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# Connect Issue 20 16 March 2009

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### Welcome to the latest issue of *Connect*

Hello and welcome to *Connect*.

IOSH has challenged the HSE to be more radical when it comes to moving health and safety forward.

Responding to the Executive's new strategy published recently, IOSH believes that it "simply hasn't gone far enough" and that the HSE needs to "look outside the box" to come up with workable solutions.

Although broadly welcoming the strategy, IOSH recommends that the HSE should:

- strengthen its goal on investigation and enforcement
- concentrate on reducing the incidence rate of ill health as well as the level of exposure to health hazards
- include the need to share lessons following incidents
- offer clear, government-funded advice to small businesses.

You can view the HSE's strategy document [here](#) and IOSH's response [here](#).

In this issue of *Connect*, we carry the first in a series of articles on REACH. Although the regulation has been around for nearly two years, many organisations are still unaware of what they need to do, and how the law affects them. As the European Chemicals Agency prepares its first recommendation for priority substances for authorisation, *Connect* looks at the controls designed to tackle the increase in chemical-related illness in Europe.

Also in this issue, to coincide with next month's 20th anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster, we talk to Ken Lewis, deputy safety officer at Liverpool Football Club, about the lessons football has learned from the tragedy.

Leslie Scorgie, safety advisor for SAFE and chair of the North of Scotland Branch, is the latest to take the 60 Second Interview hotseat where he talks about walking over hot coals to raise money for charity and bust the myth of the health and safety 'stereotype'.

Remember, *Connect* carries all your group and branch information together with the latest CPD and IPD updates, and jobs in your area. There's also news from across the industry and a couple of hot topics from our online forums.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Connect*. If you have any comments, or want to be featured in one of our articles, please [drop me a line](#).

Shaun Gibbons  
e-Editor, IOSH

### Guidance: what you need to know

#### REACH

##### Headlines

- Allergies, asthma, reproductive disorders and certain types of cancer are on the rise in Europe. It's thought that chemicals may be contributing to this increase
- The European Trade Union Confederation suggests that a third of all recognised occupational diseases in

- Europe are related to chemical exposure
- The European Commission estimates that there isn't enough information about effects and safe handling for 99 per cent of chemicals
- Only chemical substances that have been pre-registered with REACH can now be legally imported or manufactured in quantities over 1 tonne a year

## What is it?

REACH is a European Community Regulation which replaced several European directives and regulations with a single system for managing chemical hazards. It's not new - it took effect from 1 June 2007 - but many organisations are still in the dark over its implications and effects, and in particular may have missed the 1 December 2008 deadline for pre-registration.

REACH stands for the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs gives this explanation of REACH:

**R**egistration of basic information of substances to be submitted by companies, in a central database

**E**valuation of the registered information to determine hazards and risks

**A**uthorisation requirements and restrictions imposed on the use of high concern substances. This process will be used for both new and old...

**C**hemicals.

The European Chemicals Agency, based in Helsinki, will co-ordinate registration of an estimated 30,000 chemicals over the next decade.

The Health and Safety Executive is the competent authority for REACH in the UK.

## Why has it been introduced?

The key aim behind the new regulation is to improve communication between manufacturers and downstream users to help protect people and the environment. The idea is to share better knowledge of the nature and impact of chemical substances across manufacturers, importers and users. Manufacturers and importers are responsible for understanding and managing the risks of using the chemicals they supply and providing information to users.

## What does it cover?

'Chemicals' may exist as substances (a chemical element and its compounds in a natural state or as a result of manufacturing), preparations (a mixture or solution of two or more substances) and articles (items containing substances which will be released when they're used). Normally, it's the individual chemicals in a preparation or an article that need to be registered.

Nearly every organisation is a downstream user, as chemicals are found in paint, glue and cleaning materials.

If you buy the chemical from outside the EU (in sufficient quantities) you also count as an importer for REACH purposes, even if you only use the chemical within your organisation.

If your organisation makes chemicals to supply to others, or to use within the organisation, you're considered a manufacturer under REACH.

Chemical substances manufactured or imported under 1 tonne don't need to be registered. Annex IV of REACH lists chemicals (such as distilled water and carbon dioxide) which don't need to be registered. The annex was amended in October 2008, and may change again in the future.

## What difference will it make?

Many organisations are still unaware of the effect that REACH could have on them. For example, chemicals that REACH categorises as 'substances of very high concern' are subject to extra controls, and in the long term may become illegal. Some chemicals you use may disappear from the supply chain. Risk assessments will also be affected, with additional information provided to users in safety data sheets.

Manufacturers and importers now have to provide and share information on the hazards of chemicals they manufacture or import from outside the EU.

## What do I need to do now?

Decide whether your organisation is a manufacturer, importer or downstream user (remember, you may fall into more than one category) and read the appropriate HSE guide for users, importers or manufacturers.

In brief, manufacturers and importers should have pre-registered information about chemical substances with the European Chemicals Agency before 1 December 2008. If your organisation hasn't done this, you need to contact the UK REACH compliance team.

