

Risks

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**HAZARDS
MAGAZINE**



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Risks is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 11,000 subscribers and 1,500 on the TUC website. To receive this bulletin every week, click [here](#). Past issues are [available](#). This edition contains [Useful links](#) [TUC courses for safety reps](#) [Disclaimer and Privacy statement](#).

UNION NEWS

TUC calls for probe as tribunals plummet

The TUC has called for an investigation into a dramatic drop off in the number of employment tribunal cases after the introduction of new rules. Tribunals are the major route of redress for a number of workplace safety issues, including where union reps are victimised for their safety activities or barred from performing their inspection, investigation and other functions, or where workers raise safety concerns. Hundreds of safety reps have taken safety-related unfair dismissal cases to tribunals in recent years ([Risks 195](#)). A tribunal is also where employers are held accountable if they deny workers time off for union safety training ([Risks 156](#)). Latest Employment Tribunals Service figures show there was a 25 per cent drop in the number of tribunals in 2004/5 compared to the previous year. Commenting on the fall, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "Of course employment tribunals should be avoided wherever possible but not at the cost of fairness and justice for badly treated employees. We are concerned that the substantial fall in employment tribunal claims has been caused by complex new rules deterring employees from bringing a claim, no matter how strong their case." He added: "Trade unions always try to resolve disputes within the workplace as the new dispute resolution procedures require and use tribunals as a last resort. But the government should investigate whether the drop in tribunal claims is down to better practices in all workplaces, as opposed to unreasonable barriers blocking claims."

- [TUC news release](#). [DTI news release](#). [CBI news release](#). [BBC News Online](#).
- **Hazards news and resources on [victimisation](#) and [safety reps' rights](#).**

Strike threat over victimisation of FBU safety rep

Firefighters in Cheshire are to vote on industrial action to defend a safety rep from victimisation. The Fire Brigade Union (FBU) has accused management of harassment against their health and safety representative Steve Williams. The union said Mr Williams is being investigated after raising concerns during a safety exercise. The FBU said Mr Williams raised concerns over operating procedures and risk assessment forms. The dispute follows a training day to familiarise staff with new anti-terrorist decontamination equipment. A fire service

spokesperson said Mr Williams is being investigated for failing to follow reasonable management instructions.

- [BBC News Online](#).

ASLEF backs report's call for move on obstructions

Train drivers' union ASLEF has welcomed a call for better safety measures in the report of the enquiry into the Ufton Nervet level crossing crash last year. Train driver Stan Martin and five passengers died and 71 were injured ([Risks 183](#)). Commenting on the recommendations of the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) report, ASLEF general secretary Keith Norman said: "We particularly welcome the proposal that the RSSB and Network Rail research detection methods that provide a timely warning to train drivers of a level crossing obstruction." He said this research "must be undertaken with real sense of urgency," adding: "The technology to scope the track and provide high quality images to the driver that enable early steps to stop a train already exist and are in operation on the Hong Kong railway system. They were developed and are manufactured in south Wales. The issue is not how practical such systems are but rather, is there the political will to install it."

- [ASLEF news release](#). [RSSB news release and report summary \[pdf\]](#).

TUC tells safety reps they can tackle stress

The TUC is urging union safety reps to tackle the workplace stress epidemic, a problem which makes half a million people ill and costs society £3.7 billion every year. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "Tackling stress at work is not rocket science, but although most employers might know they have a problem, few are taking steps to prevent it." He added: "Everyday pressure is part and parcel of our working lives, but if the pressure builds to breaking point, the end result could be employees forced to take time out because their jobs have made them ill. Tackling the causes of stress early on can have a dramatic impact on the well-being of staff and on an organisation's bank balance." TUC wants union safety reps to get to grips with stress using its new stress management guide ([Risks 214](#)). It says the first step is to look at all the factors likely to stress someone out, for example heavy workloads or bullying colleagues. This risk assessment then allows an employer, with the help of a union, to identify potential

problem areas and act on them before stress-related illness begins to affect employees' health and dent the company's profits. Well over half the union safety reps in a recent TUC survey said stress was the biggest hazard in their workplace.

