



# Bulletin

Occasional information for members

## Institute of Safety in Technology and Research

**NUMBER 37**  
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General enquiries about the Institute should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary:

[istr-secretary@bham.ac.uk](mailto:istr-secretary@bham.ac.uk)

Enquiries about membership should be addressed to the Membership Secretary:

[istr-membershipsecretary@bham.ac.uk](mailto:istr-membershipsecretary@bham.ac.uk)

### 2003 Annual General Meeting

### New Vice-Chair



Heather Sheeley, Head of Safety for the Health Protection Agency at the Centre for Applied Microbiological Research.

The AGM was followed by a guided tour of Cardiff bay commencing at the exhibition in the "Tube" and including



a boat trip up the river. Members later dined at the Old Custom House by Penarth harbour. Many thanks to Stephan Jones for arranging the evening and UWIC for hosting the conference.

# A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to another issue of the *Bulletin*. The *Bulletin* is a service to and for members. In this issue you will find news of members, details of forthcoming *ISTR* activities, a report on a recent meeting of the Executive Committee and other items sent in by members. If you have any item that may be of interest to other members please let me know.

**From time to time, as a further service to members, advertising material may be enclosed with the *Bulletin* but this does not necessarily mean that the *ISTR* endorses the particular products.**

**The *ISTR* is not responsible for individual views expressed in the *Bulletin*.**

The *Bulletin* is edited by: Dr FJ Young, Health and Safety Unit, The University of Birmingham Email [f.j.young@bham.ac.uk](mailto:f.j.young@bham.ac.uk)

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## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### ***The Institute has admitted the following into membership***

Further details may be found in the updated, on-line version of *ISTR Members' Handbook 2002* in the members' only section of the *ISTR* website.

#### **Full Members:**

Dr PJ Baillie, Mrs AS Bird, Dr PJ Collier, Mr C Richardson, Mr AB Stuart and Mrs CM Walford,

#### **Associate Members:**

Dr MC Behrendt, Mrs C E Houghton, Mrs K M Ramskill, Mrs JA Sutton and Mrs R M Thornton,

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Enquiries about membership should be addressed to the Membership Secretary: [istr-membershipsecretary@bham.ac.uk](mailto:istr-membershipsecretary@bham.ac.uk)



## ISTR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2003/2004

Mr RM (**Rob**) **Wood**, (*Chairman*),  
Health and Safety Manager  
University of Lincoln

Mrs HS (**Heather**) **Sheeley**, (*Vice-Chair*)  
Head of Safety,  
Centre for Applied Microbiological Research,  
Health Protection Agency,  
Porton Down

Dr AR (**Arthur**) **Mitchell**, (*Secretary*)  
MRC Regional Health and Safety Co-ordinator,  
University Medical School,  
Edinburgh

Mr D (**David**) **Heath**, (*Events Secretary*)  
Safety Adviser,  
Zenecca Agrochemicals,  
Jealott's Hill Research Station

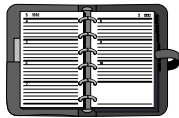
Dr JS (**Stuart**) **Thompson**, (*Treasurer*)  
Biological Safety Officer,  
Health and Safety Services,  
University of Manchester

Mr MA (**Mark**) **Cheshire**, (*Membership Secretary*),  
Head of Safety Services,  
University of Bristol

Mrs MP (**Marion**) **Murphy**

Dr FJ (**Fred**) **Young**, (*Bulletin Editor*)(*Co-opted*)  
Health and Safety Adviser,  
The University of Birmingham

Mr DH (**David**) **Watson**, (*Co-opted*)  
University Safety Officer,  
University of Hull



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### ***Skills Development Workshop Winter 2004***

A skills development workshop on slips, trips and falls using tutors from the HSE/HSL is being planned for late February/early March 2004 at a Midlands venue.

### ***2004 AGM and Symposium***

The 2004 AGM and symposium will be hosted by the University of Southampton at Highfield. The AGM will take place on 6 July. The topic for the symposium on the 7 July is "Moving matters - transport in science and technology". Issues to be covered include

legislation, internal transport/deliveries, insurance, training, policies, risk assessment, driving hours, hazardous substances, packaging and labelling. There will be workshops on a field trip to France and the design of a new stores/delivery area.

### ***2004 Autumn Symposium and 2<sup>nd</sup> Bio-Safety Sub-Group Symposium***

A repeat of this year's successful arrangement is planned for November 2004. The topic for the general symposium is "Decommissioning and Re-commissioning of Laboratories".