For the time being, downstream users should continue to follow the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, making sure that each chemical used is risk assessed, taking account of safety data sheets and looking at how the chemical is used within the job.

If your organisation uses chemicals in an unusual way, you should contact your supplier to make sure they are aware of how you use them. If you don't want to let your supplier know how you use chemicals (for example, because of the need for commercial secrecy) you should contact the European Chemicals Agency direct to make sure that your method of use is registered, and that hazard information is shared.

## Watch this space

In June 2009 the European Chemicals Agency will publish its first recommendation of priority substances for authorisation, and an inventory of restrictions. Deadlines for registration and decisions on further substances stretch as far into the future as June 2022.

In future issues of Connect, we'll look in more detail at the responsibilities of manufacturers, importers and downstream users under REACH.

## IOSH viewpoint

IOSH welcomes REACH, seeing it as having a positive effect on health and safety by improving communication between chemical suppliers and users, making manufacturers and importers take more responsibility for the substances they market, and steering employers in their duty to control exposure risks.

But to achieve this, we believe it's essential that the HSE has the right resources to carry out its role properly in the UK - for example covering extra training for inspectors.

We've also recommended that 'Chemical essentials', an online guidance tool for health, safety and environmental advice on using chemicals at work, should be used to store information about exposure scenarios and risk management measures from manufacturers and suppliers.

## IOSH events

The following branches are holding events on REACH:

- [Midland](#) - Wednesday 25 March
- [Ireland](#) - Thursday 26 March
- [South Wales](#) - Thursday 21 May

## Related links:

- [Health and Safety Executive](#)
- [The European Commission](#)
- [EC Directive 1907/2006](#)
- [European Chemicals Agency](#)

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## Spotlight: a matter of life and death

**Next month marks the 20th anniversary of the Hillsborough stadium disaster which claimed the lives of 96 Liverpool FC supporters. *Connect* talks to Ken Lewis, Deputy Safety Officer at Anfield, about the lessons learned after the tragedy...**

Many of us can recall the shocking TV pictures from April 1989 when 96 Liverpool fans were killed after the Leppings Lane end stand at Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough stadium became dangerously overcrowded during an FA Cup final with Nottingham Forest.

The scenes of fans carrying bodies on makeshift stretchers made from advertising hoardings had a profound impact not only in England but across the world, sparking an enquiry headed by Lord Justice Taylor into ground safety.

The disaster happened, concluded the Taylor Report, because most Liverpool fans entering the terraces headed for two central pens. The official capacity of these pens was around 2,000, but the Health and Safety Executive later found that this should have been reduced to 1,600 as the crush barriers didn't conform to the 1986 'Guide to safety at sports grounds'. It's estimated that more than 3,000 fans were in each of these pens shortly after kick off.

Twenty years on, and the city of Liverpool is still living with the scars of that day. Ken, a 'Red' all his life, sits at his office desk overlooked by a picture of the legendary Liverpool manager Bill Shankly and his most famous quote: "Some people believe football is a matter of life and death. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that."

So what lessons have been learnt following the Hillsborough disaster?

"Following the Taylor Report," said Ken, "the Football Licensing Authority was set up to look into ground and spectator safety. We have two FLA representatives here in the North West who regularly visit football grounds to make sure safety processes are in place. Normally, they'd take part in briefing meetings with stewards and basically just assess what is happening on a match day. In fact, an FLA representative was at Anfield recently for the FA Cup game with Everton."

One of the most controversial findings from the Taylor Report was that of all-seater stadiums. All-seater stadiums have been compulsory in the English Premiership since the start of the 1994-95 season. In the past, there have been calls for Premiership grounds to be allowed to have standing areas, but these have always been rejected.

The move from traditional standing on the terraces to all-seater stadiums has had its critics, usually from supporters who claim that some of the atmosphere is lost because crowds aren't able to stand. But despite strict rules on standing, Ken acknowledges that it is often hard to police.

"Persistent standing is largely a customer care issue. It has to be recognised that most fans, particularly those behind the goals, will stand at times of excitement. Despite persistent standing, the majority of injuries are very minor and most occur during goal celebrations."

Better staff training, in particular steward training, was another lesson learnt after Hillsborough.

"There has definitely been an increase in the amount of staff training over the past few years, and I think the quality of training has got better too.

"Years ago, stewards were just keen fans with a cup of tea and a bacon sandwich. The role of stewarding matches is done in a much more professional way now."

It's not just stewards who have had better training, but all staff operating on match days. Technology has played a major part in crowd safety too. Staff now use CCTV and control rooms to pinpoint particular problems in the crowd.

In the case of an emergency evacuation, the control room can electronically open the main Anfield gates, which have been redesigned to be much wider. The stewards can achieve an evacuation time of less than eight minutes.

Ken recently chaired a table-top evacuation exercise involving stewards, the head of the fire service, local paramedics, a police inspector and a member of the FLA.