- [TUC news release. TUC safety reps' guide to HSE's stress management standards. TUC stress webpages.](#)

Shopworkers want "no ID, no sale" protection



Retail union Usdaw is pressing the government to make "No ID, no sale" notices compulsory in stores across the UK to stamp out underage sales of potentially dangerous goods like knives and alcohol. The union says underage drinkers attempt to buy alcohol every five seconds in the UK. An Usdaw survey of 600 stores found that shopworkers who refuse the illegal underage sale of goods including alcohol, solvents, DVDs, lottery tickets, knives, cigarettes, scratch cards and fireworks, face terrifying incidents of verbal abuse, intimidation and vicious assaults. Many frontline counter staff are attacked simply because they obeyed the law, Usdaw says, by refusing to serve customers they believed to be under the legally required age to buy the goods in their shopping baskets. Speaking at the launch of Usdaw's 13 July annual "Respect for Shopworkers Day", general secretary John Hannett said: "We don't want to stigmatise all young people as most who try it on will simply walk away when challenged to provide ID, but a significant minority turn their frustration on innocent staff which is utterly unacceptable." Calling for compulsory proof of ID for purchases of restricted items, he said: "We think that this will take the pressure off our members on the frontline and reduce the potential for violence in stores. Most retailers are responsible employers, but we will continue to lobby the government for this small but vital change in the law to protect our members from violent thugs."

- [Usdaw news release and Freedom from fear webpages.](#)

Union call for more Tube security

Transport unions have called for greater security on the Tube after last week's bomb attacks on London. They want extra staff and improved

technology on trains. Rail unions RMT, ASLEF and TSSA made the joint request. The rail unions said more staff - guards were taken out of Tube trains five years ago - because it was unfair for all the responsibility to be shouldered by one person. The unions believe technology could improve security on the underground. Currently, Tube drivers using the in-cab telephone system do not have direct access to the 999 emergency services. Gerry Doherty, general secretary of TSSA, said safety and industrial reps from London Underground met soon after the tragedy to review issues and to seek assurances from Tube bosses "that all safety measures are in place to minimise any further risk to our members." All three unions expressed their sympathy to those affected by the tragedy, including the injured and bereaved.

- [BBC News Online. TSSA news release.](#)
- **Unity is strength - [TUC on the London vigil.](#)**

OTHER NEWS

Hatfield rail killing charges thrown out

Charges against five rail bosses accused of the manslaughter of four people who died in the Hatfield train disaster have been thrown out ([Risks 190](#)). A corporate manslaughter charge against engineering firm Balfour Beatty was also dismissed by the Old Bailey judge ([Risks 172](#)). But the five men, together with their employers, Balfour Beatty and Railtrack, which became Network Rail, still face health and safety charges. Five months into the trial, Mr Justice Mackay ordered the jury to find the men not guilty, but did not explain his reasoning. The tragedy in Hatfield, on 17 October 2000, happened when the London to Leeds express came off the tracks at 115 mph, leaving four dead and more than 100 injured. Commenting on the decision to drop the manslaughter charges, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "This will come as a blow to the victims and the bereaved. It is further evidence for a new charge of corporate killing and for new legal duties on directors so that people are held responsible for such preventable incidents in future." Keith Norman, general secretary of train drivers' union ASLEF, said he was "appalled", adding the decision was "a terrible indictment of our legal system and a sad measure of society's concern for working people." He said: "It means that managers can rest assured that they no longer have any responsibility for the safety of the staff who work for them. They can cock a snook at health and safety legislation." He added: "When the judge doesn't even trouble himself to explain the decision, it is a desperate indictment of the legal

system. Transparency and honesty seem to hit the buffers when they enter a court of law.”

- [TUC news release](#). [ASLEF news release](#). [BBC News Online](#).
- [TUC/Hazards deadly business campaign](#).

What Hatfield says about corporate accountability...

“Here is yet another example of a failure to hold directors and companies to account for the deaths of innocent people. How many more times must this happen? This decision gives added emphasis to the need for tougher sentences when the government introduces corporate manslaughter legislation. In the past 30 years only five directors have served a custodial sentence for manslaughter following a work related death and the three large companies that have been prosecuted for manslaughter have all been acquitted before the jury has been allowed to come to a verdict. It is the prospect of a jail sentence that will change the behaviour of company directors.”

[Alan Ritchie, UCATT general secretary](#).

“It is not just enough that there is a new law. There have to be effective penalties which include fines as well as measures such as corporate probation so that companies can be monitored and forced to report to the court on the measures they are taking to avoid future accidents. As it stands, the government's draft legislation would only allow for a fine and it is not clear how much that fine would be.”

