

Health and Safety Authority Draft Statement of Strategy (for Public Consultation)

Foreword

We are very pleased to present for public consultation this draft Statement of Strategy for workplace safety, health and welfare for the period 2010 to 2012.

Our draft strategy has been prepared with due regard for the legal duties of the Authority; for government programmes and priorities; for the EU strategy on safety, health and welfare at work; for the national and the European strategy on chemicals; and for international trends and practices.

This document gives an overview of our strategy and its key features. It also provides details of our vision and our mission, of the organisational values which underpin our work, and of the goals and the outcomes which we aim to achieve. We set out here a number of goals with their supporting strategies. The goals are the expression of our belief that only by their motivation and influence can we lead all concerned to the desired outcomes, sustained changes of behaviour.

This is a high-level strategy and it will be delivered by the annual programmes of work developed by the Authority. The annual programmes of work contain the key activities which will deliver the goals set out in this strategy.

We invite you now to comment on this draft document and to pass on to us any observations you may have. These will assist us in finalising our strategy which we will offer for adoption to the Board and for final consideration by the Minister. In particular, we would ask you to consider the following questions:

1. Are the outcomes of our strategy appropriate?
2. Is our chosen mission, to bring about change by influencing the behaviour of employers and employees, the best approach?
3. Are the goals and associated strategies the best possible for the Irish workforce and their employers?

4. Is our approach to making people accountable and our focus on those who disregard their duties and responsibilities appropriate?
5. Is our goal and strategy for the management of chemicals the correct approach?
6. Is our strategy compatible with the significant changes facing the country: economic downturn, loss of jobs in key sectors and the changing composition of the workforce and will it position us appropriately for when economic growth resumes?

We look forward to hearing your views.

Martin O'Halloran
Chief Executive Officer

Health and Safety Authority

Draft Statement of Strategy (for Public Consultation)

Introduction

This is the second Strategy Statement prepared by the Authority under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. It is also the first strategy we have prepared since the enactment of the Chemicals Act 2008. In this strategy we aim to build on the significant progress made under our previous strategy statement of 2007–2009. We believe there is yet further scope to significantly and sustainably improve workplace safety, health and welfare and to ensure the safe and sustainable use of chemicals and to become a role model for safety and health in Europe.

This strategy complements the national strategy for workplace safety and health which is being developed by the Minister for Labour Affairs at the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment.

We believe that if we provide vision and strategic direction we will achieve a change of culture. There is strong evidence to prove that businesses which embrace good workplace safety and health practices are more competitive and more productive. This is critical in our current economic circumstances. Moreover, good workplace safety and health has the potential to improve the overall health and wellbeing of our society.

Our role is to promote and to foster best practice in workplaces, but we cannot achieve this alone. We intend to work with the social partners – employers, employees, self-employed and other key organisations – to communicate our message, to achieve our goals and to bring about the best outcomes. Only as an integral part of our working lives will the management of health and safety be truly effective. By working together towards this goal and outcome, we can bring about real and sustainable improvements that benefit all.

Our broad approach will be to:

- Motivate all and to gain the commitment of all
- Inform, to guide and to advise, all stakeholders as they seek to meet their obligations

- Work with the Minister to ensure that an appropriate legislative and policy framework is in place.

Where the supportive approach is not successful, we will use the enforcements instruments at our disposal to achieve compliance.

Safety and Health in Ireland

Since the establishment of the Authority in 1989, Ireland has made very significant progress in workplace safety and health and, in the past ten years, we have contributed to the continuing downward trend in fatal injuries. In the same period Ireland has been among the three countries with the lowest non-fatal injury rates in the EU. These reductions were achieved at a time of rapidly growing employment in high-risk sectors. However, Ireland's fatality rates remain only average when compared to other EU countries. We are a long way from matching the UK fatal injury rate of only 0.7 deaths per 100,000 workers.

The rate of workplace accidents in Ireland has been consistently below the EU average and is one of the lowest in Europe. The European accident rate has reduced from approximately 4,000 accidents per 100,000 workers to approximately 3,000 accidents per 100,000 workers, while Ireland's accident rate has remained between 1,000 and 1,500 accidents per 100,000 workers in the same period.