"The exercise involved an imaginary match and there were seven sealed envelopes, each with a particular scenario. One involved a fire in which appliances couldn't get to the ground because of traffic delays, so it was an exercise in how we would deal with these issues.

"Car parking during match days does cause us problems, particularly when side streets are packed with cars, which could mean that fire engines and ambulances are delayed. We work extremely closely with the local council, residents and police to make sure supporters leave their cars in designated areas.

"We usually hold evacuation exercises once every year. It's an opportunity to assess how both the club and the emergency services communicate with each other."

Ken added:

"With new stadiums such as Anfield where steel is used in construction rather than wood, fire is less of an issue. We operate a strict no-smoking policy and we do eject people who are intent on smoking."

#### Factfile:

- Ken is a member of the Merseyside Branch and belongs to both the Retail and Distribution and Fire Risk Management Groups. He has been an IOSH member for more than six years
- Liverpool FC was founded in 1892 and traditionally played in red and white, but this was changed to all red in the 1960s. The club's crest has changed during its history, with flames added to the crest in honour of the 96 Liverpool fans who lost their lives in the Hillsborough disaster
- The capacity at Anfield is 44,000

#### Links:

- [Liverpool Football Club](#)
- [Football Licensing Authority](#)
- [Lord Taylor Report](#)

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## 60 second interview

Leslie Scorgie, North of Scotland Branch Chair and Safety Advisor for SAFE, talks to Connect

What's one of the most memorable experiences you've had in your health and safety career?

I took great satisfaction from being elected as the Branch chair, and I'm continually getting satisfaction from supporting small companies as they introduce health and safety procedures and policies for the first time.

What do you get out of your job?

I have a genuine belief that I'm helping to improve general health and safety standards.

You work in construction. What issues can you see coming up?

The credit crunch is having a massive effect. Through businesses trying to save money, I'm worried there'll be a negative impact on health and safety. The level of risk acceptance may increase so people will be less likely to complain if a scaffold hasn't been put up right.

Would you like to see any legislative changes in your sector?

It would far easier to have just one piece of legislation rather than several little bits.

You're about to walk on burning embers for charity. Does taking part in something like this set you aside from the stereotypical image of health and safety?

I'm taking part in it for personal reasons, to help a charity and to send out the message that we can do something dangerous as long as it's done safely.

**Do you want to be considered for a 60 Second Interview? Contact the e-Editor.**

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## Quote me

### IOSH gets its message across...

#### Daily Mirror

Immediate past president Ray Hurst was asked by the *Daily Mirror* to comment on HSE resources as part of the regulator's 'Asbestos timebomb' campaign. Ray said:

"We believe the HSE needs a doubling in inspector numbers. They need extra resources to really investigate accidents and ill health in this country, while also upping the ante on those employers willing to risk their workers' lives. We have to learn from past accidents and incidents so that we can avoid future tragedies. Past exposure to asbestos has resulted today in the unacceptable loss of 4,000 lives a year. Sadly, the damage has already been done for thousands of workers."

#### Leicester Mercury

IOSH chief executive Rob Strange wrote a column for the *Leicester Mercury* pointing out the dangers the bad press for health and safety can present. He said:

"The real reasons for all this show-stopping nonsense come down not to health and safety at all but to organisers' fears of being sued, poor planning, lack of a budget or resources to make the event happen or not getting good health and safety advice. If we continue to belittle real health and safety issues, then we're in danger of neglecting serious workplace risks."

#### This is My Life

The IOSH 'This is my life!' competition continued to get a lot of coverage in the local media with articles appearing in the *Belfast News Letter*, *Fermanagh Herald*, *Skelmersdale Champion*, *Kingsbridge and Salcombe Gazette* and the *Sheffield Star*.

The entry from Sarah Wilkes was one of 12 commended by the judges. Sarah, a nursery nurse from Doncaster, told the *Sheffield Star*:

"I think many people take safe workplaces for granted but I think it's important to remember that without policies and procedures in place to protect everyone, people wouldn't be able to live their lives to their full potential."

Mary Kelly from Irvinestown was another commended entry, and she told the *Belfast News Letter*:

"I support the message behind the competition as it is important to keep health and safety in mind at home or work, so we can continue to enjoy these simple, yet life-affirming pleasures."

#### Human Resources

IOSH President Nattasha Freeman spoke to *Human Resources* about the effect 35 years of the Health and Safety at Work Act has had on health and safety. She said:

"We've seen the nature of work change – from less heavy industry to more office work and this has contributed to the drop in deaths and workplace ill health. But we're seeing more older people returning to work post-retirement age, we're seeing more young people being pushed into unfamiliar work environments at an earlier age to get experience and we're also seeing more transient workers. Twenty years ago, business started to 'get' health and safety. Now we're in danger of moving backwards."

Nattasha said she was particularly concerned about the impact the recession could have. She said:

"With less job security, more people are working to live, doing longer hours, dragging themselves into work when they're ill, and when they should be at home. This is quite a new concept for health and safety professionals to have to deal with."

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