

REPORT OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS



1. Core Information [\[guidance\]](#)

Title and link to statistical output	Fatal injuries arising from accidents at work in Great Britain: Summary for April to September 2019. https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/fatalquarterly.xlsx
Name of producer organisation	Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Heidi Edwards Heidi.edwards@hse.gov.uk 020 3028 3918
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	
Date of breach report	19 December 2019

2. Circumstances of breach [\[guidance\]](#)

Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)	Principle T3: Orderly release. Practice T3.6: Statistics should be released to all users at 9.30am on a weekday.
Date of occurrence of breach	18 December 2019
<p><i>Give an account of what happened including roles of persons involved, dates, times etc</i></p> <p>The quarterly 'Fatal injuries arising from accidents at work' Official Statistics release was due to be published on the HSE website at 09.30am on 18 December 2019.</p> <p>Shortly after 09.30am, the statistician responsible for the release checked the HSE website to see that the data was indeed live (this check is routinely done for all statistics releases). On establishing that the data was not live on the site, she immediately informed both the online publishing team and the Head of Profession for Statistics.</p> <p>It was quickly established that the file had been correctly uploaded at 09.30am and the problem was an IT issue (most likely a caching issue). The problem was immediately referred to HSE's IT providers. Because the release had now been delayed for 1 hour 5 minutes, the statistician requested that a note be included on the website to alert users of the late release: this note went live on the website at 11.35am.</p> <p>At 12.17pm an interim fix was implemented that allowed users to access the new statistics via the link on the HTML page. However, any user accessing the data directly via the excel table URL would still only see the previous quarter's data. The issue was identified as a caching issue and the interim fix was removed at 5.08pm when the caching issue was resolved.</p>	

3. Impact of the breach [\[guidance\]](#)

<p><i>Provide details of the impact of the breach both inside the producer body and externally</i></p> <p>This is a low-profile official statistics release and does not attract much attention (politically or in the media).</p>
--

There is no pre-release access to these statistics and statisticians delayed giving HSE officials an update on the quarterly statistics until after they had gone live on the website.

We received no messages asking why the previous quarter's data was showing.

4. Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence [\[guidance\]](#)

Describe the short-term actions made to redress the situation and the longer term changes to procedures etc

In the short term, a statement was included on the quarterly statistics HTML web page alerting users to the problem. Also, we delayed giving HSE officials an update on the statistics until after the statistics were published on the website, to ensure equality of access.

A full investigation has been undertaken to understand the reason for the HSE website not updating. This found:

- 1) The problem was caused by an old version of the page being held in a cache on our webserver. When we looked at the files on the server (using File Transfer Protocol (FTP) – the method for uploading files onto the website), we could see that the new version was in place. However, when web browsers called for that page, they were served an older version.
- 2) The HSE online publishing team engaged with HSE's IT engineers to investigate and resolve. While the issue has now been resolved, the root cause has not yet been fully addressed.
- 3) HSE online publishing team have devised a method of replicating the scenario that occurred yesterday and have agreed to work with HSE's IT providers very early in January to run tests to confirm server configuration changes to eradicate this issue.
- 4) One complication is that we have an internal User Acceptance Testing (UAT) webserver and this issue is not present on that test server. This has narrowed the probable cause to aspects of the hosting environment rather than basic server configuration, so we will have to run these tests on the live service. Because of this HSE wish to proceed with caution to limit the risk to the wider service.
- 5) We fully expect to resolve the underlying issue and eradicate the possibility of this happening in the future.