Yet despite improvement, there was also tragedy and suffering. Since 2000 the Authority has received reports of more than 570 workplace fatalities and more than 70,000 accidents that resulted in more than three days absence from work. All of these failures are not only personal tragedies but also major losses for families and communities. In addition to the emotional toll on individuals and their families, there is also the impact on business, society and the economy. It is estimated that in 2007 alone there were more than 64,000 injuries in Irish workplaces and 59,000 work related illnesses. Each day an estimated 150 people suffered a significant injury or illness due to their work. Conservative estimates put the cost to the economy of these failures at an annual €3.3 billion. Clearly, a need to improve remains.

Our Strategy

Our draft strategy has been prepared with due regard for the legal duties of the Authority; for the EU strategy on safety, health and welfare at work; for the national and European strategy on chemicals; and for international trends and practices. This strategy addresses the compelling evidence that health, psychological and social issues in the workplace are now becoming a very significant factor in our working lives.

In this document we give an overview of our strategy and its key features. We detail our vision and our mission. We specify the outcomes for which we strive and the goals with their supporting strategies, by which we hope to achieve them. We define the organisational values which underpin our work. All of these arise from our belief that only by motivating and influencing can we achieve sustained changes in behaviour.

This is a high-level strategy which will be delivered by annual programmes of work developed by us. The annual programmes will lay out the key activities required to deliver the strategic goals which we are setting out.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Health & Safety Authority Strategy

National Vision

National culture of excellence where every person will commit to the provision of safety, health and welfare at work and the safe and sustainable management of chemicals

Outcomes

- Safe and healthy workplaces which support enterprise success
- Reduction in the rate of work-related fatalities
- Reduction in the rate of work-related cases of ill-health
- Reduction in the rate of work-related injuries
- Safe and sustainable use of chemicals

Safety

Health & Welfare

**Chemicals
Management**

Balancing resources across areas

Goal: Enable employers, employees and others to reduce risks

Goal: Motivate and gain commitment to safe & healthy workplaces

Goal: Initiate & develop appropriate legislative proposals

Goal: Hold accountable those who disregard their duties

Goal: Promote the safe and sustainable management of chemicals

Goal: Ensure effectiveness and value for money in the Authority

**Employer &
Employee
Type
Focus**

**Resource
Allocation
based on
Risk Rating**

Partnerships

**Simplifying
Compliance**

Cross-cutting Themes

Vision

The vision of the Health and Safety Authority is:

'A national culture of excellence where every person will commit to the provision of safety, health and welfare at work and the safe and sustainable management of chemicals'

Beneficial Outcomes

Achieving our vision will lead to the following beneficial outcomes:

- Safe and healthy workplaces which support enterprise success
- Reduction in the rate of work-related fatalities
- Reduction in the rate of work-related cases of ill health
- Reduction in the rate of work-related injuries
- Safe and sustainable use of chemicals

This will in turn lead to a number of indirect **benefits**:

- Improved quality of life through reduction of work-related injuries and ill-health
- An economic benefit to enterprise through increased productivity and reduced costs (such as insurance reductions, absenteeism reduction)

Organisation Mission

The mission of the Health and Safety Authority is:

'To influence changes in the behaviours of employers and employees so that they can adopt and sustain world class work practices which

- *eliminate and minimise the risk of injury or ill-health caused by work activity*
- *protect man and the environment through the sound management and safe use of chemicals'*

Organisational Values

In tandem with this strategy we have also developed a set of organisational values for the Authority which we believe will assist us in delivering that strategy. The following values will underpin all our actions and decisions:

- Commitment to customers
- Integrity
- Quality and continuous improvement
- Respecting our people
- Accountability
- Speed, agility and innovation

Strategic Goals and Strategies

Overall approach

Our approach is: to achieve behavioural change through a combination of raising awareness with giving information and advice and, where necessary, by enforcement. This has proved effective in improving workplace safety. We propose to continue this approach to safety and to extend it to the areas of health and welfare, and chemical safety.

A large part of our effort consists of alerting employers to recognised high-risk areas and encouraging them to put in place the systems and processes that eliminate or minimise risk.

We concentrate our resources on those sectors and activities in which:

- Risks of fatality, injury or ill-health are highest
- Employer awareness and commitment is weakest
- We can achieve the best outcome

We work in a range of partnerships to encourage commitment and accountability, and to make the most of our resources by influencing groups of employers and employees. Depending upon our assessment of the needs of particular sectors, we adopt appropriate mixes of raising awareness, informing, guiding and advising, and, if necessary, enforcement, to assist employers to provide safe and healthy workplaces. See figure 1 below.

We regularly evaluate the effectiveness of our approach and conduct research to ensure that emerging issues are identified and appropriate strategies applied to known hazards in the workplace.