[Mick Antoniw, corporate manslaughter law expert at Thompsons Solicitors](#).

“It is important... to recognise that: No director or senior manager of a medium or large sized company has ever been convicted of manslaughter; it follows (due to the legal corporate liability test) that no medium or large sized company itself has been convicted of manslaughter; the 11 directors convicted of manslaughter following work-related death all involve small companies; the three large companies that have been prosecuted for manslaughter have all been acquitted before a jury has been allowed to come to a verdict - P&O European Ferries following the Zeebrugge Disaster in 1987, Great Western Trains following Southall Disaster in 1997, and now Balfour Beatty following Hatfield Disaster... That is why there has been a

demand for reform - and this failure in prosecution is yet another reason why legal reform in this area is required."

[David Bergman, director, Centre for Corporate Accountability.](#)

Risk aversion row brewing

The Health and Safety Executive has launched an online debate "on the causes of risk aversion in health and safety," a move which is certain to highlight divisions about what some see as a "business-friendly" shift in the safety watchdog's approach. Launching the initiative, health and safety minister Lord Hunt of Kings Heath said: "We must concentrate our efforts on the big issues that cause real harm and suffering and remember that excessive risk aversion does damage too. It hits organisational efficiency, competitiveness, restricts personal freedoms and damages the cause of protecting people from real harm. We know that something is seriously wrong when we read stories of schools asking children to wear goggles to play conkers in the playground." The majority of early contributions to HSE's online debate have been highly critical of comments from the minister and HSE. TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson said the emphasis on risk aversion when over a million employees are injured every year "is almost surreal". He added: "It does surprise me when people talk about risk aversion. Companies may be averse to taking some financial risks, but they do not seem to be averse to taking risks with other people's health." Hilda Palmer of Greater Manchester Hazards Centre said: "If the issue is more about children crossing the road, playing conkers and hanging baskets, then let the Ministry for hanging baskets, conkers and road crossing deal with it, but to have the HSE - the workplace enforcement agency, in charge of failing to achieve Revitalising Health and Safety targets - host this debate now is an enormous insult to workers and their families."

- **Have your say! To register online and tell HSE what you think about "risk aversion", go to the [HSE risk debate webpage](#) and [forum](#).**

Firm fined after boy dies on work experience

A Welsh firm has been ordered to pay a £60,000 fine after a 14-year-old worker was killed when a quad bike he was riding overturned. Gareth Pugh was on work experience at the Kempton Estate, Craven Arms, Shropshire, when the incident happened in November 2001.

Shrewsbury Crown Court heard Gareth had not been given safety instruction about the all-terrain vehicle. The company, G&A Leisure of Bettws, near Newtown, which runs a pheasant shoot on the estate, admitted failing to ensure he knew the risks of the bike. The firm was fined £35,000, with £25,000 costs. The court heard Gareth, who was from Clunton, near Craven Arms, had been using the bike to distribute bird food. Health and Safety Executive Hilary Lidbury commented: "All terrain vehicles (ATVs) are very useful, but also very dangerous. The Health and Safety Executive knows of many accidents both serious and fatal involving ATVs and is aware that many accidents go unreported." She added: "Commercial operators need to appreciate the dangers associated with ATVs and should insist on training for all staff using these vehicles. The lesson to be learnt from this case is to ensure that an adult that has been trained in the use of ATVs and remains in control of the vehicle at all times."

- [HSE news release](#). [BBC News Online](#).

UK workers take fewer sick days

Workers took fewer days off sick in the past year, a survey from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) suggests, with absenteeism now at its lowest level since 2000. The UK average was 8.4 days off sick, down from 9.1 days in the previous year. CIPD says on average, public sector workers took 10.3 days off compared to 6.8 for private sector workers. It put the overall cost of sickness absence at £601 per worker, slightly up on last year's figure. About half of public bodies cited stress as the leading cause of long-term absence for non-manual workers. Ben Willmott, CIPD employee relations adviser, said that reform of the public services could be a cause of increased stress. "Change is one of the biggest causes of stress and there has been a tremendous amount of change in the public sector with employees working within increasingly target-driven and performance managed environments," he said. "Employers must consult with staff before making changes and involve them as much as possible in order to help gain their trust and commitment." Absence levels were highest in local government, the health sector and in the drink, tobacco and transport industries. Public sector organisations are far less likely to treat sickness as a disciplinary issue, the CIPD found. However, the most effective intervention for managing long-term absence is occupational health involvement, it said.

