

UNITE THE UNION NORTHERN IRELAND

WORKERS IN THE EYE OF THE STORM



**Safeguarding workers during
extreme weather events:**
Survey results and policy
recommendations





“Sure you’ll be grand, it’s only a bit of wind”

Employer response to Unite member working for the automotive industry ahead of Storm Éowyn

“Employer said it was scare mongering even though government guidelines stated to stay home”

Unite member working in manufacturing

A recent Unite survey of members in the aftermath of Storm Éowyn highlights the need for legislation and regulatory changes to protect workers from the impact of extreme weather events.



Susan Fitzgerald

Ireland regional secretary, Unite

On red alert

Between 5 pm and 6 pm on Thursday 23 January, siren alerts were sent to all mobile phones in Northern Ireland warning of the impending Storm Éowyn. The alert urged people to stay indoors if they could, and warned that it would not be safe to drive during the storm. Although it came too late for workers to get clarity on arrangements for the following day, it was the first time the alert system had been used since it was developed during the Covid pandemic.

Notwithstanding the fact that the entire island had been placed under an unprecedented 'Red' Weather alert, thousands of workers were forced to travel and work throughout the storm and its devastating aftermath. They included many workers with caring responsibilities who were forced to work while also focusing on keeping their families safe during the storm.

Storm Éowyn brought record-breaking wind-speeds, with weather stations registering hurricane-force winds.

Across Northern Ireland, nearly 300,000 households and businesses were impacted by power cuts in the wake of the storm, while water, gas and communication services were also affected well into the following week.

Travelling was hazardous during and after the storm, with roads obstructed by fallen trees and power lines.

Late on Thursday – when authorities on both sides of the border had instructed those who could to stay home and 'shelter in place' during the forthcoming 'Red' alert – Unite started receiving calls from concerned members.

Some said that they had received no communication from their employer regarding whether their workplace would be closing. Others told us that they were being told to take the Friday as an unpaid day's leave or as time-off-in-lieu. In some cases, members were told they would be docked a day's pay. And in a few cases members were asked to come in to

work the night before to avoid the storm, with no provision being made for their accommodation.

The situation was made worse by the absence of specific legislation outlining employers' responsibilities during extreme weather events and requiring all workplaces to have an extreme weather policy.

Following Storm Éowyn, Unite decided to ask our members about their experiences during and after the storm. Their responses to our survey highlight the need for 'Extreme Weather' legislation.

While many employers in Northern Ireland behaved responsibly during Storm Éowyn, many others put their workers at risk – forcing them to travel and work during unsafe conditions, or expecting them to carry the cost of workplace closures, for example by taking leave or accrued time-off-in-lieu.

Our members' comments also illustrate a worrying divide between some employers' treatment of 'white collar' salaried workers and their treatment of manual hourly-paid workers.

"They put profit before people instructing office staff to work from home but hourly paid plebs expected to attend work"

Unite member in food production sector

The responses to our survey also highlighted the gendered impacts of extreme weather events. Nearly half of all respondents to our survey indicated that they had caring responsibilities, and some of the responses pointed to the difficulties faced by workers trying to combine caring and work responsibilities during the storm:

"Expectation that parents of children requiring care should have to take the time as annual leave is unfair, and emergency childcare provision leave should apply in my opinion. There was literally no option but to mind the child at home"

Unite member, Health sector

Unite has been demanding 'Extreme Weather' legislation and associated workplace policies ever since 2018, when Unite member **Matthew Campbell**, an electrical engineer, was killed by a falling tree while working during Storm Ali. Matthew's colleague was severely injured during the incident.



Matthew Campbell

Unite member

acknowledgement to
his family for use

Last year, after a lengthy battle, a court fined the workers' employer, Lagan Construction Ltd, and Newry Mourne and Down District Council £50,000. Both the company and the council admitted health and safety failings, and both had received weather warnings from the Met Office before the tragedy.

There is growing academic and scientific consensus that the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events – from storms to extreme temperatures – is likely to increase as a result of accelerating climate breakdown.

Speaking ahead of Storm Éowyn, Professor Suzanne Grey of the University of Reading's Department of Meteorology pointed out that:

[...] studies have shown that winter storms may become more frequent and clustered in the future, such that several storms occur one after the other .

A study led by researchers at Newcastle University and the UK Met Office has concluded that:

Climate change will cause an increase in extreme winter storms combining strong winds and heavy rainfall over the UK and Ireland .