We recognise that in the current economic environment some employers may try to make short-term savings by reducing investment in safety and health. We know that this may lead to increased rates of death and injury and to significant losses in productivity. We will, therefore, focus our efforts on motivating and assisting employers to maintain and increase their commitment, and, where necessary, we will use our enforcement powers to protect the safety and health of workers.

Figure 1 : How we approach delivery in our areas



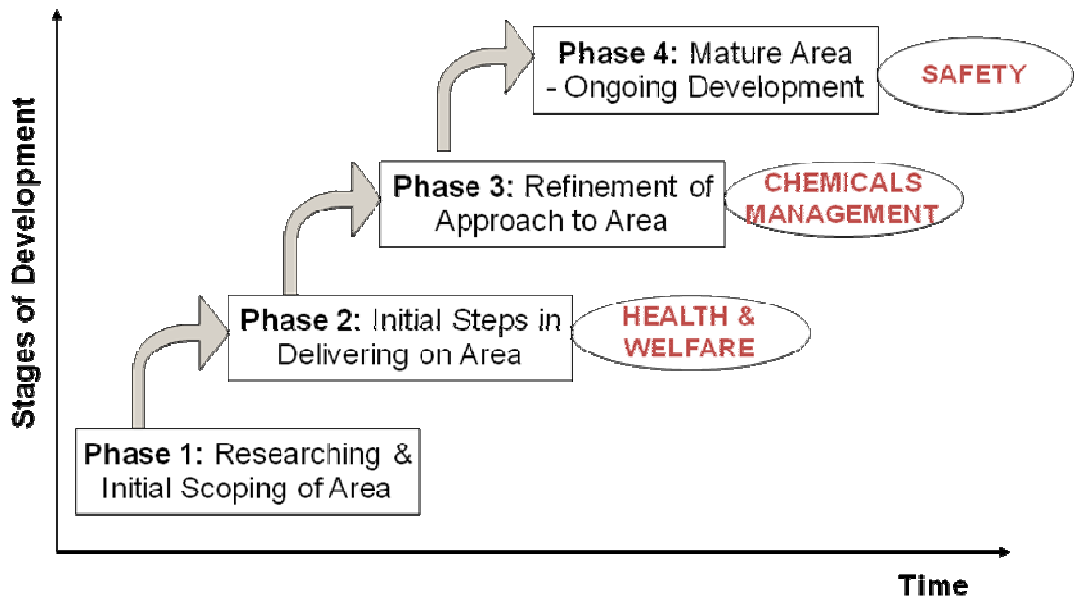
The Authority works in three distinct areas:

- Workplace safety
- Occupational health and welfare
- Chemicals management

Workplace safety was originally the core of our work, and our strategies and processes in this area are well developed. On the other hand, chemicals management is a relatively new area for us and our strategies and processes in this area are not as well developed as for workplace safety.

However, we can build upon our prior responsibilities for chemicals safety. Occupational health remains the least developed area of our work, in spite of the increasing importance of occupational illness as a cause of workplace absence. Our strategy aims, among other things, to develop both chemicals management and the management of occupational health to a higher level. Figure 2 gives a clear and analytical breakdown of the different stages of development in these three areas.

Figure 2: Stages of Development of our work areas



Overall goals

Our priority for the duration of this strategy will be to make progress in achieving the six goals listed below:

Our Goals:

To enable employers, employees and others to reduce risks to safety, health and welfare

To motivate and gain commitment to having safe and healthy workplaces which support success in all enterprises

To support the Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment in the initiation and development of appropriate legislation and policies

To hold accountable those who disregard their duties and responsibilities for occupational safety, health and welfare

To promote the safe and sustainable management of chemicals

To ensure that the Authority is effective in delivering on its goals and achieves value for money

To enable employers and employees to reduce risk

Strategies to support delivery of our key goals

Goal: *To enable employers, employees and others to reduce risks to safety, health and welfare*

Our approach here is to support employers, employees and others by providing advice, guidance and information that is tailored to the specific group, readily accessible and easily understood. We will seek to reflect the unique needs of each stakeholder whilst using the full available range of communication and information tools.