- [CIPD news release](#). [BBC News Online](#).

- [Hazards news and resources on sickness absence.](#)

Mobiles “quadruple car crash danger”

Drivers are four times more likely to crash when using mobile phones, even if they use hands-free kits, experts say. They reached their estimates by looking at the phone bill records of 456 drivers needing hospital treatment after road crashes in Perth, Australia. In the UK it is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. Safety campaigners say the University of Western Australia study, published online in the *British Medical Journal*, shows the rules should apply to hands-free phone use. Mobile phone use in the 10 minutes before a crash was associated with a four-fold increased likelihood of crashing. This was irrespective of whether the driver was using a hand-held or hands-free phone. Similar results were found for the interval up to five minutes before a crash. Author Suzanne McEvoy and colleagues from the University of Western Australia said: “More and more new vehicles are being equipped with hands-free phone technology. Although this may lead to fewer hand-held phones used while driving in the future, our research indicates that this may not eliminate the risk. Indeed, if this new technology increases mobile phone use in cars, it could contribute to even more crashes.” The study authors said a possible solution might be to change mobile phones so that they cannot be used when vehicles are in motion, but added that industry was unlikely to embrace this.

- [Sydney Morning Herald.](#) [BBC News Online.](#)

Smoking ban “would save £4 billion”

An outright ban on smoking in all enclosed public places would save the UK economy £4 billion each year, according to a new report. The Royal College of Physicians’ ‘Going smoke-free report’ also refutes the “myth” that banning smoking at work would increase smoking in the home. Professor John Britton, chair of the college's tobacco advisory group, said the impact of a smoking ban in Ireland and other countries was examined. “Wherever smoke-free policies have been introduced they have been very popular and very successful, with no policing or compliance issues to speak of,” he said. “The popularity of the measures increase substantially between the government announcing them and implementing them and then still more after it happens.” The £4 billion predicted savings to the UK economy come from increased productivity, lower NHS costs and reduced insurance,

cleaning and fire-related bills. An Office for National Statistics survey report published this week found 30 per cent of non-smokers said they would visit a pub more often if smoking was restricted. Even among smokers, the vast majority - 85 per cent - said they would visit about as often as they do now, and only 12 per cent would visit less often. TUC is calling on the government to close a loophole in its smoking ban proposals that would permit certain pubs and bars to allow smoking ([Risks 213](#)).

- [RCP news release and key conclusions and recommendations.](#) [ONS news release and report.](#) [The Guardian.](#)

Passive smoking at work linked to breast cancer

Secondhand smoke exposure has been linked conclusively to breast cancer, with half of all cases linked to workplace exposures. The Californian study found exposure to secondhand smoke increased the risk of breast cancer by 70 per cent. The data indicated exposure to secondhand smoke caused up to a fifth of new cases of breast cancer in women under 50. Almost half the risk came from exposure at work. The report, by the California Scientific Review Panel on Toxic Air Contaminants, found active smoking also increased breast cancer risk. A report this year from Canada also linked breast cancer to long-term passive smoking in premenopausal women. Researcher Kenneth C Johnson, of the Public Health Agency of Canada, analysed data from the 20 published studies which had examined the relationship of passive smoking to breast cancer. For all studies combined, long-term secondhand smoke exposure was associated with a 27 per cent increase in breast cancer risk among women who were lifetime non-smokers.

- [Stuff News. Women's Health Matters.](#)
- **Kenneth C Johnson. Accumulating evidence on passive and active smoking and breast cancer risk, *International Journal of Cancer*, published online 31 May 2005 [[abstract](#)].**

Cape aims to cap asbestos liabilities

Asbestos campaigners have warned UK multinational Cape plc not to railroad through a proposed asbestos fund to cap its asbestos disease liabilities. The English Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum says

the proposed fund, which will be overseen by a Cape subsidiary, would receive £40 million to compensate Cape's UK asbestos victims for about the next 12 years. Under the proposal, the amount in the fund would be reviewed on a three-yearly basis and topped up only if Cape has sufficient funds. The scheme, which would need to be approved by the courts, would protect Cape from asbestos litigation within the UK and remove the threat of insolvency should asbestos claims increase dramatically. Tony Whitston, spokesperson for the Forum, said the group was not convinced by supposed safeguards on the fund, and said he "believes that the scheme as currently proposed is unacceptable to Cape's asbestos victims." He added: "If claims were to increase, there is no guarantee that Cape will top up the fund and asbestos victims would be left high and dry." Many mesothelioma settlements are in six figures, and at least two have broken the £1m mark, the largest being £4.37m in 2003 ([Risks 96](#)). He said that all previous schemes to cap companies' asbestos disease liabilities have disadvantaged asbestos victims. "Much more will be needed to be done by Cape to reassure Cape's asbestos victims that this scheme is any different," he said.

