

Health and Safety Executive Operational Circular OC 543/3

Field Operations Directorate

This OC advises staff of liaison arrangements between the Food NIG and the poultry- processing industry and of new guidance on prevention of upper limb disorders. . .

To

Agriculture and Factories Inspectors (Bands 0-4)

EMAS Professional Staff (Band Unallocated)

FCG Specialist Inspectors with Ergonomics Responsibilities (Bands 2-3) . .

UPPER LIMB DISORDERS IN POULTRY PROCESSING . . .

BACKGROUND . . .

1 In 1995 liaison was re-established between the Food NIG and the British Poultry Meat Federation (BPMF). A group was formed whose remit is to identify health and safety problems and priorities and produce practical industry-specific guidance. It meets 3 to 4 times per year and representatives from a number of the larger poultry processors participate. The group is chaired by the NIG and members are listed in the guidance. . . .

2 For many years the industry has been cited as one of the highest in risk for work- related upper limb disorders. There have been a number of highly publicised civil claims for damages. Work has now been completed on a guidance document on this subject. . .

NEW GUIDANCE DOCUMENT . . .

3 The document *Guidance on work-related upper limb disorders in poultry processing* draws from the practical knowledge of participating companies and has been largely written by the industry. The group hopes that by giving such specific advice, better standards of control will be achieved across the industry. . . .

4 The document has been publicised in the poultry trade press and will be distributed free to BPMF members. Non-members may purchase it (price approximately £5.00) from the British Poultry Meat Federation Limited, Imperial House, 15-19 Kingsway, London WC2B 6UA. . . .

5 Copies for HSE will be issued to file 543. Inspectors and others should be able to use the document as a benchmark of what is reasonably practicable in the industry. . .

OTHER GUIDANCE __

6 Other guidance for this industry has been jointly produced in the past for safeguarding: gizzard skinning machines; eviscerating machines; and automatic cutting machines (the NIG can provide additional information on request). Review of these elderly documents and consideration of specific guidance on bandsaws and slip prevention are the next planned work items for the group.

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SECTOR STRATEGIC PLAN __

7 Musculoskeletal risks have been one of the 12 "Recipe for safety" priorities at food factories for a number of years. For 1997/98 it will be one of the 2 areas (slips being the other) in the Sector Strategic Plan (SSP) that heads of operations agreed would be sampled as a way of assessing management of health and safety and implementation of "Recipe for safety" in general. Inspectors will be asked to assess the compliance of food manufacturing units visited and this guidance will provide the benchmark against which to make the FOCUS contact report. __

8 Additionally, the SSP asks inspectors to undertake initiatives to raise awareness and progress with "Recipe for safety" guidance more generally than just those visited. Inspectors may wish to ensure all poultry-processing premises are aware of this guidance as underpinning the general prioritised approach in the food industry. __

FEEDBACK __

9 The Food NIG will always welcome feedback from inspectors. An initiative to evaluate the impact of the guidance and assess standards of control of work-related upper limb disorders may be considered in the future. __

30 April 1997

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ASI headings__

British Poultry Meat Federation Limited: food musculoskeletal disorders: poultry: repetitive strain injury: upper limb disorders: work programmes and systems. __ __