Strategy: develop and prioritise work programmes

We will deliver this by:

- Ensuring that we have structures and processes in place to enable us to identify new and emerging risks
- Promoting workplace strategies that contribute to employee health and devising specific measures where there is a direct link between work, absence and employee health

Strategy: support employers and employees in dealing with and understanding workplace safety, health and welfare

We will deliver this by:

- Promoting and encouraging the implementation of effective safety and health management systems in organisations
- Ensuring that employers have access to comprehensive and easily understood information and guidance for high-risk sectors and hazards and for the key duties that arise from legislation
- Presenting information to employers and those in control of workplaces in a manner that is accessible, cost effective and appropriate to their needs

To enable employers and employees to reduce risk

- Enhancing employer competence in dealing with workplace safety, health and welfare and integrating all aspects in a comprehensive management system
- Supporting employers who demonstrate eagerness to implement safety and health practices that prioritise prevention
- Providing special supports for small businesses and the self-employed which will address their safety, health and welfare needs in a simple manner. (We will involve relevant organisations in the delivery of a major programme for small businesses and the self-employed)
- Establishing a series of national programmes designed for general workers which can be delivered on site (for example e-learning technology) with the purpose of ensuring employees can demonstrate their understanding of their individual responsibilities. (We will seek accreditation with FETAC within the national framework of qualifications (NFQ))

Strategy: use partnerships to enhance our capability to influence employers, employees and others

We will deliver this by:

- Cooperating with other state agencies including agencies with an enterprise development or support role to enable the provision of integrated and effective supports in relation to safety and health
- Assessing existing partnerships and structures, and by strengthening those which deliver measurable outcomes
- Agreeing multiple annual programmes, which can be implemented by and/or with other organisations, which can positively assist workplace safety and health

To enable employers and employees to reduce risk

- Sharing information identified through our inspection programmes on issues specific to each sector with relevant partnership groups to promote sector-wide responses
- Working with employer groups and training providers to ensure that appropriate training in safety and health is available

Strategy: communicate effectively and appropriately

We will deliver this by:

- Presenting information to our defined audiences in the manner that is most appropriate to their needs and most accessible to them
- Keeping our information clear and concise, and by seeking feedback and evaluating its effectiveness at all times

Strategy: encourage and enable employers to address occupational health issues in conjunction with safety

We will deliver this by:

- Developing tools for employers to enable them to identify risks in occupational health and develop appropriate control measures
- Providing on-site support through special initiatives, based on case studies, which aim to reduce instances of occupational illness
- Identifying significant issues causing occupational illness in each sector, and addressing these together with our key partners

To motivate and gain commitment to safe and healthy workplaces

Goal: *To motivate and gain commitment to having safe and healthy workplaces which support success in all enterprises – private and public sector, commercial and not for profit organisations*

This goal targets a number of stakeholders – employers, employees, government, taxpayers, students who will be at work in the future, public, professional and voluntary organisations, including NGOs – whose work has an impact on safety, health and welfare.

Our key outcome for this goal is that all the above groups will be convinced of the benefit to be derived from increased action to improve workplace safety and health and will therefore engage in this action. In addition to the specific strategies set out below, we will ensure that all our external communication tools are motivating in their content and delivery format.

Strategy: Influence leaders and those that can bring about and support change

We will deliver this by:

- Developing effective partnerships with other agencies and public bodies that have a common interest in the safety and health of workers and those affected by work
- Presenting the case for investment in occupational safety, health and welfare with an emphasis on the beneficial long-term outcomes for society, the state and the economy
- Conducting research and collating existing research which defines the opportunity for businesses to reduce costs by implementing a good safety, health and welfare system
- Renewing our campaign on the theme of directors' responsibilities
- Developing partnerships with countries of similar size and structure, if possible with EU funding support, and gaining the support of government for such an approach
- Raising national awareness of outcomes, particularly positive ones. Presenting year-end outcomes with a strong emphasis on value for money and impact.

To motivate and gain commitment to safe and healthy workplaces

- Benchmarking Ireland's progress, including rates of fatality and injury/ illness, with northern EU countries with similar standards: for example, UK, Denmark, Netherlands and Finland

Strategy: Achieve a greater balance between occupational safety and occupational health in our promotion and implementation

We will deliver this by:

- Promoting our mission for this area – *to protect workers' health from any existing and emerging work-related hazards and to encourage workplace practices which promote good health*
- Leading businesses, through effective communication, to understand the contribution of workplace health to the protection of their workers and to the success of their organisation
- Providing incentives for organisations to address workplace health by developing and promoting simple tools and support materials for them to use
- Undertaking a sustained general awareness campaign on the positive relationship in general between health and work, and on occupational health and the protection of workers from work-related ill-health in particular
- Ensuring a good balance between health issues and safety issues in our inspections

Strategy: Target safety and health promotion and information to areas of most need and areas which have most potential to contribute to safety and health performance