The Irish Environmental Protection Agency has warned that:

Climate change not only means changes in the average climate such as temperature but also changes in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather and climate events .

Yet, in the face of accelerating climate breakdown, and over five years after Matthew Campbell's death, just 16 per cent of those responding to our survey said their employer has an 'Extreme Weather' policy.

Even where workplaces did have an extreme weather policy, the policy was not always consistently communicated or implemented. One member noted that:

“My employer has an adverse weather policy that HR claimed not to know existed, shop steward discovered it. Management did not relay this information of the adverse weather policy to employees. HR dismissed the storm as just a bit of wind”

Unite member in manufacturing

Unionised workplaces, with union-trained health and safety representatives, are safer workplaces. They have higher levels of health and safety compliance and lower levels of workplace injuries than workplaces where there is not a collective workers’ voice.

During Storm Éowyn, Unite and our union reps intervened in a number of instances to ensure that members were safe and were paid as usual during the storm and its aftermath.

It is therefore likely that Unite’s survey of union members significantly understates the challenges faced by workers across Northern Ireland, including the many workers in non-unionised workplaces.

The responses to our survey have been collated and evaluated below, and they inform Unite’s policy demands detailed at the end of this document.

We need to see immediate changes to legislation and statutory guidance to improve protections and safeguards for workers during increasingly likely extreme weather events. We are calling on the Stormont Executive to raise the bar on health and safety and enact legislation to protect workers’ lives and incomes from the impact of extreme weather events.

Susan Fitzgerald
Regional Secretary
Unite the union



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Unite Storm Éowyn Survey – Key results

- **1225 Unite members** from across Northern Ireland completed an online survey between 12 and 19 February 2025
- **37 per cent** indicated their workplace remained open during Storm Eowyn
- **23 per cent** said they did not receive timely information on workplace closure/working from home and/or payment arrangements
- Of those who went into work during the storm, **32 per cent** said they were expected to arrive early or leave late to avoid travelling during the storm
- Of those who went into work, **82 per cent** said they did not feel safe travelling
- Of those who normally work outdoors, **59 per cent** were required to work outdoors during the storm
- Of those, **74 per cent** said they did not feel safe working outdoors
- **66 per cent** of those working outdoors did not feel their employer had taken all reasonable precautions to keep them safe
- Of those whose workplace was closed and who did not work on the day of the storm, **25 per cent** had to take the day as annual leave, unpaid leave, dependency leave or time-off-in-lieu.
- Of those whose workplace closed down and who did not work, or worked from home, on the day of the storm, **22 per cent** said they did not feel comfortable asserting their right to be safe with their employer
- Of those who worked from home or whose workplace remained open on the day of the storm, **50 per cent** said they did not feel safe during the storm
- **30 per cent** said they did not feel safe travelling to or from work the next day
- **30 per cent** did not feel their employer handled the aftermath of the storm well
- **Just 16 per cent** of respondents were aware of their employer having an 'Extreme Weather' policy. 32 per cent said there wasn't one, while **52 per cent** were unsure

Summary of Unite policy demands

Unite is demanding specific Extreme Weather legislation to protect workers from the workplace impacts of climate change, including

(1) Extreme weather events and natural disasters

- A statutory obligation on employers to conduct extreme weather risk assessments for all employees – including for essential workers travelling to and from work during extreme weather events.
- A legal obligation on employers to implement graduated alert-based responses, with outdoor work ceasing during amber alerts and all non-essential work ceasing during red alerts.
- A legal requirement that, where the above provisions require work to cease, workers be paid as usual for the day/days in question.
- Explicit prohibition of any attempts to shift the cost of extreme weather events onto workers (by deducting pay, requiring workers to take leave, use flexi-time or TOIL, or similar).
- Extension of these protections, and existing protections under Health and Safety legislation, to the self-employed.

(2) Extreme temperature events

- Establish maximum temperatures depending on the type of work and the working environment, and oblige employers to attempt to reduce temperatures.
 - An action level of 24C where heat management controls/systems must be put in place.
 - Absolute maximum temperature of 30C (or 27C for strenuous jobs) at which work should stop if these cannot be prevented by using engineering controls.
- Oblige employers to monitor temperatures and conduct risk assessments, with the nature and scope of the assessment laid down by law.
- Establish specific provisions protecting 'at risk' groups of workers
- A statutory obligation on employers to put in place specified monitoring and mitigation measures.

(3) Recognition of temperature-related illnesses as occupational diseases

- Legislation to recognise illnesses caused by extreme workplace/site temperatures as occupational diseases as per the ILO List of Occupational Diseases Recommendation, 2002.

