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OHSA Operations During First 3 Quarters of 2020

4,318 different workplaces were inspected by the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) during the first 3 quarters of 2020. These varied from micro to large enterprises in the manufacturing, construction as well as services sectors amongst others. OHS officers who carry out these inspections look at the various aspects of work activity being carried out and take action according to the levels of risk present.

In situations where the danger is significant but not high, improvement notices are issued, instructing employers to remedy the situation within a reasonable period of time. Until September, improvement notices were issued to nearly half the workplaces visited (1968).

In 400 workplaces visited, the hazards present were deemed serious enough to potentially cause death or serious physical harm. In these instances, OHS Officers issued orders for work activities to stop immediately until the situation was remedied. These cases will continue to be followed up to ensure that the workplaces become compliant. In all these instances, administrative fines are issued or judicial proceedings commenced once OHSA's investigations are finalized.

During the same period of time, 258 entities and individuals were issued with administrative fines for breaches of occupational health and safety legislation committed during the preceding months. The fines ranged between €250 and €1000 depending on the severity of the case. The most common infringements were the lack of provisions to prevent falls from heights, construction site project supervisors not adhering to OHS general principles of prevention and construction site clients not following the recommendations of the project supervisor.

"Recent accidents at places of work have brought home the reality that no work sector is free of risk. However, the vast majority of workplace accidents are preventable, but only if duty holders shoulder their respective responsibilities. This is the only way through which accidents and their consequences can be avoided. A lot of guidance material has been produced by OHSA, so as to facilitate the process of achieving compliance and reducing risk. Contact OHSA to seek advice and direction, and do not waste time before you start controlling the risks," said Dr Mark Gauci, OHSA's CEO.

During the same period of time, OHSA also vetted 3,380 equipment examination reports and is waiting to commence legal action against a further 450 individuals for breaches of occupational health and safety legislation.

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