We will deliver this by:

- Targeting prevention initiatives at sectors with high levels of accidents, ill-health and lost-time incidents
- Ensuring continuous sustained information and promotion to address the major hazards in safety and health

To motivate and gain commitment to safe and healthy workplaces

- Continuing our work to get safety and health onto the mainstream education curriculum at all levels; increasing the development of these curriculum materials for primary and third levels, whilst maintaining the focus at second level
- Identifying possible contributions to the safety and health agenda from state funded and voluntary organisations, together with those existing structures established with a workplace safety and health objective (for example existing safety and health partnerships)
- Developing cost and resource effective proposals from such contributions which may provide the wider community with the same benefits in safety and health as for the sponsoring organisation
- Developing an educational course and standard for accreditation award at FETAC level 5 on the awareness and practice of occupational safety and health

Strategy: Encourage employers to implement key preventive initiatives at site level

We will deliver this by:

- Developing key initiatives for implementation at site level which can demonstrate the potential for a substantial reduction in worker injury or ill-health, in lost days and in associated costs of work-related injuries and illnesses and which provide motivation for inclusion in normal operating practice
- Encouraging line managers to make tangible progress in their areas towards the outcome of improved worker well-being with increased productivity
- Promoting good record management, which identifies areas for improvement and which tracks progress, as a key component of workplace safety and health management systems

Strategy: Involve workers and future workers

To motivate and gain commitment to safe and healthy workplaces

We will deliver this by:

- Introducing and sustaining campaigns in support of worker safety, health and well-being. Using these campaigns to remind employees of their responsibilities and to enlist their support for safer workplaces for themselves and their workmates
- Reinforcing our message of value and care for individual workers
- Encouraging and promoting worker incentives to participate in and to comply with safety and health provisions, and to prevent accidents and ill-health at their place of work
- Strengthening the promotion of our role in the protection of workers and the societal impact of safety and health management
- Encouraging students, by relevant interventions and incentives, to become more aware of good workplace safety and health and better practitioners of it (60% of post primary students are in some form of employment)
- Continuing to develop efficient tools, using new technologies, to promote workplace safety and health for young people and selecting the appropriate channels for best impact on these age groups

Strategy: Recognise and acknowledge effort

We will deliver this by:

- Identifying and acknowledging examples of good practice during our inspections
- Demonstrating support for those workplaces that our inspectors perceive to be working hard to prevent workplace accidents and ill-health

To support the Minister in the initiation and development of legislative proposals and policies

Goal: To support the Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment in the initiation and development of appropriate legislation and policies

Our strategy is to help the Minister ensure that the body of legislation is appropriate to the protection of the occupational safety and health of workers and others, and to their protection from the effects of chemicals. We will work to ensure that any regulatory burden is reduced to the minimum consistent with securing worker protection.

Strategy: take account of the administrative burdens on employers and the principles of better regulation

We will deliver this by:

- Working to consolidate existing legislation
- Keeping new requirements to the minimum necessary for the protection of workers and others
- Reviewing and where necessary making proposals for the repeal and/or replacement of out of date or redundant safety and health legislation: examples include, the Factories Acts and associated regulations, the Dangerous Substances Act and associated regulations, and the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act and associated regulations

Strategy: where there is a case for regulatory intervention develop legislative proposals for submission to the Minister that are clear, proportionate and effective

We will deliver this by:

- Ensuring effective consultation with affected parties
- Providing timely and informed Regulatory Impact Analysis

To support the Minister in the initiation and development of legislative proposals and policies

Strategy: actively participate in EU forums to ensure that Ireland's interests are competently represented

We will deliver this by:

- Taking account of the interests of workers and of small and micro employments
- Assisting the Minister, where appropriate, in representing Irish interests in the drafting of EU legislative proposals
- Contributing to the development of EU legislative proposals, in particular on REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) and the associated classification labelling and packaging of substances
- Assisting the Minister, where required, in the transposition of EU directives
- Contributing actively to Ireland's compliance with relevant international obligations

Strategy: evaluate the impact of existing regulation and legislation

We will deliver this through inspection, consultation and research.