Detailed Survey responses

Who responded?

A total of **1225 responses** to the survey were received from workers employed in Northern Ireland.

Demographic questions relating to gender or age were not asked.

A large response was received from health workers – who represent approximately **13 per cent** of the union membership in NI but who made up **19 per cent** of the survey respondents.

This was followed by respondents working in Aerospace & Shipbuilding (**14 per cent**); Engineering & Manufacturing (**11 per cent**); Local Authorities including the Education Authority (**11 per cent**); and Food, Drink and Agriculture (**9 per cent**).

Perhaps reflecting the large number of respondents working in the female-dominated health sector, **47 per cent** of respondents said that they had caring responsibilities at home.

Workplace closures

Over half (**55 per cent**) reported that their employer had closed their workplace during Storm Éowyn with **37 per cent** indicating that their workplace remained open.

Of the rest, some were not due to work that day, while **a significant number** reported having to go to work but being allowed to go home early on the day of the storm, their workplace operating on a reduced basis, or being closed for a half day or until the red alert ended.

“The roof lifted off in the despatch area of the workplace, Health and Safety manager wanted employees to move 20 feet away and keep working. Only when the reps got involved did the factory get closed as the roof was made of asbestos”

Unite member in food production sector

Timeliness of information provided by employer

Of those who reported that their workplace closed on the day of storm, the majority (**55.6 per cent**) said their employer had provided timely information on closure/working from home and/or payment arrangements, while **23 per cent** indicated that they did not. Of the rest, many indicated that they were notified very late or after the event.

Working from home

Of those whose workplace closed on the day of the storm, **25 per cent** indicated that they worked from home on the day while **69 per cent** did not work.

Of the remainder, many were not due to work that day while some attempted to work from home but were unable to do so after losing power or internet connection, and others worked for part of the day.

Of those who worked from home, **8 per cent** reported that they or Unite had to make representations for them to do so. **84 per cent** said no representation were required, while the remainder were unsure.

Essential workers or not?

“We were told we are essential workers. We were also driving high side vehicles in the storm. Profit before people's safety. Then we had to drive home in the eye off the Storm total disregard for the employee's safety”

Unite member transport services

Of the **448** who indicated that their workplace did not close on the day of the Storm, **86 per cent** said that their employer considered their work ‘essential’ and therefore they were expected to go to work, while **7 per cent** reported that their workplace remained open even though it wasn’t deemed essential by their employer.

Essential work: differing worker and employer perspectives

The respondents were then asked whether they felt their work to be essential. Responses to this split evenly – but were markedly different to the employers’ assessment.

48 per cent said their work was essential, while **48 per cent** said it was not. Of the remainder, some indicated that they considered this was contingent on staffing levels or the weather.

Others said their work was not essential during the storm; notably, this was a view shared by many health workers.



Working on the day of the Storm

“Travelling to work in the conditions was a risk to life. Employees should not be expected to travel in such conditions”

Unite member in manufacturing

Of those respondents whose employer keep their workplace open, **25 per cent** indicated that they did not go into work on the day of the Storm, while **66 per cent** did attend work.

Of the remainder, some had tried to come in to work but were unable due to fallen trees, while one respondent had a car accident which prevented them from coming in.

Of those who went into work, **32 per cent** reported that they were expected to come in early or leave later to avoid travelling due to the Storm. Of those, **just 37 per cent** said they were paid and accommodated properly with **50 per cent** saying that they were not.

One agri-food worker indicated that they could not access toilets for several hours while in the workplace.

Safety during Storm Éowyn

73 per cent, or nearly three-quarters, said that they did not feel safe, while **just 17 per cent** said they felt safe.

Many workers offered detailed descriptions of unsafe conditions. One member working in the road transport sector said they did not feel safe:

“... in a high sided lorry, trees falling down all over the place, half way down NI, Vehicles damaged or blew off road. Very late night home”.

Those who went into work were asked specifically if they felt safe travelling to or from work that day. **82 per cent** said they did not feel safe travelling, while **just 8 per cent** reported that they felt safe.

Many of the remainder wrote in answers which expressed concerns about travel – others indicated they worked outside the red alert period.

