

## JOBS

**Thinking about changing job?**

See how other health and safety professionals have done it, then turn the page for all the latest health and safety vacancies.

If you would like to be featured on this page, fill in the online form at:  
[www.shponline.co.uk/career-experience](http://www.shponline.co.uk/career-experience)

# How did I get here?

## Mary Darlington

**How did you get into health and safety?**

By fluke, actually. I was working with a large American multinational in Dublin in a HR/recruitment role when the organisation approached me to take on the health and safety portfolio in late 1989. This request was in direct response to the enactment of Ireland's Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 1989.

**What qualifications do you hold?**

Certificate in Training and Continuing Education from NUI Maynooth; BSc in Occupational Safety & Health Management from UCD; Diploma in Environmental Impact Assessment Management from UCD; Diploma in Safety, Health & Welfare at Work from UCD; NEBOSH Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health; Diploma in Personnel Management.

**Which aspects of your health and safety role do you most enjoy?**

Delivering health and safety briefings to senior management teams, in both the public and private sectors.

**What have been the highest points in your career?**

When I was appointed to the board of the Health and Safety Authority in 1995 for a three-year term; my election as chair of IOSH Ireland in 2004; my election as national president of Network – the Organisation of Women in Business in 1994; and becoming a chartered fellow of IOSH.

**What has been the biggest change in H&S since you have been working in it?**

It has become much more mainstream than it was 20 years ago. However, we still have a great deal of work to do to instill a health and safety culture across all management teams in all organisations, big and small.



CV	Mary Darlington
<b>July 2007 to date</b>	Director of Darlington Consulting, based in Sligo
<b>2006-2007</b>	Health and safety executive with the National Irish Safety Organisation
<b>1996-2006</b>	Director of Darlington Consulting, based in Waterford
<b>1989-1998</b>	Safety and environment manager, Bausch & Lomb
<b>1984-1988</b>	Personnel officer, Cheeverstown House Ltd, Dublin

**What do you think will be the biggest developments in the next 10 years?**

I think the focus will shift from physical safety to occupational health, psychological safety, ergonomics and worker well-being. This trend has already started but we have an uphill battle to convince some organisations of the dividend to be enjoyed from safe and healthy workplaces.

**If you were prime minister for a day, which H&S law(s) would you introduce, or repeal?**

**"We still have an uphill battle to convince some organisations of the dividend to be enjoyed from safe and healthy workplaces"**

I would require that every owner/manager/MD, or every organisation, big or small, attend a basic health and safety certificate course, which would be subsidised by the state. The pay-back would be enormous, in terms of reduced injuries, fewer lost days, fewer claims – particularly for occupational injury benefit.

**How do you capitalise on your IOSH membership?**

I am very active in IOSH. I was chair of South East District for a number of years before becoming chair of IOSH Ireland. I am now chair of North West District, which I represent on the IOSH Ireland Committee. I am totally committed to IOSH and the badge of competence that it represents. Competence in our profession is one of the key issues that will improve Ireland's overall health and safety performance.

**What are your top two tips on getting a job in health and safety?**

If you are interested in the area, speak up. Talk to your existing safety manager, offer to assist them with projects, risk assessments, etc. Get yourself qualified and go on every training course offered to you. Benchmark your organisation's performance against the best around, and keep an open mind on all issues.

**Who has had the biggest impact on your career, and how?**

Several people come to mind: Noel Caffrey, former training and development manager at Bausch & Lomb, who suggested that I be given the health and safety portfolio in 1989; Dr Anne Drummond, UCD, who led the Safety Diploma I did in the 1990s; and Herbert Mulligan, editor of *Health and Safety Review*, for his advice, mentoring and friendship over the years.

**If you could be anything other than a H&S practitioner, what would you be?**

There are several alternative careers I might have chosen, including: helicopter pilot, lawyer, writer and professional musician!