- [Forum news release.](#)

Asbestos cancer killed teacher

A teacher has died of the asbestos cancer mesothelioma. Alan Anthony died aged 72 on 27 May. His wife Carol is determined to draw attention to the risks posed by mesothelioma, which affect thousands more people in the years to come. A former head of English, she and Alan, who was head of modern languages, worked at a comprehensive school in southern England for many years. "I can't be absolutely certain but, when you look back over the years, you can pinpoint a time when exposure to asbestos probably occurred. Alan worked in a particular part of the school in the 70s where work was taking place. Asbestos was disturbed. The case made national news. It is when the particles get into the air that dangers arise." Liz Darlison, consultant nurse with Mesothelioma UK, commented: "It is known that 85 to 90 per cent of mesothelioma cases are caused by exposure to asbestos. It is likely that the other 10 per cent of cases were caused by asbestos too but it is not known when the exposure occurred." Teacher June Whitwam died of the same cancer, caused by asbestos exposure in classroom ([Risks 73](#)).

- [Derby Evening Telegraph.](#)

RESOURCES

Searching for employers' liability insurers

The TUC has published an online guide to tracking down insurers for personal injury compensation cases. It says many occupational diseases often manifest themselves many years after exposure which means the employer someone worked for when they were exposed to hazardous conditions may no longer exist when their symptoms emerge. "In such circumstances it is often possible to locate either or both the employers' liability and public liability insurers of the company," the guide says. "Most solicitors will know how to trace the insurers but some do not." The briefing gives pointers to sources of information.

- [TUC guide to tracking down employers' liability insurers.](#)
- [Hazards guide to compensation.](#)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

China: Dozens die in coal mine blast

A deadly coal mine blast in northwest China has killed at least 76 workers, with seven others still missing. Investigators from the State Administration of Work Safety have already uncovered unauthorised production at the Shenlong Coal Mine, which has already this year produced almost six times its allowed tonnage for all of 2005. As a preliminary step in the investigation, authorities have placed travel restrictions on the owner and others in charge of the mine, the administration's website said. An administration official said the mine was not adequately ventilated to dissipate flammable gases. Coal is always in short supply in China, as the country relies on it for two-thirds of its energy needs, a situation that is not expected to change significantly. China's coal mines are reputed to be the world's deadliest - more than 1,000 people have died in them this year. Correspondents say increasing demand for energy has put pressure on mines in China to provide coal faster. The families of workers killed in the latest blast are likely to receive at least 200,000 yuan (£13,800) compensation each, China Central Television reported.

- [Xinhua. BBC News Online.](#)

India: Out-sourced and stressed out

Complaints of stress and depression among Indian call centre and software workers are rising. Dr S Kalyanasundaram, who runs a psychiatric clinic in Jayanagar, Bangalore, says he is seeing increasing numbers of the "the IT crowd", complaining of stress, panic attacks, depression, relationship troubles, alcoholism and eating disorders. Aged between 20 and 33 and keen to hide their symptoms from employers and families, the patients have significantly increased Dr Kalyanasundaram's workload. "They work somewhere between a 10- and a 14-hour day, which, in my view, is just not healthy," he said. While stress and burnout are familiar topics of conversation among India's educated, outsourced workforce, their employers are "in denial", believes Dr Kalyanasundaram. "They just do not want to know about it," he said. "It remains too heavily stigmatised. Stress is seen as a weakness of personality." Nand Gouhari, chief executive of PPC Worldwide, a UK-based employee assistance programme provider which is to open an office in Bangalore, said the need to adopt an alien persona can be as damaging as long hours. "The strain of pretending to be 'Bob' or 'Susan' on the phone for weeks on end and keeping up with Eastenders and baseball can lead to questions of identity," he said.

- [Business Standard](#).