One worker in the manufacturing sector wrote that:

“[the employer] took NO action regarding employee safety travelling to and from work during Storm Éowyn. The 7 am start and finish time for the dayshift and nightshift employees respectively, coincided with the storm at its peak [...] Production, production, production. That was number one priority as usual leaving many employees feeling let down by the situation”

Outdoor working

“We are courier workers and we had to take the decision ourselves to close our depot as slates were flying about and open again in the afternoon so couriers could collect their deliveries”

Unite member

Of those who went to work on the day of Storm Éowyn **67 per cent** reported that their work involved outdoor duties.

Of those, **59 per cent** reported that they were required to work outdoors on the day of the storm.

Of those, **74 per cent** – or nearly three quarters – said that they did not feel safe working outdoors during the storm.

66 per cent of those who worked outdoors during the storm felt their employer had not taken all reasonable precautions to make their work safe.

12 per cent said their Unite rep had had to argue the case for them not to work outdoors during the storm.

Workers paying for the storm: leave, pay and other arrangements

“The day before the storm, our manager called a meeting in which it was communicated that staff who could not make it to work on the day of the storm would be required to take annual leave or would need to take an unpaid day off. Despite the severe weather conditions and safety risks, I decided to come into work as I didn’t want to lose any of my remaining annual leave, and I didn’t want to risk needing to work the time back at a later date. Additionally, working in a hospital, I felt that someone had to be there for patient care”

Unite member, health sector

Those workers who indicated that their employer deemed their work essential and required them to attend work on the day of the storm, but who did not attend because of the risks, were asked how their employer treated the day.

18 per cent indicated they took the day off as ‘unpaid leave’, **10 per cent** as ‘sick leave’, **10 per cent** as ‘annual leave’, **6 per cent** as flexi-time, **4 per cent** as ‘time in lieu’, **3 per cent** as ‘TOIL’ and **2 per cent** as ‘holiday’. The remaining **46 per cent** respondents provided written replies which largely reflected the above responses.

“Handled terribly by the company, they thought that at lunchtime of the day of the storm it was still a yellow warning. Eventually with the help of Unite they gave the holidays back and people got paid. Expected the workforce to do the risk assessment”

Unite member manufacturing sector



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We also asked those respondents whose employer closed their workplace and who did not work on the day of the storm how the employer treated the day.

- **13 per cent responded that they received full paid leave**
- **10 per cent took the day as annual leave,**
- **6 per cent as unpaid leave**
- **5 per cent as dependency leave**
- **4 per cent as time in lieu or TOIL**

63 per cent chose to give a fuller response, many detailing how they felt pressured by employers to take annual leave. Some indicated they received part pay, some did not receive any pay for the day or had it marked as 'unproductive'.

Of those who indicated that they were required by their employer to take the day as annual leave, **just 19 per cent** said they felt their employer gave them adequate notice.

Asserting our right to be safe: workers' confidence

"They didn't care and ignored anyone that raised concerns"

Unite member, Engineering and Manufacturing sector

Of those whose workplace closed down and who did not work or worked from home on the day of the storm, **22 per cent** said they did not feel comfortable asserting their right to be safe with their employer, while **72 per cent** said they did feel comfortable.

One of the reasons that union workplaces are safer workplaces is that organised workers feel more confident asserting their health and safety rights and pushing back against risky behaviour. Given that our survey was confined to union member, it is likely that the percentage who said they felt comfortable asserting their rights is significantly higher than would be the case among non-union members in unorganised workplaces

During and after the storm: overall safety

"They're more worried about getting bins lifted than they are about their workers' welfare"

Unite member manufacturing sector

Those who either worked at home or whose workplace remained open on the day of the Storm were asked if they felt safe during the storm.

50 per cent said they did not feel safe while **just 28 per cent** said they felt safe.

All respondents were asked if they thought their employer handled the aftermath of the storm well.

While **59 per cent** felt the aftermath had been well-handled, over a third – **35 per cent** – felt it had not. One member reported that, “When metal flashing was blown off and resting on a walkway the company said it was still safe to walk under.”

All surveyed were asked if they felt safe travelling to or from work the next day. **52 per cent** said they did and **30 per cent** said they did not. The overwhelming majority of the remainder were not at work the next day, with some indicating that they had to work from home.

Extreme weather policies

“They don't have an extreme weather policy. Only reason they eventually closed was they were more concerned about the prevention of an electrical surge damaging the machines than their employees”

Unite member, unspecified sector

The extreme weather policy was never communicated to shop floor staff. No hourly paid staff were given any option other than come to work.

Unite member manufacturing sector

We asked all those surveyed whether they were aware of their employer having an ‘Extreme weather’ health and safety policy.

