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Target Audience

Inspectors responsible for the food and drink industries

REVITALISING HEALTH AND SAFETY - AN AGREEMENT WITH INDUSTRY ON A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRIES

This SIM gives information on an agreement which has been drawn up between the Food and Drink Federation (FDF), main food industry trade unions and HSE on a strategy for improving health and safety in the food and drink industries in order to further the HSC/DETR Revitalising Health and Safety initiative.

BACKGROUND

1 In the early 1980s an agreement entitled 'A Common Strategy for Improving Health and Safety in the Food and Drink Industries' was drawn up between HSE's Food NIG, the FDF (the main umbrella trade association for the food and drink industries) and the 4 main trade unions represented in the food industries - GMB, T&G, USDAW and the bakers trade union BFAWU.

2 This agreement set out the main health and safety priorities in the food industries and actions required by employers, trade unions and HSE to reduce accidents which were running at twice the incidence rate of manufacturing generally.


3 Over the next decade the number of reported injuries in the food industries decreased and by 2000 the incidence rate for injuries had dropped by 12% (twice that of manufacturing generally) and the total number of injuries reported had dropped by 24%. In some food sectors, such as dairy, meat processing, sugar confectionery, grain milling and bread production, injury rates dropped by 25-35%. The number of fatal injuries nearly halved over the decade.

REVISED COMMON STRATEGY

4 In 2000 the FDF, trade unions and HSE Food Section agreed that the Common Strategy needed revision so as to better reflect the HSC/DETR Revitalising Health and Safety initiative. The revised document is attached as an appendix.

5 The revised Common Strategy sets out the challenge, areas for improvement, objectives and proposed injury reduction and occupational ill health targets. It also sets out agreed actions for the FDF, trade unions and HSE and suggested actions for other food and drink trade associations, food companies and safety committees/groups.


6 The main objectives set out in the revised Common Strategy are to:

- (1) raise awareness of the need to further improve health and safety - and the cost benefits in doing so;
- (2) concentrate on the 'priority' health and safety issues as set out in HSE's booklet [A Recipe for Safety](#); 
- (3) promote the importance of effective management of health and safety;
- (4) ensure a consistent message on objectives (1)-(3) emanates from HSE, FDF and trade unions; and
- (5) monitor achievement until 2010.

7 The injury reduction and occupational ill health targets set for 2010 aim at a further decrease in injuries similar to that already seen between 1990-2000, thus ensuring demanding but realistic targets.

ACTION

8 The actions for HSE set out in the revised Common Strategy are primarily for HSE Food Section to carry out. However, inspectors will want to be aware of the existence of this joint food industry/HSE agreement on improving health and safety.

9 In particular inspectors should note that the food and drink industries are encouraged to use the free HSE booklet [A Recipe for Safety](#)  to help determine health and safety priorities and actions. These priorities will be reflected in annual inspection programme priorities - musculoskeletal disorders, workplace transport, falls from height, slips prevention etc.

10 No special visits or actions are required by this SIM or the revised Common Strategy.

Date first issued: November 2001

APPENDIX (para 4)

September 2001

REVITALISING HEALTH AND SAFETY SECURING HEALTH TOGETHER

A COMMON STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRIES

This document indicates the aims and objectives of a renewed Common Strategy agreed separately between HSE's Food Section with the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) and between the Food Section and the main Trade Unions (GMB, TGWU, USDAW, BFAWU). It indicates the actions in support of these aims and objectives which each party will undertake.

The Challenge

In June 2000 the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) and the Department of the Environment, Transport & Regions (DETR) launched a Strategy Statement ***Revitalising Health and Safety***¹.

This set challenging targets to reduce, by 2010:

- working days lost from work-related injuries and ill health by 30%
- the incidence rate of fatal and major injury accidents by 10%
- the incidence rate of cases of work-related ill health by 20%.

In July 2000 the HSC launched a supplemental document *Securing Health Together - a long term occupational health strategy for England, Scotland and Wales*². This document set a strategy to achieve the targets in work-related ill health mentioned above.

Background

At the beginning of the decade HSE's Food Section, the Food & Drink Federation (FDF) and the main food industry trade unions (GMB, TGWU, USDAW, BFAWU) agreed a Common Strategy of actions to improve health and safety in the food industry.

By 2000, the overall injury rate in the food and drink industries had dropped by 15% and fatal injuries were down 40%. Between 1996-2000 the major injury rate, ie broken major bones etc, had dropped 5% (data before this period is not comparable due to different reporting criteria).


With this success already recorded, this renewed Common Strategy revises and updates the earlier one and sets out actions for each party to carry it forward.

Areas for Improvement

- Injury rates in the food and drink industries are twice that of the manufacturing average; some 24% of all manufacturing injuries occur in the food and drink sectors. There is also a high incidence of occupational ill health, particularly musculoskeletal injury.
- Whilst care must be taken in making such comparisons, given the characteristics of the industry, there needs to be more widespread recognition of the benefits of improved risk management in reducing injuries, ill health and costs.
- The benefits of health and safety management auditing need to be recognised more widely and more auditing carried out.
- The benefits of workforce participation need greater promotion.