For more information contact the Events Secretary: [istr-eventssecretary@bham.ac.uk](mailto:istr-eventssecretary@bham.ac.uk)

## ISTR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2003

The Institute's Annual General Meeting took place at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff on the 1 July, and followed the Agenda sent to all members in advance of the meeting.



## HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

### 1. Executive Committee Meetings

Since the last AGM the executive committee has met four times during the past year. The meetings were held in Manchester (November 2002 and May 2003), Birmingham (February 2003) and Cardiff (July 2003). The executive committee deals with all the business associated with ISTR. Subject areas for future meetings and the organisation of such meetings are important items on the agenda.

This year has seen decisions made to actively promote ISTR as an organisation on the "wider stage" and part of this strategy has been to contact outside bodies to ensure that they are aware of our presence.

The introduction of an ISTR award is part of this promotion strategy.

### 2. Membership

Mark Cheshire (Bristol University) is now Membership Secretary and the committee would like to thank Mark for the work he does on behalf of ISTR.

### 3. Symposia and Skills Development Workshops

David Heath acts as the co-ordinator for these events. A great deal of hard work goes into making these meetings successful. David's work ensures that all our meetings run smoothly and efficiently and it is a pleasure to record our thanks for all his efforts.

This last year has seen ISTR organise two symposia and one workshop.

These were at Durham following last year's AGM, the National Motor Cycle Museum in Birmingham in November last year and at the University of Birmingham on the 16<sup>th</sup> March this year. The numbers attending and comments received from delegates

have indicated that we continue to select relevant subject matters. The executive committee has made the positive decision to actively promote ISTR membership to those attending our meetings but who currently are not members.

Since the last AGM where the decision to form a Biosafety subgroup was taken it is pleasing to record that the first meeting of this group will take place this year on November 19<sup>th</sup>. Heather Sheeley and Stuart Thomson from the executive committee are both actively involved with the subgroup.

### 4. Bulletin and WWW Home Page

Dr Fred Young ensures that the bulletin is published and that our Web site is maintained. The recent bulletin contains information on membership changes, details of the recent Symposia and Meetings that have been organised and the responses ISTR have made to consultation documents. Much of this work goes on "behind the scenes" and ISTR is fortunate to have Fred working for us in this capacity. The executive committee would like to record their appreciation of the work undertaken by Fred.

### 5. Correspondence

ISTR are asked for and make responses to consultation documents from time to time. Details of our responses are within the bulletin. The committee would like to encourage more members of ISTR to actively participate in putting together responses to consultation documents. Fred has publicised this in the recent bulletin. Having the names of individuals willing to help in this way would enable ISTR to respond more quickly to consultation requests. Many such requests have relatively short response times.

Finally I would like to thank the committee for the support they have given to me over the last year.

*Arthur Mitchell*



## HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

The Hon. Treasurer reported an excess of expenditure over income of £494 compared with last year's profit of £3699. Subscription income was down by £415. However the previous year's total had been boosted by a successful campaign to collect arrears from lapsed members. In fact subscription income in the present year slightly exceeded the total from two years ago. The November Symposium in Birmingham showed a profit of £1150 compared with a profit of £6 in the preceding year. During the financial year, there was an excess of income over expenditure of £617.93

for the March skills workshop. However, items related to this event that appear in the books after the end of the financial year end converted this to a loss of £596.20. This was not unexpected and is in line with Institute policy in recent years which subsidises the Skills Workshop by up to £1000. The year 2002 annual conference in Durham made a loss of £374 compared with the quite exceptional profit of £2842 for the 2001 annual conference held in York. Expenditure

on "administration" increased to £4634 from £2486. Just over half this increase is attributable to the costs of producing and distributing the ISTR Handbook which was not produced in the previous year. In addition, the advance deposit for the Cardiff conference was higher than the AGM deposit in the previous year. There has also been a steep increase in the cost of liability insurance despite the committee's attempts to obtain better value from an alternative source. Once again this year, we have experienced the unwillingness of employers of

members of the Executive to fund their committee-related travel and subsistence to the same extent as in the past.

Nevertheless, the capital reserve remains reasonably robust. The Treasurer summarised the current finances of the Institute as remaining in a healthy state and recommended that subscription rates remain at their current level.

*Stuart Thompson*



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The first year as chair of the Institute has been both a busy and satisfying one, although I have to say it has been more demanding for the members of the hard working Executive Committee than for me. The committee have as usual been extremely supportive and keen in organising and improving upon the activities and administration of the Institute. My deepest thanks go to them all for their hard work.