To hold accountable those who disregard their duties

Goal: To hold accountable those who disregard their duties and responsibilities for occupational safety, health and welfare

The Authority will continue to implement targeted annual inspection programmes as these deliver:

- The clearest indicator of the approach to safety and health and its management on a day to day basis in individual workplaces and across sectors
- Motivation of employers and employees within the workplace
- Support to employers and employees in their efforts to improve safety and health standards at work
- Commitment from employers and employees and support to the other initiatives taken by the Authority to ensure that risks are addressed in ways based on prevention and sustainable in the long-term

The inspection of workplaces gives clear evidence of where employer or sector standards are poor. Where duties are being disregarded, we will ensure that duty holders are held to account and that the required levels of compliance are achieved. Compliance with safety and health legislation protects the lives and health of workers and supports competitiveness and productivity. Ensuring that all companies and individuals are making every effort to be compliant prevents unfair competition at the expense of workers' safety and health.

Strategy: implement a risk-based sector and topic focus to ensure that the highest risk areas are prioritised for actions to ensure compliance

We will deliver this by

- Maintaining nationwide targeted inspection programmes that are appropriate to each sector, to its risks and to the level of activity within the sector
- Making the allocation of inspection resources to sectors dependent on known indicators of risk: for example, the absence of safety and health management systems; the existence of high

To hold accountable those who disregard their duties

accident and injury rates; low levels of compliance; high levels of complaint; the use of hazardous chemicals; and knowledge derived from our inspection programmes

- Increasing our focus on and resource allocation in the areas of risks to health and arising from chemical use
- Heightening our focus on enforcement in those areas where significant guidance and advice has already been provided and yet non-compliance still exists
- Engaging with and seeking the support of sector representative bodies where common areas of low compliance are identified
- Clarifying for employers and others the standards to be used by us in conducting workplace inspections

Strategy: focus on individual workplaces with low compliance levels within the high-risk sectors

We will deliver this by:

- Cooperating with other national regulators in the assessment of employers' levels of compliance and in the development of consistent approaches to inspection
- Prioritising our inspection activity towards the sectors and individual employers where the highest levels of non-compliance are expected, using indicators such as complaints, accident rates and failure to provide required notifications
- Prioritising for further inspection those employers with a lower level of compliance
- Broadening our knowledge base of employers through sectoral and key hazard initiatives, with an increasing focus on risks to health and chemical use and the presence of control measures based on the principles of prevention

To hold accountable those who disregard their duties

- Ensuring that in sectors where low compliance is identified, our knowledge of the causes will inform further preventive actions

Strategy: use the optimal enforcement measure to ensure compliance

We will deliver this by:

- Ensuring that our assessment of compliance through the inspection programme is based on evidence
- Ensuring that our approach to holding duty holders to account, where non-compliance is observed, is proportionate and measured. We will take into account the duty holders' willingness to comply and their commitment to remaining compliant
- Targeting failure to control well known and established safety and health risks
- Taking enforcement actions against those with responsibility who are clearly non-compliant
- Holding individuals to account where this is warranted

Strategy: Focus on key indicators of poor compliance

We will deliver this by:

- Responding to complaints and ensuring that actions to ensure compliance are taken
- Ensuring that employers comply with their duty to notify the Authority of reportable accidents
- Actively seeking other sources of information on occupational injury, ill health and chemicals management and use

To hold accountable those who disregard their duties

- Investigating workplace fatal accidents and priority occupational accidents including major releases of chemicals in workplaces

Goal: To promote the safe and sustainable management of chemicals

Our overall objective is to achieve the sound management and use of chemicals so that they are produced and used in ways that minimise significant adverse impacts on human health and the environment. Our strategy will be compatible with the goals of developing appropriate legislation and policies, and motivating, enabling and ultimately, if necessary, holding accountable those who disregard their duties. Some of the ways to deliver our strategy will be incorporated in those goals. Since the enactment of the Chemicals Act 2008, our legal duties have enlarged. We are concerned now not only with occupational measures but also with environmental and consumer protection and the marketing of chemical products at national, EU and international level. Our strategies must reflect the enlargement of our duties which have defined this goal.

Strategy: influence chemicals legislation and develop appropriate policies

We will deliver this by:

- Fulfilling our Competent Authority role under the Chemicals Act 2008; the EU Control of Major Accident Hazards (Seveso II); the UN Chemical Weapons Convention; the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) and the Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations
- Representing Ireland at the relevant European Commission committees and working groups dealing with chemical legislation
- Fulfilling the Member State and individual expert roles required by the committees and working groups of the European Chemicals Agency
- Participating in OECD and UN committees and working groups which have a direct link to our role as Competent Authority and our responsibilities for policy formulation

To promote the safe and sustainable management of chemicals

Strategy: adopt a risk-based approach

We will deliver this by:

