

The Role of the Health and Safety Authority



The Health and Safety Authority

- The 2005 Act and other safety and health Regulations -Enforce safety and health laws
- Advisory/accident prevention role
- Development of work programmes and overall national safety and health policies

What does the the inspector do?

- Enforce the 2005 Act and other safety and health Regulations
- Carry out inspections and investigate accidents and complaints
- Use enforcement procedures up to and including prosecution
- Key role of providing advice, information and concentrate on accident prevention
- Provide internal technical advice and help to other inspectors
- Develop national safety and health policies

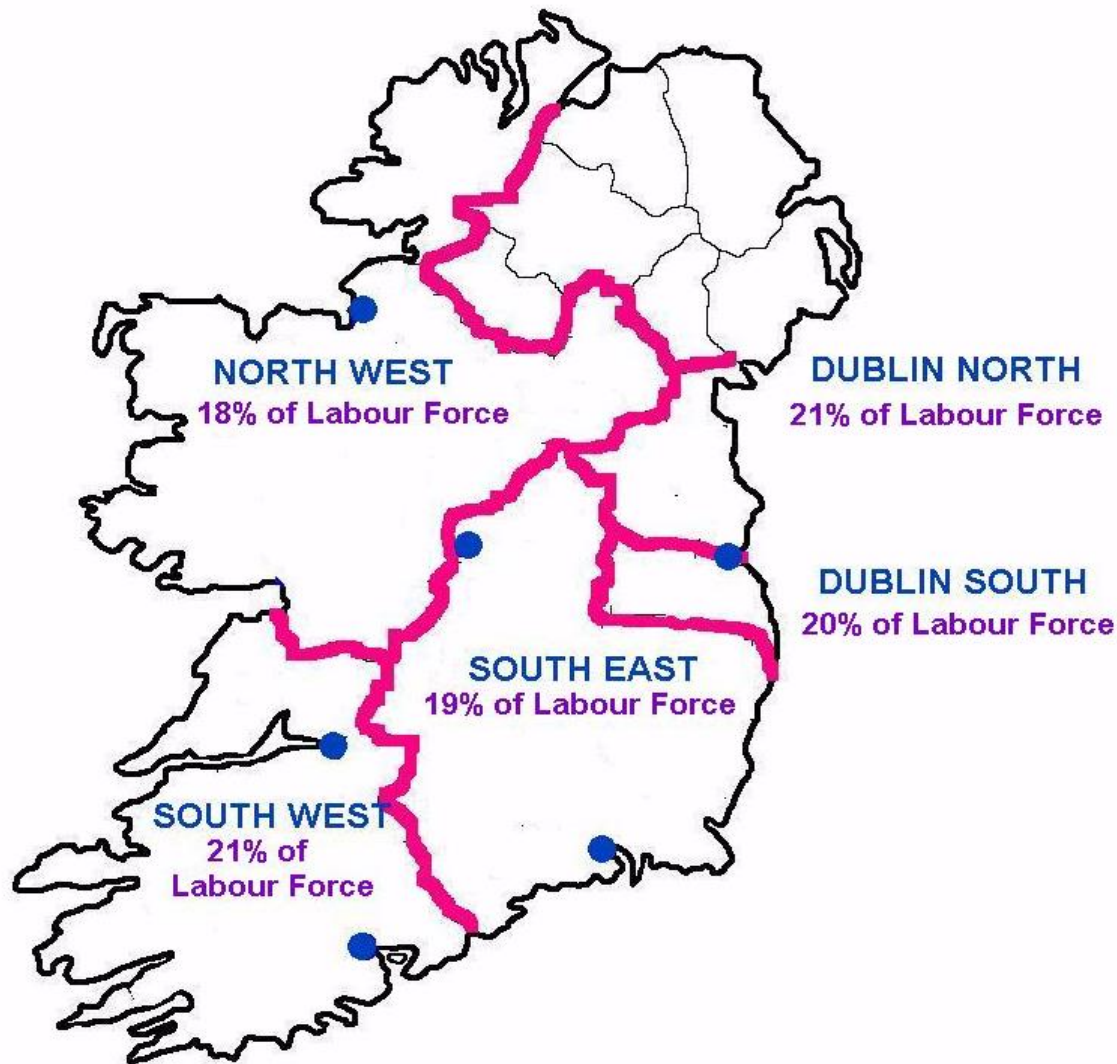
Inspectorate Staffing

- Work programme sets agenda:
 - Target high risk sectors for inspection, repeat inspections, complaint and accident investigations
- Inspectors all have technical qualifications e.g. health and safety professionals, civil, mechanical or chemical engineers, chemists, physicists, microbiologists and psychologists

