



October 2004

Accidents involving electricity

During 2002 , there were a total of 27 deaths involving electric current in the UK. Of these, 24 occurred in England and Wales,¹ 2 in Scotland,² and 1 in Northern Ireland.³

The estimated number of accidental injuries caused by electricity in the home were as follows:

| Home accidents involving electric current 2002 | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Age in years | | | | | | |
| Injuries | 0-4 | 5-14 | 15-64 | 65-74 | 75+ | UNKNOWN | Total |
| Reported* | 14 | 18 | 99 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 136 |
| National estimate | 287 | 369 | 2030 | 62 | 21 | 21 | 2,788 |

Source: DTI Consumer Safety Unit HASS/LASS database.

**number of reported injuries at the 18 hospitals used in the HASS survey.*

Articles reported in accidents involving electric shock include light fittings, toasters, hair dryers, electric sockets and plugs, extension leads and cables, strimmers and lawnmowers, washing machines and dishwashers.

Work Injuries

In Great Britain, work injury statistics are compiled from reports made to HSE and local authorities under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR 95) which came into force on April 1st 1996.⁴

Any accidental injury which involves a fatality, a major injury or one which results in more than three days away from normal duties must be reported under the regulations. Included under the heading of reportable major injuries are those resulting from electric shock or electrical burn leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.

Reported workplace injuries involving electricity during the period April 2002- April 2003 (provisional) were:

| Contact with electricity or electrical discharge | | | |
|---|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| | Fatal | Major Injury | Over 3 day |
| Employees | 12 | 124 | 441 |
| Self employed | 3 | 10 | 8 |

Source: Health and Safety Statistics 2002/03, HSE website.

Dangerous occurrences

If something happens which does not result in a reportable injury, but which clearly could have done, then it may be classified as a dangerous occurrence which must also be reported.

Dangerous occurrences involving electricity in 2002/2003 were:

- Plant or equipment either comes into contact with overhead electric line in which voltage exceeds 200 volts or causes an electrical discharge - 188
- Electrical short circuit which results in stoppage of the plant for more than 24 hours - 287⁴

* Please note: HASS/LASS statistics and mortality statistics are for the whole of the UK.

Workplace injuries and dangerous occurrences are for Great Britain only.

References:

¹ OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS. *2002 Mortality Statistics: Cause: England & Wales*. London: The Stationery Office, 2002. Series DH2 no. 29. ISBN 0-11705-624-3.

² REGISTRAR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND. *Annual Report: 2002*. Edinburgh: General Register Office for Scotland, 2003.

³ REGISTRAR GENERAL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND. *Annual Report: 2002*. London: The Stationery Office, 2003.

⁴ HEALTH & SAFETY COMMISSION. *Health & Safety Statistics: 2002/03*. Sudbury: HSE website