



# Bullying at work leads to suicide

by Sean O'Riordan

THE Government and companies need to tackle the fact that more people commit suicide as a result of workplace bullying than are killed in industrial accidents, according to a Cork-based company.

Newmarket-based Health & Safety Services, which is one of the country's largest safety consultants, said its research showed up to 100 people took their lives every year as a result of being bullied at work.

Senior consultant Vincent Harrington said figures showed 74 workplace fatalities in 2005, along with 67 last year.

"A staggering one in four employees in Ireland are stressed because of bullying, while more than 80% have experienced it at some stage in their career," he said.

Furthermore, absenteeism and alcoholism were causing serious losses in productivity, and were often the result of workplace bullying.

"The number of people being bullied in the workplace may, in fact, be higher than is recorded. The real figure is not clearly visible as most of the time it's only the high-profile cases that are documented. In many instances the situation becomes intolerable and the victim has to leave the company because they become ill," Mr Harrington said.

He called for more research, saying bullying was "a time bomb still ticking".

He urged companies to introduce strict policies on bullying, harassment and

sexual harassment.

"Caring professions and financial institutions have been identified as the two sectors where bullying is most common. It's thought that a lack of structure within the caring sector leaves people more susceptible while, in the financial institutions, it's believed workers are under enormous pressure to meet unachievable targets," he said.