So, what has been happening? Well, beginning with the AGM of last year, it was agreed that the bio-safety groups that are developing within the country should be affiliated with ISTR and this new aspect of ISTR has been progressing very nicely. The first joint event will take place in November of this year when the ISTR autumn seminar will be followed on the next day by the first all-UK seminar of the bio-safety groups.

The members-only section of the ISTR web page is now live and will include copies of presentations from our seminars and conferences; where the speakers provide permission for us to publish them. We will also be extending the usefulness of the members-only pages by including the members' details and areas of expertise (as are normally published in the Yearbook) to allow for better networking.

Further to that, the ability to network has been improved by establishing a daughter discussion group to the popular HASNET group. This is termed the HASNET-ISTR discussion group and is available to all those members who have provided our membership secretary with their e-mail address. So far the uptake has not been huge, but we expect and hope it to grow over the years.

We have run hugely successful autumn and spring symposia. The autumn event targeted animal research and handling facilities, involved many very eminent speakers and generated a lot of interest. I personally found it to be a fascinating event at which to be present. The spring event focused on a one-man circus of information and edutainment revolving around behavioural safety. Again this proved to be a popular and worthwhile event, my only regret is that such events need to limit the numbers that can attend.

Internally, the Institute has completed its reorganization of the membership and accounting record system. We are confident that we now have a robust and auditable system of record and data protection that should see the Institute well managed into the foreseeable future.

There has been much discussion and debate on the provision of recognition of best practice to members of the Institute by their peers. This has culminated in the proposal of an award that is to be put before you today.

Overall, I think, an excellent year's work by all concerned and again I would like to thank the committee, the speakers, the organisers of events and most of all the members of the Institute for their contributions and support.

Congratulations to you all.

*Robert Wood*

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## ELECTIONS

An **Election for Vice-Chair** is held at the AGM following the start of the tenure of the current Chair. As there was no other nomination, Heather Sheeley was declared elected Vice-Chair.

**Elections for the honorary officers' posts of Treasurer and Secretary** are held annually. As there was only one nomination for each of the



posts Stuart Thompson, Honorary Treasurer, and Dr Arthur Mitchell, Honorary Secretary, were declared elected.

**Executive Committee** members serve for two years: all three ordinary positions were vacant at this AGM. Three nominations had been received: Mark Cheshire, Marion Murphy and David Heath were declared elected.

## ...and after the AGM



### A tour of Cardiff Bay

Delegates enjoyed a guided tour of Cardiff bay, first to the "Tube" containing an exhibition of the new development and including a boat trip.

Cardiff Bay encompasses the estuaries of two rivers, the Taff and the Ely, with a tidal range of 14 m - one of the greatest in the world.

The original development of the Cardiff/Penarth docklands into the biggest coal port in the world began with the building of the Glamorganshire Canal in 1794, which brought iron and coal down from the valleys. On the eve of the First World War in 1913, coal exports reached their peak at over 13 million tonnes. After the Second World War, however, demand for coal slumped and international markets were lost as other countries developed their own steel industries. By the 1960s coal exports had virtually ceased.



Before construction of the barrage, the tidal range resulted in vast areas of mud flats dominating the landscape for up to 14 hours a day. The Barrage, built between 1994 and 1999, extends from Cardiff Docks to Penarth. It has an 800m long embankment constructed with rock and sand enclosing a 200 hectare freshwater lake no longer influenced by the tide.

The Barrage includes three locks for boats, five sluice gates to regulate the water level in the Bay and a fish pass to allow fish to return to the Bay

### The view across the Bay to Penarth



The barrage has been a catalyst for regeneration of these old docklands -

opposite is a view showing the new Millennium Centre under construction

However, parts of the Estuary are protected marine environment under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Special Protection Areas under the EC Birds Directive and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

The tour of Cardiff Bay was followed by dinner at the Old Custom House by Penarth Harbour.



## THE DUTY TO MANAGE

ISTR SYMPOSIUM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES INSTITUTE, CARDIFF 2 JULY 2003

*David Heath, ISTR Events Secretary, has produced the following account of the symposium proceedings (members may download presentations from the ISTR Members' web page)*

The annual Symposium commenced with a welcome from Pam Ackroyd, Chair of the University Health and Safety Committee, to 46 delegates.

### Key Legislation relating to contractors

Chris Phillips, Halliwell Landau.

