

## Achieving the *Revitalising Health and Safety* targets:

### Statistical progress report, November 2003

The statistics on health and safety at work inform the measurement of progress against the targets for reducing work-related injuries, ill health and working days lost set in the *Revitalising Health and Safety* strategy. HSE's approach to progress measurement is detailed in a Statistical Note published in June 2001, which is on the HSE website at [www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/statnote.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/statnote.pdf). Among other things, this states that progress will be assessed from trends estimated in statistical models, and that, for ill health, existing data sources will need to be refined and new ones developed, with a judgement on progress being made by integrating data from several of them. At this stage, it is not possible to make a full assessment of progress, but the following can be said with respect to the three targets.

Fatal and major injuries – for more details please see [Health and Safety Highlights 2002/03 page 10](#)

- The target is to reduce the indicator by 10% in the ten years to 2009/10 and by 5% by 2004/05.
- The indicator includes an up-rating for the under-reporting of major injuries, and therefore depends heavily on estimates of the level of major injury reporting.
- Whilst the rate of reported over-3-day injury to employees has fallen, the rate of employee reported major injury has risen in the two years to 2002/03, indicating a change in the relationship of reported major and over-3-day injuries. This change may reflect a genuine change in the occurrence of major injuries or that employers are maintaining (or improving) the reporting of major injuries, but not that of over-3-day injuries.
- To allow for these changes in the rate of reported major injury relative to the rate of reported over-3-day injury to employees, a revision was made in 2002/03 to the methodology used for the calculation of the estimate of major injury reporting used in the indicator for this target. This revision was also applied retrospectively to 2001/02, and should be regarded as provisional, pending further work to validate its underlying assumptions.
- For 2002/03, the un-revised indicator shows a rise of 5.7% from 1999/2000, the base year. On a revised basis, the indicator falls by 3.8%. Both these estimates are subject to statistical uncertainty of 5-6%.
- These alternative estimates represent two interpretations of the relative changes in the rates of reported major and over-3-day injury. If the change in the pattern of reported major injuries reflects a genuine change in their occurrence, this implies a rise in the rate of all major injury. If employers are maintaining the reporting of major injuries but not that of over-3-day injuries, then the 3% reduction since the base year in rate of reported major injury reflects a genuine reduction in the rate of all major injury. There is insufficient evidence to choose confidently between these alternatives and the true position is likely to lie somewhere in-between, leading to the conclusion that there is no clear evidence of change, which is also in line with the flat trend in the rate of reportable non-fatal injury from the Labour Force Survey.
- HSE will be undertaking further analysis and commissioning research on the reporting of major injuries.

Work-related ill health – for more details please see [Health and Safety Highlights 2002/03 page 11](#)

- The target is to reduce the incidence rate (new cases) by 20% in the ten years to 2009/10, and by 10% by 2004/05.
- The balance of evidence suggests that the overall incidence of work-related ill health is likely to have risen since 1999/2000.
- This is essentially because the latest information suggests work-related stress is rising, while musculoskeletal disorders – the other major cause of ill health – shows no change (though there is some evidence of improved risk control). A reduction in asthma, and hints of a reduction in dermatitis, are not enough to offset the stress increase.
- This judgement on progress involves integrating data from several different sources, using newly developed methods that are presented in *Highlights* for the first time and on a provisional basis.

Working days lost due to injuries and ill health – for more details please see [Health and Safety Highlights 2002/03 page 12](#)

- The target is to reduce the rate per 100 000 workers by 30% in the ten years to 2009/10, and by 15% by 2004/05.
- There are no new data this year. The latest information from self-reporting surveys, published in last year's *Highlights*, estimates that there were 40.2 million days lost per year in 2000/02, the base year.
- The next estimate of days lost will be for 2003/04 and will be available in a progress report in Autumn 2004.