure that the risk is reduced to a reasonable level. The risk assessment must signed off by the employee's manager. For more information and guidance on potential workplace exposures, please refer to our safety advisory guidance note on [Completing a Pregnant Employee Risk Assessment](#).

As an employer you are required to review workplace risks. However to safeguard the health of both the expectant mother and unborn child you are required to review the pregnancy risk assessment with your employee regularly throughout the pregnancy. This makes sense as the employees physical form will change and her physical demands increase during the progression of her pregnancy. A regular review of the pregnancy risk assessment ensures that all risks are reviewed and



controls identified and implemented as appropriate. It also provides an opportunity for your employee to inform you of any concerns they may have in relation to their pregnancy and work exposures. These safety measures should not be news to your employees, this information should be reviewed at departmental meetings so that the risk assessment is seen as a positive, proactive safety step for the benefit of your employees. For more information please go to [www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing](http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing) or log a call with the helpdesk for support and assistance.