- Identifying the areas of highest risk in the use of chemicals and target these for follow-up actions
- Targeting for specific follow-up, those chemicals which are known to be toxic to human health and to persist in the environment

Strategy: Motivate and gain commitment to best practice in chemical safety

We will deliver this by:

- Developing an awareness programme to inform business, employees and consumers on the correct management, handling and use of chemicals
- Aiming promotional material on chemicals towards relevant sectors and users
- Providing leadership on chemicals issues at the national level. By building partnerships amongst our national and European colleagues, aimed at protecting human health and the environment whilst balancing this with the need for competitiveness and innovation
- Demonstrating the economic, health and environmental benefits of compliance with chemicals legislation together with the consequences of non-compliance
- Integrating chemical safety initiatives at EU and national level with other environmental sustainability initiatives – for example, green initiatives; green products; sustainable manufacture; and the government’s Smart Economy initiative

To promote the safe and sustainable management of chemicals

Strategy: enable employers, employees and others to manage and use chemicals in a sustainable and safe manner

We will deliver this by:

- Working in partnership with other agencies and public bodies to ensure resource efficiency and effectiveness and consistency of approach
- Establishing a chemical partnership group (employers, employees, consumers, NGOs and government agencies) to identify and promote sustainable management and use of chemicals in Ireland
- Developing, in partnership, education and research programmes on sustainable chemical use and the safe management and handling of chemicals
- Providing technical and scientific advice on emerging chemical technologies and initiatives, and land use planning at the national and EU level

To ensure the Authority is effective and achieves value for money

Goal: *To ensure that the Authority is effective in delivering its goals and achieves value for money*

We will ensure that all our programmes deliver the best possible value for money and are as effective as it is possible for them to be. To ensure this we will concentrate on the following areas:

Strategy: ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of our goals

We will deliver this by:

- Evaluating the effectiveness of key programmes and reporting on the associated inputs, outputs and outcomes
- Concentrating resources on those areas where the returns relative to expenditure are greatest
- Ensuring that the efficiency of inspections and other activities, including prevention, is the best possible and that our nationwide activities are equitably targeted and based on risk assessment
- Refining our targeted approach to inspection to ensure that the non-compliant are quickly identified and action is taken to ensure compliance
- Ensuring the effectiveness of our inspectors, managers and other staff through the continued development of their competence
- Cooperating in the development of efficient and effective shared services with other government department or state agencies
- Implementing government policies, including those in the area of e-government, the Smart Economy and public sector reform
- Exploring the possibility of alliances with other enforcement agencies, where this will enhance our efficiency and effectiveness

To ensure the Authority is effective and achieves value for money

Strategy: deliver a high level of customer service to our external and internal customers

We will achieve this by:

- Basing our service delivery on customer needs
- Streamlining our processes to make them more accessible to our customers
- Consulting on proposed strategy or regulatory developments
- Publishing performance results and satisfaction levels
- Developing a 'business partner' model for the delivery of services to internal customers

Strategy: Apply best practice throughout the organisation to ensure that it delivers a consistently high level of service

We will deliver this by:

- Developing our business processes so that we deliver high levels of service
- Ensuring that inspections are carried out in accordance with the EU Senior Labour Inspectors 'Principles of Inspection' and that our inspectorate is periodically assessed against these principles
- Demonstrating excellence in human resources processes by retaining the Excellence Through People award at gold level
- Maintaining our Customer Contact Association accreditation
- Maintaining and developing best practice policies and procedures in the areas of inspection, accessibility to services, human resources, information and communications technology and finance

To ensure the Authority is effective and achieves value for money

- Complying with the Code of Corporate Governance for State Sponsored Bodies and the Authority's Code of Standards and Behaviour

Cross-Cutting Themes

Each goal in this strategy contributes to the outcomes which we have identified as key components in the quest to reach our vision. Our goals are not isolated, but inter-connected, and they form an integrated approach that ensures the maximum benefit from their outcomes during the lifetime of our strategy.

Each goal contains strategies which will be tailored to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved and to take account of their interdependence. In fulfilling this need to tailor the strategies and maintain an integrated approach for all our goals, we have identified a number of cross-cutting themes. Their consideration will influence the direction and focus of each strategy.