Only 16 per cent said they were aware of one, with **32 per cent** saying that there wasn't one while **52 per cent** were unsure.

Protecting workers during extreme weather events

Unite proposals for additional legislative and regulatory protections

Background

There is a growing academic and scientific consensus that accelerating climate breakdown is likely to increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, including extreme temperatures.

Such extreme weather events bring with them a range of immediate and long-term health and safety risks for workers which are not specifically addressed by existing legislation and regulatory protections.

Unite's policy recommendations below are informed by our members' experiences, most recently during Storm Éowyn. While our recommendations are specific to Northern Ireland, we believe they could serve as a template for Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Our proposals will require both legislative and regulatory change as well as changes to the function of bodies charged with overseeing workers' health and safety.



A. Extreme weather events and natural disasters

Alert levels below refer to alerts issued by the Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service.

- 1. An automatic presumption** that workplaces should close during red alerts and an escalated set of responses to each level of alert below that. Where an employer believes that the workplace should be exempted from the 'red alert' closure requirement in the public interest, the onus should be on them to demonstrate this in accordance with clear guidelines.
- 2. A legal obligation** on employers to conduct extreme weather risk assessments, at each level of alert, for all employees, and to implement appropriate preventative and protective measures in order to eliminate and reduce risks.
- 3. Safety risk assessments for workers travelling to work** during extreme weather events.
- 4. Extend protections under Section 44 of the Health and Safety Act** to self-employed persons working on a site / in a workplace.
- 5. Workers' elected health and safety representatives** to be consulted involved in carrying out risk assessments.
- 6. Risk assessments to be reviewed annually**, or more frequently if required by circumstances
- 7. All risk assessments to be documented** and documentation to be shared with workers' elected health and safety representatives
- 8. Climate leave legislation** Governments on this island need to keep up with international best practice (e.g. Spain) and introduce paid climate leave to support workers' facing ongoing difficulties in the aftermath of extreme weather events.

Four days' paid leave if extreme weather makes it impossible to travel to work, with the possibility of extending this period until conditions improve;

Four days' paid leave also to be available if workers need to address needs at their home (which can range from structural damage to the unavailability of childcare or eldercare) resulting from extreme weather impact;

After four days, enterprises to be able to declare 'force majeure' and access government supports as part of a package of temporary suspension measures.

Statutory obligation on employers to include the following in risk assessments:

- Debris or structures/trees falling onto workers.
- Extreme heat or cold events and UV light risks.
- Flooding with contaminated water, debris and disruptions to essential infrastructure which could result in drowning, injuries, mental health issues, gastrointestinal and other illnesses, and accidents.
- Soil- and dust-borne risks e.g. silica dust related diseases resulting from drier weather.
- Specific consideration of key workers who often work at maximum capacity while wearing PPE or clothing, causing additional mental and physical strain.
- Exposure to naturally occurring potent carcinogens such as asbestos or erionite (for example, during trail and forest road maintenance).
- Increased risks from physical and/or mental fatigue to workers forced to remain at the worksite, or to work extended hours, while waiting to be relieved by colleagues during extreme weather events.
- Workplace air pollution.
- Risk of vector-borne diseases.
- Agrochemicals.

82%

**Said they did not feel
safe travelling**



Alamy



Employer preparedness must include:

- Resourcing a hazard recognition system
- Carrying out vulnerability assessments to determine which workers are more exposed to extreme weather-related risks (and when, how, and why)
- Assessing the potential impact of extreme weather-related risks on more vulnerable groups of workers, including women, older workers, workers with disabilities and workers with chronic health conditions
- Implementing a control strategy to include policies, procedures, equipment, and work organization that eliminates or minimizes the impact of these hazards.
- Establishing communication links to reach workers during events and/or involving fire departments in process safety management.
- Integrating occupational health and safety into long-term planning; adapting detailed guidance to variable or unpredictable climate change-related hazards.
- Providing training to promote awareness of new or more intense hazards, including training on work modifications to address these hazards
- Developing and installing new technologies and equipment, including climate-adapted personal protective equipment, to better protect workers facing threats due to climate change.
- Implementing prevention-through-design strategies to embed health and safety.
- Building resilient infrastructure and energy-efficient buildings; revising standards for office buildings to comply with ventilation and other requirements

B. Extreme Temperature events

1. **Establish maximum temperatures** (action levels) in law depending on the type of work and the environment in which work is carried out (there is currently no maximum).
2. **Introduce a positive responsibility** on employers to attempt to reduce temperatures.
3. **Specific provisions protecting 'at risk' groups** of workers including older workers and women workers, as well as those with chronic health conditions, those performing manual work outdoors or working in confined conditions.
 - **An action level** where heat management controls/systems must be put in place if temperatures exceed 24C.
 - **Absolute maximum temperature** to indicate when work should stop, if employers fail to prevent this by using engineering controls such as air conditioning - set at 30C (or 27C for those doing strenuous jobs).
4. **Legislation to recognise illnesses** caused by extreme workplace/site temperatures as occupational diseases as per the ILO List of Occupational Diseases Recommendation, 2002.

