

Health and safety in HSE

268. It is HSE's policy to set and maintain exemplary standards of health and safety for its staff and contractors. HSE staff are exposed to a variety of potential hazards to their health and safety ranging from the normal office-based risks to those that regulatory staff meet on site, eg construction sites, offshore installations, asbestos removal operations, working on the rail system etc. During 2003/04 HSE continued to work towards achieving this aim and set ourselves targets to reduce the number of RIDDORs, accidents due to slips and trips, and ill health caused or exacerbated by DSE use, as well as our targets under Revitalising Health and Safety.

269. During the year, an Internal Audit's report on our health and safety performance found that we had extensive health and safety systems, but there were questions about how well we complied with them. A review of the management arrangements was subsequently commissioned, and is due to report to the HSE Board early in the 2004/2005 financial year.

Monitoring of performance

270. Performance is monitored in the following ways:

- the HSE Board discuss health and safety at every formal Board meeting, receiving monthly accident/ill health statistics and monitoring performance against our targets. They also discuss reports on significant health and safety issues and agree the Corporate Health and Safety Plan;
- the Board discusses formal mid-year and end of year reports on HSE's performance, which include progress against the Corporate health and safety plan;
- audits are carried out by HSE's Health and Safety Adviser, as well as local inspections and audits.

Consultation

271. HSE recognises the importance of consultation with their employees. The Corporate Health and Safety Committee (CHSC) is the principal consultation forum between the Executive and the HSE trade unions. Justin McCracken, the Deputy Director General (Operations), is the Board Champion for health and safety and chairs the CHSC, which meets three times a year. There are a number of local site safety committees. Safety representatives are encouraged to be involved in workplace inspections, accident/ill-health investigations and health and safety events, such as during Euroweek.

Progress on the Corporate Health and Safety Plan for 2003/2004

272. The plan set a number of priorities:

- musculoskeletal disorders (MSD): Continued effort into prevention of MSD has seen a significant reduction in the number of reported cases of ill health due to DSE. The Board set a target to reduce ill-health reports due to DSE by 10% and this was substantially exceeded as we reduced cases by over 40%;
- stress: Directorates have been tackling action plans based on risk assessments (against the seven factors identified in 'Tackling Stress Together'). The Stress Management Standards were incorporated into the 2004 Staff Attitude Survey, and follow-up action will be taken forward next year;
- slip, trip accidents: Campaigns and promotions to reduce the number of accidents due to slips and trips continued during the year with particular impetus on near-miss reporting and the immediate removal of potential hazards. The target to reduce injuries by 10% due to slips and trips has been met;
- work-related road risk: Guidance on controlling work-related road risks was produced. There has been a reduction in work-related road incidences;
- monitoring and review: Workshops were run for contract managers and HSE's contractors to ensure that:
 - contractors deliver their services to equivalent standards of health and safety;
 - performance is monitored; and
 - management is in place to rectify shortfalls.

Health and safety performance: Accident/ill-health/near-miss reports

273. Accidents, work-related ill health and near-misses are reported and investigated. The Board sponsor for health and safety is notified, within 48 hrs, of all incidents identified as reportable under RIDDOR.

	April-March 2004	April-March 2003	April-March 2002
RIDDOR:			
Fatal injuries	0	0	0
Major injuries	3	1	2
Dangerous occurrences	0	0	2
Over-three-day injuries:	8 (1)	10 (1)	8(3)
Ill health	0	4 (1)	3
Other over-three-day injuries, eg Road traffic accidents	1	3	1
Ill health, other	101 (2)	154 (4)	126 (1)
Minor injuries	128 (17)	148 (17)	114 (19)
Near misses, including verbal abuse and possible accidental asbestos exposure	90 (4)	85 (6)	72 (12)
TOTAL	331	405	328

Note: The figures for non-HSE staff are included and shown in brackets.

274. There were 11 RIDDOR reports during 2003/04, (one of which was reported by an employer of non-HSE staff). This compares with 15 last year (including two non-HSE staff) and 15 in 2001/02 (including three non-HSE staff). The incident rate for RIDDOR is 233 per 100 000 employees. HSE estimates the total cost of the accidents/ill health to be approximately £356 000. There were three claims settled during the year relating to work-related accidents.

275. Enforcement action against HSE: There were no prosecutions or convictions against HSE during the year. However, following a serious accident at the Health and Safety Laboratory, a Crown improvement notice was served by the Enforcing Authority, which in this case is the Field Operations Directorate of HSE. Following this, changes in procedures and training were implemented.

276. Our priorities in the 2004/05 Corporate Health and Safety Plan will include:

- continued commitment in the reduction of musculoskeletal disorders;
- reduction of slips and trips;
- management of stress; and
- monitoring performance of contractors.

277. The Board has set targets for 2004/05 to:

- further reduce reports due to DSE and accidents causing injury due to slips and trips by 10% on 2003/04 figures;
- reduce RIDDOR incidents to single figures.

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24 June 2004

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