Chris Phillips outlined the key legislation relating to contractors. Chris stressed that in his experience judges are applying higher standards of compliance with the regulations, clients need to check the competency of all contractors AND subcontractors and a higher level of duty is necessary to vulnerable groups, such as children who might stray onto building sites.

### Managing contractors

Len Ellenton – UK Safety Solutions

Len Ellenton talked about the management and control of contractors on our premises and how we

must influence their safety performance. A control strategy includes:

- the choice of contractor,
- the assessment of the hazards,
- verification of bids,
- the contractors acceptance of the contract terms, monitoring their activities and
- review of their performance.

### The consequences of not managing contractors – civil claims

Chris Phillips, Halliwell Landau.

Chris Phillips then explained the consequences of not managing contractors, in particular the criminal liability which falls on the client who fails to manage the contractors working on their site or within their undertaking. Chris illustrated this with several well known cases, including Swan Hunter, Rhone Poulenc Rorer and Associated Octel.

### The revised asbestos regulations – how to carry out a survey

Terry Jago - ARCA

Terry Jago described the management of asbestos in buildings, in the light of the recent Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. He explained the history of asbestos use and the consequences to past workers who now suffer ill health. He explained the new regulation; the duty to manage asbestos so that it

does not present a hazard using excellent photographs to illustrate the sorts of situations where one might expect to find asbestos lurking in the depths of older buildings.

## Symposium Workshops

The afternoon comprised two workshops, one on issues arising from a variety of construction scenarios and the other on the new 4 stage asbestos clearance procedure.

### Balancing the pressure of time, money and safety

Led by Keith DeRycke, Construction Safety Manager, Astra Zeneca

Keith DeRycke outlined four scenarios and he invited groups to propose solutions to the dilemmas posed.

These included:

- the choice of windows on a new building to comply with CDM for cleaning purposes,
- Pile driving in a built up area, having consideration for the neighbours,
- devising a system to check the competency of contractors; and

- the safe use of two tower cranes in a confined city building site.

### The 4 stage asbestos clearance procedure

Led by Martin Stear, HSE Specialist Inspector

Martin Stear used a walk through of a series of photographs of a real strip out to illustrate what to look for, interacting with the delegates on their understanding of a survey.

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## ISTR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The executive committee has met at The University of Wales Insitute, Cardiff in July 2003 and the University of Lincoln in October 2003. The following is a summary of the matters considered.

### Relations with other organisations

Following discussions involving tyhe Chair of ISTR and the Chair of the Universities' Safety and Health Association (which represents institutions) it was agreed that there was a need to avoid clashes, particularly with meetings. USHA will be sent ISTR future programmes. It was hoped that more formal links with USHA would be explored in the future.

### ISTR Logo and Bulletin Header page

Work is still in hand to obtain readily reproduceable

and scaleable computer images.

### Skills Development Workshop 2004

Slips, trips and falls is proposed for a workshop February/March 2004.

### Delegate Fees for ISTR Symposia

Non members will be charged £20 more than members for all future meetings.

### Future AGM Venues

The custom of holding the AGM and Annual Symposium in different regions will continue. Southampton, Edinburgh and Cambridge are likely future venues.

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## PROPOSALS FOR THE CARRIAGE OF DANGEROUS GOODS AND USE OF TRANSPORTABLE PRESSURE EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS 200[ ] - CD 188

*The Health and Safety Commission's consultation which ended on 2 September 2003 set out regulatory proposals to implement European Directives relating to the Carriage of Dangerous Goods.*

*The Institute is indebted to Jag Cook, for this response on the Institute's behalf. The question numbers relate to the Response Form in the original*

*consultation ( see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd188.pdf>)*

The handling of toxic and hazardous materials is not generally done by our members on a large scale and so the response has been from this standpoint.



1. *Do you agree with the general approach to implementation?*

The approach taken seems sensible and logical.

2. *Do you think we have placed the right duties on the right people? (paragraphs 29 to 31)*

There is a change from the old Regulations and now duties are imposed on consignors and users even though they are not necessarily active in transport. From the viewpoint of our organisation this may result in putting obligations on people who have had no previous experience. Thus if this is to work some kind of education program will be essential.

3. *Direct referencing of RID/ADR introduces a number of changes to existing requirements (see paragraphs 41 – 51). To what extent do these benefit or hinder your operations? Are there others not highlighted that are of concern?*

The proposed load limits would not usually be a problem to our members. However the threshold limits for packaging could be more carefully explained.