Objectives

1 To raise awareness of the need to further improve health and safety performance - and the cost benefits³ in doing so.

2 To concentrate on the 'priority' health and safety issues as set out in HSE's [A Recipe for Safety](#).⁴

3 To promote the importance of effective management of health and safety. ⁵

4 To ensure a consistent message on Objectives 1-3 emanates from HSE, FDF and trade unions with encouragement to other food/drink industry trade associations and employers to pursue these objectives

5 To monitor achievement until 2010.


Proposed targets

As a minimum, by 2010 to seek to reduce:

- overall injury rates by a further 15% (making 30% in total)
- fatal injuries by a further 10% (making 50% in total)
- major injuries by a further 5% (making 10% in total)
- the incidence rate of cases of work-related ill health by 20%.

Actions to implement the renewed Common Strategy


HSE's Food Section will assist industry by:

- continuing to raise awareness for the food and drink industries to improve health and safety performance, focusing on significant risk areas and their management
- promotion of the 'core' booklet [A Recipe for Safety](#) and by publishing and promoting guidance in significant risk areas
- ensuring HSE inspectors visiting food and drink factories are appraised of the significant risk areas to target, and the guidance and tools available to tackle these
- promoting the value of health and safety management auditing by companies
- identifying factories with high injury rates and targeting these for joint initiatives with the employer to reduce injuries
- promoting this renewed Common Strategy to trade associations and other food industry health and safety committees and groups
- running conferences and seminars and writing journal articles to promote the priority H&S issues
- participating in FDF, trade association and trade union initiatives
- promotion of greater workforce involvement in the development of health and safety systems.


The FDF through its Occupational H&S Panel will assist industry by:

- encouraging member companies to calculate the true costs of accidents and absence


due to occupational ill health, particularly from musculoskeletal injury

- promoting [A Recipe for Safety](#)  and encouraging member associations and companies to take positive actions to follow its guidance
- promoting the value of health and safety management auditing
- encouraging member companies to carry out joint working on health and safety issues with trade unions
- running conferences and seminars to promote health and safety priorities and promoting/introducing initiatives, eg contractors' passport scheme
- promoting health and safety issues in FDF Update
- discussing with HSE its proposed inspection programmes to ensure they are relevant and helpful and ensuring industry interests are represented
- participating in the preparation of HSE's guidance to industry.

Trade Unions will assist industry by:

- promoting [A Recipe for Safety](#)  and encouraging employers to take actions to follow its guidance, particularly on reducing musculoskeletal risks
- participating and encouraging joint working with employers on health and safety issues
- promoting the value of health and safety management auditing
- encouraging employers to calculate the costs of accidents
- running conferences and seminars to promote health and safety priorities
- promoting health and safety issues in TU journals
- discussing with HSE its proposed inspection programmes to ensure they are relevant and helpful and ensuring TU interests are represented
- participating in the preparation of HSE's guidance to industry.


Food/drink industry Trade Associations and industry health and safety committees/groups can assist their industry by:

- promoting [A Recipe for Safety](#)  and encouraging member companies to take positive actions to follow its guidance
- where appropriate, publish health and safety guidance specific to risks in their industry - and promote/introduce initiatives, eg contractors' passport scheme
- promoting the value of health and safety management auditing
- encouraging member companies to calculate the true costs of accidents and absence

due to occupational ill health, particularly from musculoskeletal injury

- encouraging member companies to carry out joint working on health and safety issues with trade unions at local level
- running conferences and seminars to promote health and safety priorities
- promoting health and safety issues in their Newsletters
- where appropriate, participating in the preparation of HSE's guidance to industry.

Individual food/drink companies can assist by:

- costing the full impact of accidents and occupational ill health to their business to determine the potential for cost savings from good management of health and safety
- calculating their company's injury rate and comparing it with benchmarks given in [A Recipe for Safety](#) 
- concentrating health and safety efforts on their main causes of injury and occupational ill health - in general these will be those highlighted in *A Recipe for Safety* with particular attention to reducing musculoskeletal injuries
- obtaining and implementing the specific health and safety guidance issued for their industry and for the specific risks in their company
- carrying out health and safety management auditing to monitor and review prevention strategies implemented
- consulting and involving trade union safety representatives or employee representatives in health and safety issues and carrying out joint working with them at local level
- ensuring full involvement of the workforce in health and safety by training and effective feedback arrangements
- promoting health and safety issues in their Newsletters.

Useful References:

¹ ***Revitalising Health and Safety - Strategy Statement 2000*** available from DTLR, Free Literature Service, PO Box 236, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7NB Tel: 0870 1226 236

² *Securing Health Together - a long term occupational health strategy for England, Scotland and Wales* MISC225 2000 available from HSE Books

³ *The Costs of Accidents at Work* HSG96 HSE Books

The Costs to the British economy of work accidents and work related ill health HSG101 HSE Books

⁴ [A Recipe for Safety](#)  TOP05(rev 1) 1999 available from HSE Books

⁵ *Successful health and safety management* HSG65 HSE Books

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TOP ▲