



Chartered  
Institute of  
Environmental  
Health

# Proposed amendment to Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

Response by the  
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health  
to the review by  
the Health & Safety Executive

May 2011

# The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

As a **professional body**, we set standards and accredit courses and qualifications for the education of our professional members and other environmental health practitioners.

As a **knowledge centre**, we provide information, evidence and policy advice to local and national government, environmental and public health practitioners, industry and other stakeholders. We publish books and magazines, run educational events and commission research.

As an **awarding body**, we provide qualifications, events, and trainer and candidate support materials on topics relevant to health, wellbeing and safety to develop workplace skills and best practice in volunteers, employees, business managers and business owners.

As a **campaigning organisation**, we work to push environmental health further up the public agenda and to promote improvements in environmental and public health policy.

We are a **registered charity** with over 10,500 members in the UK and increasingly in countries outside the UK.

The CIEH was originally established in 1883 and was at the forefront of the drive to improve public health in the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the control of the spread of disease. The role and philosophy of the CIEH remains the same today despite vast changes in technology and social conditions which have brought new challenges.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The CIEH responded in detail in July 2010 to the (then) proposed review of Health and Safety by Lord Young.
- 1.2. The CIEH was supportive of the recommendations in the report 'Common Sense, Common Safety' published in October 2010.

## 2. Summary

- 2.1. The logic of the recommendation to extend the period for reporting injuries that lead to a worker being incapacitated for work, from three days to seven days is acknowledged by the CIEH but the concerns of both regulators and businesses are recognised.
- 2.2. The CIEH believes that the acknowledged shortcomings of RIDDOR (such as the low compliance rate of 50%) will not be addressed by extending the period for reporting injuries and that a fresh and more comprehensive approach is needed to ensure businesses investigate and learn lessons from accidents and incidents.
- 2.3. The CIEH is not opposed in principle to the proposed extension of the reporting period but believes that it is an inadequate solution to securing better protection for workers and consumers.

## 3. The current system

- 3.1. The requirements of RIDDOR (the reporting of accidents for dangerous occurrences causing absences of more than three days) are not sufficiently observed (currently estimated at 50%) as to provide meaningful data.
- 3.2. The current system is often ineffective due to a lack understanding by businesses (and sometimes by regulators) as to the precise requirements of the regulations.
- 3.3. It does however lead to evidence based policy which is clearly a beneficial by-product. The investigation of accidents is integral to national strategy for protecting workers and consumers.

## 4. The proposed amendments

- 4.1. The CIEH believes that the extension of the reporting period to seven days will not contribute to worker or consumer safety, nor will it have a meaningful effect on reducing any perceived burdens on business.
- 4.2. One key omission is the lack of any reference to customer and public accidents. There is a need for greater clarity in dealing with such accidents which are an important issue for business.
- 4.3. It is generally considered that much of the under reporting is concentrated in the SME sector. Such businesses are in urgent need of clear guidance to improve the level of reporting and to address the fear of attracting unwanted "attention" from regulators resulting from reporting.

- 4.4. Extending reporting requirements from 3 to 7 days is an isolated approach which focuses only on reducing burdens and does not address inconsistencies.
- 4.5. The key issue for consideration should be the relative merits of fewer reports from more businesses compared with more reports from fewer businesses

## 5. An alternative approach

- 5.1. A more straightforward system which would be better understood by business would concentrate on medical intervention (e.g. accidents requiring visits to a GP or attendance at A&E).
- 5.2. Reporting could be linked to the Fit Note system; this could trigger investigations and would lead to better reporting. Such reporting would also facilitate intelligence led enforcement (and reporting).
- 5.3. Accidents requiring reporting to HSE could then be restricted to fatalities and notifiable major injuries and dangerous occurrences. The current list of dangerous occurrences has been in place for a long time, is difficult to understand and requires updating to reflect changes in businesses and practice. HSE would then be in a better position to gather meaningful data on the prevalence and causes of accidents (e.g. through periodic sample surveys by HSE).
- 5.4. The CIEH will play its part but looks to the HSE to campaign to raise awareness and understanding of RIDDOR requirements so as to increase levels of reporting.
- 5.5. The CIEH wishes to advocate a more comprehensive review rather than arbitrary ad hoc change.