4. *What is your view on whether we should continue to maintain the mandatory EAC system for journeys taking place wholly within Great Britain or offer a choice of using either the EAC system or the HIN system for domestic carriage operations? (paragraphs 52-54)*

The EAC system would be much better.

5. *Are you happy with our proposals for administering ADR accident reporting requirements separately from RIDDOR requirements? (paragraphs 55 to 57)*

As long as the details are carefully explained it may be that two separate reporting forms will prove to be much easier. However, it is to be recommended that a trial period be used to identify any problems.

6. *Are you content with the standards already approved by HSE for pressure receptacles and those DfT propose to approve for tanks? Are there other standards you would like HSE or DfT to consider for approval? (paragraphs 58 to 61)*

Some laboratories may operate various forms of pressure systems including reverse osmosis. However, the majority of our members will be mainly concerned with gas cylinders. Presumably these will be inspected after manufacture and thus will be the concern of the manufacturer / supplier and not the user. Old cylinders could be a problem if they had to be transported, if not, would they still have to be inspected? It is not clear whether a user can be, or needs to be, a competent person. This certainly needs clarification.

7. *Do you agree with the proposal to phase out by 1 July 2005 the competent person periodic inspection regime in favour of inspections by bodies appointed by the competent authority? (paragraphs 65 to 68)*

This is effectively an extension of the comments on question 6. As users of gas cylinders, often of some age the inspection requirement will impinge heavily on laboratories in respect of cost, a particular blow to

money deficient Universities. However, as long as the charges are reasonable and the time between the inspections bears a sensible relationship to risk then the system could work. It would however be a good idea to send out notices explaining the why, when and how of the inspection regime. One other point is there is no mention of size, will there be a difference in procedure between normal size and small or very small cylinders?

8. *Are you happy with our proposals to amend Schedule 2 of the proposed regulations as set out in paragraphs 69 to 70?*

It appears that modifications are the responsibility of the manufacturers and owners. In that case if a user has hired the cylinder, on whom does the responsibility devolve.

9. *How well do you think that the estimates contained in the Regulatory Impact Assessment reflect the costs and benefits to industry of implementing the proposals? What would you like to see considered further? (paragraphs 80 to 81 and appendix 5)*

Regulation and the use of the H.S.E. for inspection is more applicable to major transporters of bulk chemicals, including fuel oils and gases, rather than the small laboratory user. Will this be so? It does beg the question that with the resultant increase in work for the H.S.E. coupled with the governments intention to decrease H.S.E. staff whether this would be a viable option. Also would the charges be expected to fund the increase in staff needed?

10. *Are you content with our proposed approach to guidance? (paragraphs 82 to 83)*

As long as a leaflet is produced on time and clearly explains the system then it will be a good thing. We are not sure that leaving industry to produce it's own guidance is necessarily an ideal solution.

11. *Looking to the future, bearing in mind that amendments to RID/ADR are subject to international negotiations, what changes to RID/ADR would you welcome?*

Our members will be mainly concerned with packaging and labelling and the control of gas cylinders. Will such a user need to appoint a competent person or safety adviser for transport? It is more likely that a certified carrier will be used who will have their own advisers and competent people. It is not clear either where the functions of these appointed persons will divide. This should be spelled out more clearly in the guidance as also should the question of amounts and the cut off level, if any should be made clear. For instance if the risk of transporting say one gram of a substance is assessed to be very low then will the transport come under the Regulations? It is not so much changes that would be welcome but in making sure that the provisions of the Regulations are crystal clear especially to organisations who are not in the main stream of transport and rarely have to do it.

12. *How well does the CD represent the different policy issues involved in this matter?*

We think that the policy issues are well presented but that the explanations and practical guidance needs adjustment.

13. Is there anything you particularly liked or disliked about this consultation exercise?

We liked the idea of presenting questions so that the items could be answered in order. However the results may be skewed as Consultees may merely apply themselves to the questions without considering the whole document. That is there may be bits missed out. Generally however the format was liked.

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## Current Consultative Documents

The Executive Committee organises formal responses from the ISTR to Consultative Documents (CD's) put out by the Health and Safety Commission, etc. Each such response is intended to be based on the views of the membership co-ordinated by identified individuals. These co-ordinators need to have expertise in a particular area of interest to the *Institute* because the timescales for responses to CD's is sometimes very short and there may be little opportunity for further consultation with the membership.

If you are willing to act in this capacity of "CD" co-ordinator for ISTR please contact Arthur Mitchell, Hon. Sec., and indicate the topic area you have the expertise to cover.