Inspection and Enforcement

- Inspectors are assigned to work in 5 geographical areas e.g. in the east, north east, north west, south west and south east
- Cover all area health and safety issues and concentrate on specific sectors such as construction, mines, quarries, agriculture, health services, manufacturing
- Accident and complaints are prioritised for follow up

HSA Inspection Regions



Enforcement powers

- Inspectors powers of entry, requiring documents, taking samples, interviewing workers, measuring atmospheres etc.
- Enforcement powers - Improvement Directions and plans, Improvement and Prohibition Notices, High Court and Voluntary Closures and prosecutions,
 - Verbal and written advice/Report of Visit letter

Inspection Procedures

- Inspectors Enforcement manual:
 - Guidance on interpretation of the legislation on enforcement
 - Sector specific and activity guidance included
 - Operational minutes
- Developed by inspectors for inspectors

Policy and Technical services

- Staffed by inspectors since May 2005

Develop national safety and health policies, guidance, codes of practice

- Provide technical assistance to inspectors and produce internal guidance
- Attend EU meetings, develop EU Directives, draft national Regulations and Guidance

Special Investigation Unit

- Staffed by 10 inspectors since March 2005
- Especially trained to investigate accidents, major incidents etc.
- Will take most of HSA prosecutions - work closely with Gardai, CPSO and DPP
- Backup from other inspectors when required

Workplace Contact Unit

- Staffed by safety and health trained personnel, since July 2005 Contact no. 1890 289 389
- Answer 2,500 calls per month and deal with requests for information and complaints
- Especially trained to deal with callers
- Some complaints passed on to inspectors for follow up

Chemical Safety Division

- Set up in May 2006 - 40 staff
- To cover the implications of the new EU REACH Regulation due for implementation in 2007
- Global Harmonised System for the classification of chemicals
- REACH/GHS enforcement from 2007

HSA - Information and public relations

- HSA website at www.hsa.ie
 - New number at www.safework.ie
 - New look format - FAQs - 2005 Act update
 - Related safety and health sites
 - Health and Safety Matters newsletter
 - All publications downloaded free and hard copies for sale
- PR department
 - Press releases & campaigns

HSA - education and training

- Influence the education system
- Training - 2005 Act provisions
 - 'Competent person' requirements
 - FAS, FETAC, Teagasc, Others
 - S&H Diploma & Degree courses
- Safety representative and safety committee members training requirements

The Legislation

- The 2005 Act and its Guidelines
- 2006 Regulations on Noise, Vibration, Working at Heights, ADR
- The new Construction and General Application Regulations
- Other Regulations subject to ongoing review e.g.
 - mines and quarries, chemical & biological agents, new and existing chemical substances (REACH) chemical labelling (GHS), ADR etc.

Work Programme for post 2010

- Key issues for inspections in recent years:
 - Duty holder responsibilities knowledge
 - Safety and health management systems and implementation
 - Slips, trips and falls on the level
 - Same traditional issues remain
 - New challenges - stress and bullying
- Focus on knowing new duties and responsibilities

Duty holder responsibilities under 2005 Act - Inspection campaign

- Key questions on safety & health organisation:
- Boards, directors and managers duties
- Safety statement - knowledge and responsibilities assignment
- Setting safety and health standards
- Safety consultation and information
- Emergency planning and response
- Availability of ‘competent persons’
- Employee acceptability of their duties

HSA Guidelines which HSA Inspectors enforce

- Risk assessments and Safety Statements
- Safety Representatives and Consultation
- Workplace Safety and Health management
- Sector and activity specific on Construction, agriculture ,manual handling, ergonomics etc.

The new challenges

- 2005 Act implications
- Stress and bullying at work
- Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) less an issue
- Traditional ones still remain
- The prevention message is still key:
 - Prepare and implement the safety statement
 - Ensure better safety and health management
 - Good corporate governance is needed at all times

The economic case

- Approx. 8,000 accidents reported to HSA annually on IR 1 form
- CSO QNHS results 2010:
 - 21,800 >3 day accidents
 - 23,700 ill-health cases
 - 1.5 million days lost each year
- The need for better safety and health management is made

Conclusion

- Continue to sell the prevention message
- *‘Prevention is not only better, but cheaper than cure. There is no necessary conflict between humanitarianism and commercial considerations. Profits and safety are not in competition. On the contrary, safety is good business.’*

HSG 65, Successful health and safety management