

**Achieving the Revitalising Health and Safety Targets
Statistical Progress Report, November 2005**

EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW

prepared on behalf of

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

by

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Introduction

The *Revitalising Health and Safety* strategy statement launched in June 2000 set three national targets for improving health and safety performance by 2010:

- to reduce the number of working days lost per 100,000 workers from work-related injury and ill health by 30%;
- to reduce the incidence rate of cases of work-related ill health by 20%;
- to reduce the incidence rate of fatalities and major injuries by 10%;

and to achieve half the improvement under each target by 2004.

In June 2001, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) produced a statistical note, detailing how progress towards these three targets would be measured and reported: a progress report was to be produced each autumn comparing the latest data with those for the base year (1999/2000).

The purpose of the document presented here is to provide an external peer review of the mid-point statistical progress report (November 2005) produced by the HSE.

One of the main issues that underlies the statistical progress report is how the under-reporting of fatalities and major injuries should be taken into account when measuring progress towards these targets, as any change in the amount of under-reporting could falsely create the impression of a change in the injury rate. For this reason, the HSE commissioned the Health and Safety Laboratories (HSL) to research the pattern of reporting of major and over 3-day injuries in a sample of British manufacturing companies over a five year period (April 1999 – March 2004). This research aimed to explore injury reporting trends in the manufacturing industry (An investigation of Trends in Under reporting of Major and Over-3-day injuries in the Manufacturing Sector: Second Survey). A similar survey was also commissioned covering the services sector.

This review concentrates on the assessment of the fatal and major injuries target within the progress report and takes into account the results from the HSL manufacturing study. The particular sections of the progress report which are covered by this review are: section 1; section 2 (Fatal and Major Injuries only); section 3; section 5.1; and Annex A.

Overall Conclusion

Regarding the Fatal and Major injuries target the conclusion is given in section 2 of the progress report:

“The rate of fatal and major injury has fluctuated and is around 1% higher in 2004/05 compared with 1999/2000, the base year of the Revitalising targets. The mid-point target for a reduction of 5% in the rate of fatal and major injury in the five years has therefore not been met.”

Having reviewed this report and with reference to the HSL study, it is our opinion that this conclusion is valid.

Further Comment

The following comments based on data from the report of the HSL manufacturing study may be of interest to the audience of the progress report and as such could be considered for inclusion in the report.

- Section 4.1 and 5.1.1 of the HSL manufacturing study report conclude that regarding major injury ‘the level of reporting appears to be getting worse’. Whereas the HSE progress report concludes that ‘there is no clear trend in the rate of major injury to employees’. These conclusions appear to be contradictory and perhaps deserve some further comment. However, any trend (if it exists) is not clear given the data provided (78%, 73%, 75%, 62%).
- Table 4 in the HSL manufacturing study report shows that the proportion of companies under reporting appears to be increasing over the four year period studied; however this trend is quite different from that observed in table 6 of the HSL manufacturing study report (based on individual injuries). This information may prove useful in understanding the nature of the changes in reporting levels.

Annex A contains much of the data on which the report is based, however it may be useful to supplement this with some further information.

- Section 3.2 refers to the ‘annual LFS rate of workplace injury’ and ‘LFS figures for rate of “all workplace injury”’. Only one of these is given in Annex A table 1, it would be useful to include both.
- Section 5.1 discusses the number of days lost target, the data on which these comments are based is not included.
- In Annex A, Notes 1 and 2 appear to give contradictory information: 796 manufacturing companies traded and gave a useable return each year throughout the 5 year period, but only 629 gave a useable return in 1999/00. If these numbers are correct, further explanation would be beneficial.
- Although it is not within the remit of this report to review the HSL manufacturing study report, it is noted that tables 4 and 5 (HSL study report) differ in the number of companies with missing data or not trading.