### **Volunteers are needed NOW for the following.**

The documents may be downloaded from the web addresses provided.

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### Health and Safety Commission

## **Proposals to introduce a new occupational exposure limits (OEL) framework**

The present COSHH Regulations use two types of OEL. They impose different requirements on employers. But only a very small percentage of firms understand the differences. The proposal in this CD is to replace them with a single type of OEL, to be called a Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL). This will impose a single duty on employers - the amount of a chemical in their workplace air must not exceed the WEL.

requires that the amounts in the workplace air must be reduced as much as possible – “as low as is reasonably practicable (ALARP)”. HSE's advice will explain what ALARP means in practice.

There are often uncertainties in the scientific information available on the health effects of chemicals and we cannot predict how all individuals will respond to the same chemical. For many chemicals we can be 99% certain that the vast majority of people will not suffer any harm at the WEL, but at the other end of the spectrum there may be considerable uncertainties.

The practical advice will be available on the Internet. It is proposed to link together Information on WELs, *COSHH Essentials* – which gives practical advice - and more in depth information on individual chemicals and the COSHH Regulations. The aim is that employers who just want practical advice on what they have to do will be able to get it, but specialists who want more technical detail will get it through hypertext links.

The proposals in this CD bring the main features of adequate control into a list of principles of good practice for controlling chemical exposure. A key feature of the proposals is to make a link between the principles and compliance with the WEL. Thus the Regulations will require employers to apply the principles and not exceed the WEL.

There are over 500 OELs in the present system, but many of these were set decades ago and are no longer considered reliable. The proposal is that only existing OELs considered to be scientifically robust will be transferred into the new system as WELs. This will leave a list of about 150 substances. For substances not carried forward into the new system advice on how to control exposure will be made available – in many cases through *COSHH Essentials*.

There are some special cases. Chemicals that can cause cancer are of particular concern and the law

**Closing date for comments** 31 December 2003  
[<http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd189.htm>]

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### Health and Safety Commission

## **Proposals for new Control of Vibration at Work Regulations implementing the Physical Agents(Vibration) Directive**

## – hand-arm vibration

This consultative document seeks views on draft Regulations to implement the European Physical Agents (Vibration) Directive and on draft guidance on the Regulations as they relate to hand-arm vibration. The Health and Safety Commission (HSC) is publishing a separate consultative document relating to whole-body vibration.

Exposure to hand-arm vibration is a cause of significant ill-health. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has already published considerable guidance on handarm vibration (HSG88, HSG170, INDG126, INDG175 and INDG338) setting out the action that employers should take to reduce risks. Many of these are straightforward, practical measures which can often improve efficiency. The draft Regulations identify new exposure values at which action has to be taken and exposure prohibited, but the draft guidance largely repeats HSE's existing recommendations, including some simple and common-sense ways by which employers can reduce risks, e.g.:

- looking for alternative ways of working which eliminate the vibrating equipment altogether;
- making sure employees use the most appropriate equipment for each job;
- ensuring chisels, abrasive discs etc which are inserted in the tool are suitable for the task and in good condition;

- minimising the time individuals use the equipment, e.g. by introducing job rotation.

The HSC would like views on this approach, but also on a number of other issues, including:

- whether guidance on hand-arm and whole-body vibration should be published separately;
- the structure of the hand-arm vibration guidance;
- the implementation of the transitional periods;
- when exposure measurement might be necessary;
- who should be competent to carry out exposure assessments;
- how often risk assessments should be updated;
- the system for allowing weekly averaging of exposure;
- the criteria for and proposed system of health surveillance.

**Closing date for comments** 31 March 2004  
[<http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd190.htm>]

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### Health and Safety Commission

## Proposals for new Control of Vibration at Work Regulations implementing the Physical Agents (Vibration) Directive (2002/44/EC) - Whole-body Vibration

This consultative document seeks views on draft Regulations to implement the European Physical Agents (Vibration) Directive and on draft guidance on the Regulations as they relate to whole-body vibration. The Health and Safety Commission (HSC) is publishing a separate consultative document relating to handarm vibration.