74%

Said they did not feel safe
working outdoors



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Unite notes that the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) recommends target temperatures of:

- 13°C for heavy work such as in factories
- 16°C for light work in factories
- 18°C in hospital wards and shops
- 20°C in offices and dining rooms.

Legal obligation on employers to:

- **Monitor temperature and humidity**, and workers' responses, at least hourly in hot environments (i.e. above the target temperatures).
- **Schedule work or tasks** (especially manual handling, heavy work or work requiring PPE or additional clothing) for the cooler hours of the day.
- **Shorten the length of work periods** and increase the length of rest periods.
- **Give workers shade**, cooling or air-conditioning during breaks.
- **Halt work altogether** under extreme conditions.
- **Outside tasks should be scheduled** for early morning and late afternoon.
- **Indoor workplaces should be adequately ventilated** so they remove and dilute warm and humid air or air conditioning temp units.
- **Access to cool drinking water** at all times.
- **Workers to be enabled to arrive earlier or leave later** to avoid rush hour commute
- **Temporarily relaxing their workplace dress codes.**
- **Enabling staff to work from home** where feasible.
- **Where appropriate provide sunscreen.**
- **Educate workers** about the early signs of heat stress

C. Improving regulatory oversight and conduct of investigations

In the wake of the death of Unite member Matthew Campbell while working during Storm Ali in 2018, Unite worked with Matthew's family to identify a number of regulatory shortcomings and develop proposals to improve the effectiveness of investigations and oversight.

It is clear that functional improvements to the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) are required if it is to respond effectively to workplace incidents and fatalities, in particular those related to extreme weather events.

Cooperation between the HSENI and other enforcement bodies also needs to be enhanced to ensure that the evidential requirements for a charge of corporate manslaughter can be met where appropriate, and steps must be taken to secure the HSENI's independence and improve public confidence in the body.

Unite proposes the following reforms:

Remit, structure and personnel

- The HSENI must be explicitly tasked with enforcement of all relevant legislation and regulations, and with holding employers to account for serious breaches.
- The possibility of transferring the HSENI from the Department for the Economy to the Department for Infrastructure should be examined in order to safeguard the body's independence and reduce the potential for conflicts of interest between the HSENI's responsibility to the public and its business advisory function.
- Two seats on the board of HSENI to be reserved for trade unions, with one representing private and one public sector workers.
- Provision to be made for 'roving' trade union health and safety inspectors who have a right to access workplaces to ensure safety.
- Designated HSENI employees to be trained to liaise with bereaved families

Procedural

- Mandate the HSENI to routinely conduct site investigations after all fatalities and incidents as quickly as it is safe and practicable to do so.
- In the event of fatalities, the HSENI must attend the site on the day without exception.
- Legal requirement for employers to protect and preserve the site of an accident or fatality until the HSENI conducts its visit.
- Mandatory procedures for collaborating with enforcement bodies:
 - The HSENI to liaise with law enforcement bodies at the scene of the accident or fatality to discuss whether an offence has potentially been committed
 - Since the HSENI is not authorised to investigate corporate manslaughter, law enforcement must take a lead role from the start of any investigation into a fatality, seizing any items of evidential value and talking to witnesses together with HSENI employees
 - If it is determined that the case fails to meet the required standard for a charge of corporate manslaughter, the HSENI should lead for the remainder of the investigation
- In the case of a fatality involving a trade union member(s), the relevant trade union(s) must be consulted and involved in the investigation
- Where necessary, the HSENI should utilise the Regulatory Investigative Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 to access phone data for investigations. Staff should be trained in completing RIPA applications and liaising with the law enforcement bodies.

Information and reporting

- All fatalities to be included in the HSENI annual report
- All conclusions, reports and documentation obtained or produced by the HSENI in relation to any investigation to be made available to legal representatives, relevant trade unions and survivors
- Full disclosure of investigation findings at each stage to survivors and victims' families through designated and trained HSENI liaison staff