Japan: Asbestos deaths scandal prompts ban by 2008

Japan's health ministry has said it plans to ban all use of asbestos by 2008 after recent revelations that hundreds of workers have died from asbestos-related diseases ([Risks 214](#)). A partial ban has already seen Japan's asbestos imports fall from a peak of 350,000 tons in 1974 to 8,000 tons last year. Responding to intense media coverage in recent weeks of the asbestos disease toll, Hidehisa Otsuji, the health, labour and welfare minister, said the ministry would investigate affected companies and provide help with medical assessments and compensation claims. The ministry is to instruct companies to conduct health checks on current and retired employees and to heighten protection for workers involved in demolishing buildings insulated with asbestos. The government is facing criticism for not acting sooner. An editorial in the 9 July issue of *Asahi Shimbun* said Japan continued to allow the use of asbestos despite evidence of its deadly effects. "At issue now is whether the government allowed the use of asbestos despite its well-established risks overseas," it said. "Since a health

hazard may be spreading among the public, that is tantamount to causing AIDS by allowing the use of tainted blood products. The government may yet be held accountable in this matter.”

- [The Japan Times. Asahi Shimbun.](#)

USA: Immigrants entrapped with promise of safety training

Federal immigration officials have used a bogus offer of mandatory safety training to entrap undocumented construction workers in North Carolina. The fake training ruse has angered safety authorities in the state, who say it has eroded trust with groups of workers at particularly high risk at work ([Risks 213](#)). The immigration officials took into custody 48 undocumented workers from Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador and Ukraine at the Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, North Carolina. They now face deportation. Allen McNeely, head of the state Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health division, said the workers were lured to their arrest by a flier announcing a mandatory Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) meeting. A flier printed in English and Spanish instructed all contract workers to attend an OSHA briefing and promised free coffee and doughnuts. McNeely said that neither his division nor the federal safety watchdog OSHA was involved in the arrests. He said the trick has eroded trust between the Labor Department and the workers it is trying to keep safe. “We are dealing with a population of workers who need to know about safety,” McNeely said. “Now they're going to identify us as entrappers.” Officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which made the raid, said they have the right to round up illegal immigrants in any manner they see fit - even if it means impersonating OSHA officials. And US Attorney Frank Whitney commented: “We have to protect the ability of law enforcement to use undercover operations.” Joe Hansen, president of the UFCW union, commented: “This unscrupulous action has shattered the trust between OSHA and the workers who depend on the agency the most.” His union organises workers in North Carolina’s massive meatpacking industry, where over half of all employees are foreign-born.

- [News and Observer plus commentary. Confined Space.](#)
- [Hazards migrant workers news pages. US migrant workers health and safety news and resources from NYCOSH.](#)

USA: House moves to deform safety law

A Republican-led bid to severely weaken US health and safety law has passed its first legislative hurdle. The House of Representatives this week passed by a comfortable margin four "roll-back" measures that if they become law will give most US companies far greater latitude to evade health and safety action and penalties. The lax safety controls would apply to firms with fewer than 100 employees or with a net worth of under £7m (£4m), which comprise over 97 per cent of US private companies. The Workforce Protections Subcommittee's Republican chair Charlie Norwood, the chief sponsor of the bills, said: "Small businesses can't afford compliance managers and full-time safety personnel that big businesses use to keep over-zealous OSHA agents at bay." In fact OSHA, the resource starved federal enforcement agency, would at current staffing levels, take 108 years to inspect every company in its jurisdiction just once. Among the more damaging proposals passed by the House was one that would require OSHA to pay the legal bills of a company challenging successfully any enforcement action, even if action was found to be substantially justified and the challenge succeeded on a technicality. The legal changes will also have to be approved by the US Senate if they are to become law. It is not known yet whether they will be added to the Senate's crowded legislative programme. Over 5,500 workers are killed in US workplaces every year.

- **Confined Space on [the House vote](#) and [the "OSHA deform" proposals](#). [AFL-CIO factsheet on the anti-safety bills \[pdf\]](#). [San Francisco Chronicle](#). [St Petersburg Times](#).**

EVENTS AND COURSES

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR APRIL TO JULY 2005

[Midlands](#), [North](#), [North West](#), [Scotland](#), [South East](#), [South West](#), [Wales](#), [Yorkshire and Humberside](#)

COURSES FOR SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2005

[Midlands](#), [South East](#), [Scotland](#)

USEFUL LINKS

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