Exposure to whole-body vibration is linked to back pain, although the risks are not well-defined and there are other factors which can cause back pain. The Health and Safety Executive has already published recommendations on straightforward, practical measures employers can take to reduce whole-body vibration risks (INDG 242). The draft Regulations identify exposure values at which action has to be taken and exposure prohibited, but the draft guidance repeats the message that these can usually be complied with by simple and common-sense ways of reducing risk e.g.:

- using machines or vehicles which are suitable for the job;

- training employees on correct use of the machine;
- driving safely at speeds appropriate to the ground conditions;
- checking suspension seats are adjusted for the driver's weight;
- planning work site routes to take account of vibration risks as well as safety factors;
- looking at whole-body vibration together with other factors which might cause low back pain such as posture and manual handling.

The HSC would like views on this approach, but also on a number of other issues including:

- whether guidance on hand-arm and whole-body vibration should be published separately;
- the structure of the whole-body vibration guidance;
- the implementation of the transitional periods;

- the use of A(8) or VDV for the exposure action value;
- when exposure measurement might be necessary;
- who should be competent to carry out exposure assessments;
- how often risk assessments should be updated;

- the system for allowing weekly averaging of exposure;
- the proposed system of health monitoring.

**Closing date for comments** 31 March 2004  
[<http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd191.htm>]

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Health and Safety Commission

# CONSULTATION DOCUMENT 192 - PROPOSALS FOR WORK AT HEIGHT REGULATIONS

The proposed Work at Height Regulations will implement the Temporary Work at Height Directive (2001/45/EC). Falls from height are the biggest single cause of fatal injuries, and the second biggest cause of major injuries, caused by accidents at work - and it is hoped that these Regulations will help to make a substantial impact on the problem.

The key elements of the HSC's approach to the regulations are:

- To take this opportunity to bring together and clarify processes and procedures which will reduce the numbers of deaths and major injuries caused by falls from height in the workplace;
- To bring together all the current legal requirements for safe work at height, making a cohesive, single set of goal-setting Regulations which will be flexible enough to apply to all industries and allow for technical innovation;

- To ensure that the Regulations are practical and tackle high-risk areas whilst avoiding unworkable requirements;
- To adopt a risk-based approach, so that measures taken to comply with the Regulations are proportionate to the risks involved, and can build upon existing good practice in the various industries they will apply to and compliance with the current law.

The draft Regulations are based on a hierarchy whereby work at height should be avoided so far as is reasonably practicable; if work at height is necessary, safe systems of work should be established, proper planning and organisation should take place and appropriate equipment should be chosen and used correctly.

**Closing date for comments** 2 April 2004  
[<http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd192.htm>]

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## Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs European Commission Communication - A European Environment and Health Strategy

The Strategy aims to achieve a better understanding of the environmental threats to human health, to identify the disease burden caused by environmental factors in the EU and to plan policy responses to the challenges that emerge.

Although many environment and health related problems have been solved, the Commission states that work still remains to be done. Until now environmental assessments and policy actions have focussed on single pollutants in single environmental compartments (air, water, soil etc). However, by taking this approach, some health impacts may be underestimated because in reality the situation is more complex e.g. pollutants are transferred between different environmental compartments and people are exposed to a combination of pollutants that interact in the environment and in the human body.

Given the size and complexity of environment and health issues the Communication presents a Strategy which is to be launched as the **SCALE** initiative. The initiative will develop a policy framework to ensure the protection of society as a whole and it will rely on five key elements:

- It will be based on **Science**, drawing together knowledge from a wide range of networks of stakeholders.

- It will focus on **Children**, as investing in children's health is essential to ensure human and economic development. Children are particularly vulnerable to environmental hazards as their physiology, metabolism, diet and behaviour are different to adults.
- It aims to **raise Awareness** about the interconnection between environment and health.
- It uses **Legal instruments** provided by the Amsterdam Treaty to complement international and national initiatives.
- It will include a constant and continuous **Evaluation** to verify the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of the actions in terms of the reduction of the environment-related health problems. The evaluation will also allow new emerging problems to be addressed.

The main thrust of the strategy will be to fill the knowledge gap on the link between environment and health and, in order to establish this the Strategy, proposes an integrated approach. The Strategy will be implemented in successive cycles and will be incremental in scope. The first cycle (2004-2010) aims

to establish a good understanding of the link between environmental factors and:

- Childhood respiratory diseases, asthma, allergies
- Neurodevelopmental disorders
- Childhood cancer
- Endocrine disrupting effects

It also aims to identify and prevent new health threats caused by environmental factors, reinforce the institutional structure needed to strengthen policy-making and integrate environment and health into other policy areas. The first cycle will focus on a set of environmental pollutants that are suspected to be associated with these health effects. These are identified as dioxins and PCBs, heavy metals and endocrine disrupters.