The key cross-cutting themes we identified are:

- Employer/Employee Type Focus
- Risk-Rated Resource Allocation
- Partnerships
- Simplifying Compliance

1. Employer/Employee Type Focus

We recognise that our approaches must take account of prevailing circumstances. This is all the more so in a time of recession when, for example, survival of the business becomes the principal objective for many small organisations. Implementing our agenda should complement the work of the organisation. It will ensure that workers' safety and health is protected and at the same time that business is not impeded by accidents and unplanned down time. In implementing our goals we will consider the circumstances, the related risk profiles and the costs and the benefits for the various categories of *employer type*.

The following are the significant employer groupings which will be considered in the implementation of all our goals:

- Small and micro businesses
- Self-employed /sole traders (including farmers)

- Multinational companies
- Medium to large Irish companies
- Public sector organisations, including government departments and agencies

Similarly, there are also *employee categories* whose needs, involvement and risk profiles vary according to their type. These will also be considered in the implementation of our goals.

They include:

- Part-time workers
- Shift workers (including night workers)
- New entrants to the work force (different risk perspective)
- Workers in safety critical roles
- Directors
- Workers with temporary safety and health needs (for example pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers)
- Workers with disabilities
- Older workers (for example, in farming)

2. Risk-Rated Resource Allocation

The Authority has finite resources, and, given the nature of its functions and its areas of responsibility, it has a significant range of choices to make on how and where it allocates these resources. It is important, therefore, that we have an approach for allocation that is consistent across the organisation and is designed to maximise the positive outcomes from the best possible resource allocation. We have identified these outcomes as: safe and healthy workplaces; reduced fatalities, injuries and ill health; and the safe and sustainable use of chemicals.

Risk assessment is an essential means of directing regulatory resources towards their maximum impact on outcomes. Applying a risk-rated allocation of resources enables us to take account of a range of factors, such as: sectors known to have significant hazards; hazards that are common throughout sectors; less well understood issues; the size of the undertaking; incomplete knowledge of new hazards; lack of understanding; and the approach of employers.

On the basis of this information, we can direct our resources to where they can do the most good. This approach can reduce less productive activity in areas of low risk.

We recognise that risk-rated resource allocation needs to be comprehensive. It also must inform all aspects of the regulatory process from the selection and development of appropriate regulatory and policy instruments through to our work, which includes information gathering, inspection and enforcement.

3. Partnerships

Since its establishment, the Authority has recognised the advantage of engaging with external parties to maximise our influence on employers and to heighten awareness of safety and health issues. The nature of that engagement varies from informal contact at the one extreme to statutory relationships at the other.

Overall our experience has been that such alliances have been beneficial and have given us extra leverage. We will continue to establish the type of alliances that help the Authority to deliver its strategic plan.

We will continue to work in partnership with those organisations – including social partners, employers and trade unions – who assist us in reaching employers and workers and who are our partners in a range of initiatives, as well as a source of valuable input to us for the formulation of policy.

We will work to ensure the most effective allocation of resources and will seek to develop cooperative and efficient working arrangements with other organisations by:

- Developing and maintaining agreements on our respective areas of responsibility
- Working closely with other agencies where there are shared goals; in particular, those who enforce or promote safety and health in working conditions or the environment and those who have a remit for enterprise support. This will include key organisations with responsibility for:

- Transport of goods (Department of Transport)
- Fishing (Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Department of Transport)
- Driving for work (Road Safety Authority and an Garda Síochána)
- Radiological Protection (RPII)
- Chemical Safety (Pesticide Control Service)
- Environmental protection (EPA, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government)
- Energy (ESB, Commission for Energy Regulation)
- Working conditions (National Employment Rights Agency (NERA))
- Law enforcement (Garda Síochána)
- Farming (Teagasc)
- Education (Department of Education and Science)
- Public Sector Safety (Local Government Management Services Board, Department of Education and Science, State Claims Agency)

4. Simplifying Compliance

We recognise the need for, and the advantages of, simplifying compliance for our customers. This applies across all of our goals and in all of our tasks and responsibilities. Our overall approach is to provide employers and others with the necessary tools to assist them to meet their obligations themselves. This should ensure improved compliance with the requirements of the legislation and also ensure that any regulatory burden is reduced to a minimum.

To do this, we will develop legislative proposals that are clear, proportionate and effective. Before legislation is developed, we will analyse and take account of its potential impact on stakeholders. We will also ensure that our guidance, advice and tools are easily accessible to all our customers, are cost effective and meet their needs. We will explore new possibilities for communicating with the emphasis on accessibility and reduced cost (for example, Internet communications). Finally we will maximise the benefits of our inspections to employers by adopting a risk-based approach to the choice of places of work for inspection and by cooperating with other inspection agencies.