The first cycle will establish the following:

- European Integrated Environment & Health Monitoring and Response System, in order to assess the overall environmental impact on human health
- Research, in order to achieve a better fundamental impact on human health
- Reducing exposure

The Commission recognises that broad stakeholder involvement is essential for strengthening dialogue and exchange of information between all stakeholders and has established a **Consultative Group on Environment & Health** and a number of **Technical**

**Working Groups** to address the issues identified for the first cycle. These groups will work in close collaboration in order to prepare a "Baseline Report 2004" which will be a draft implementation plan for all the items of the first cycle. In March 2004 the Commission will organise a Major Stakeholder Conference involving the Consultative Group and all the Working Groups, with the aim of finalising a detailed action plan with defined goals and actions for the period 2004-2010. This plan will then be adopted as the European Commission Action Plan at the end of May 2004.

The UK Government and the devolved administrations will be taking an active role in the consultative process.

The Environment & Health Strategy is a strategic document, which does not set out proposals for specific legislation. However the strategy does include proposals to address 'reducing exposure in the areas of air quality, Mercury and other heavy metals and electro-magnetic fields together with a proposal for a thematic strategy on the urban environment'. Although it does not have direct proposals for legislation, it is probable that the Action Plan 2004 - 2010 will form a framework against which legislation and amendments to legislation may be proposed in the future.

**Closing date for comments** 16 January 2004  
[<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/european-strategy/index.htm>]

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## Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

### Action to Control the Risks from Nonylphenol, Octylphenol and their Ethoxylates

Nonylphenol, octylphenol, and their ethoxylates are of concern for persistence, toxicity and bioaccumulation (PBT). They are also known to affect endocrine systems in wildlife

Proposals to take voluntary action to control the risks from nonylphenol, octylphenol and their ethoxylates have been agreed by a wide range of industries following discussion with Government. This voluntary action is being taken in advance of marketing and use legislation that will restrict the use of nonylphenol and nonylphenol ethoxylates from January 2005.

The voluntary action proposed has been agreed by a number of trade associations representing suppliers and users of nonylphenol, octylphenol and/or their ethoxylates.

Comments are invited on the likely impact of the proposals on UK businesses and the environment. This will help to inform industry on the effectiveness of the proposals and on any need to amend them.

**Closing date for comments** 7 January 2004  
[<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/phenols-risk/index.htm>]

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## ISTR's ELECTRONIC INTERFACE

For enquiries about ISTR membership: [istr-membershipsecretary@bham.ac.uk](mailto:istr-membershipsecretary@bham.ac.uk)

For enquiries about ISTR symposia: [istr-eventssecretary@bham.ac.uk](mailto:istr-eventssecretary@bham.ac.uk)

For enquiries about subscriptions and ISTR financial matters: [istr-treasurer@bham.ac.uk](mailto:istr-treasurer@bham.ac.uk)

General enquiries about ISTR: [istr-secretary@bham.ac.uk](mailto:istr-secretary@bham.ac.uk)

## New non-personal email addresses for ISTR Officers

ISTR's honorary officers now have non-personal contact email addresses (see above). The principal benefit is continuity:

- if a different person takes over the role, the contact email address remains the same and there is no need for members to update their address books;
- mail can be automatically forwarded to other specified members of the Executive Committee to ensure no break in service if the particular officer is temporarily unavailable.

**Members are urged to use the new addresses in place of personal addresses and, especially, to put them in their email address books.**



### HAZNET-ISTR Email Discussion List



This is a closed email discussion list. That is, only ISTR members are given access to it. Members need do nothing; members are automatically added to the list by the Membership Secretary using the email address supplied by the member. Queries about

HAZNET-ISTR should be addressed to the Membership Secretary:  
istr-membershipsecretary@bham.ac.uk

The Executive Committee would like to see members make a lot more use of HAZNET-ISTR



## Bulletin

Whilst this copy of the ISTR Bulletin has been posted to you, an electronic version in Adobe Acrobat pdf format can be downloaded from the member's only section of the ISTR web site.



### Communication with Members



Do we have your correct details? The Executive Committee will increasingly use email as a rapid and efficient means of communicating with the Membership. It is vital, therefore, that you notify [istr-membershipsecretary@bham.ac.uk](mailto:istr-membershipsecretary@bham.ac.uk) without delay if your email address changes. Email is the best way to do this because your message will confirm the correct form of your email address.

**ISTR on the World Wide Web: <http://www.bham.ac.uk/istr/>**