



# Risks Newsletter



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Risks is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 12,000 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](#).

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## UNION NEWS

### Council says safety reps make safer schools

Union safety reps and active safety committees have made Brent schools a safer place, a council boss has said. Speaking to almost 300 delegates at a healthy schools conference hosted jointly by Brent Council and the school unions ATL, GMB, NASUWT, NUT, UNISON, council leader Ann John said: “The number of trained school safety representatives and safety committees in Brent has risen to well above the national average and that means Brent schools are becoming safer and healthier.” She said promotion of the Health and Safety Commission ‘Safety reps’ charter’ for education and successful collaboration between Brent Council and the school unions had increased the proportion of Brent schools with union safety representatives from 22 per cent in 2003 to 71 per cent in 2006. The number of schools with safety committees had gone up from 3 per cent to 22 per cent. Local NUT rep Hank Roberts said: “It is clear that when Brent Council, unions, school management and governors work together enormous strides are made in improving school safety.” Since the safety push started in 2003, the proportion of NUT safety representatives having received relevant training has increased from 7 per cent to 69 per cent – and this is having an impact, says the union. A Brent NUT safety representatives’ survey, carried out in June 2005, found that after just one day’s training, the trained safety representatives carried out more than three times as many activities as untrained safety representatives.

- [Brent NUT news release](#). HSC Safety Representatives’ Charter for the education sector [[pdf](#)].

### Call for improved school security

Teaching union NASUWT says more needs to be done to ensure our schools are safe from acts of violence. Chris Keates, general secretary of NASUWT, was speaking on this week’s 10th

anniversary of the Dunblane primary school massacre, in which 16 children and a teacher were killed when Thomas Hamilton went on an horrific shooting spree before killing himself. She said: “Although fortunately such incidents are extremely rare, Dunblane rightly focused attention on the need to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to ensure schools remain relatively safe havens of peace and security. Schools are increasingly conscious of the need for constant vigilance and have been supported by a range of national and local initiatives.” She added that while much had been achieved, more needed to be done, “particularly in raising awareness of emerging evidence that school security may more effectively be tackled by nil or low-cost measures such as a single entry system and a clear procedure for managing visitors, rather than expensive electronic surveillance equipment. It is also crucial to remember that school security is not just about responding to external threats. Strategies for tackling violent and disruptive behaviour of pupils and a clear behaviour policy are integral to creating a safe and secure environment.”

- [NASUWT news release](#). [The Scotsman](#). [BBC News Online](#).

### Licences for gangmasters unveiled

A new system aimed at weeding out rogue gangmasters has been welcomed by plough-to-plate union TGWU. Measures to protect workers include forcing anyone who supplies workers to the packing, food processing or farming industries to have a licence from April this year. Anyone found to be operating without a valid licence will be fined up to £5,000 or imprisoned for up to 10 years. Commenting on this week’s announcement by Defra minister Jim Knight, TGWU deputy general secretary Jack Dromey said: “This is the right move for agriculture and the food industry and its workers across the country. It paves the way for a fair yet robust licensing system which the industry can unite behind. Importantly it serves notice on the rogues and scoundrels who plague this industry.

Those who rip-off and exploit their workers and clients, wherever they may be in the food chain, will not be tolerated or rewarded with a contract to supply labour.” He added: “The TGWU campaigned vigorously for full licensing. Our daily experience of organising our members in food and agriculture, many of whom are migrant workers, is rogue gangmasters are expert in dodging labour law. Their scams are not limited to shaving a few pounds off wage packets but include tax fraud, intimidation and criminality. So, we commend the government for listening to the views of the industry who said clearly and consistently that only licensing from farm to factory will work. We look forward to the Gangmasters Licensing Authority now getting on with the vital job of enforcing this law and protecting workers in this sector.” Licensing will start on 6 April for the majority of gangmasters supplying workers to the agriculture, horticulture and fish processing industries. It will become mandatory on 1 October. From 1 December it will be illegal to hire workers from an unlicensed gangmaster.

- [TGWU news release](#). [Defra news release](#). [BBC News Online](#).
- [Gangmasters Licensing Authority](#). [TGWU gangmasters campaign](#).

**Union pushes safer needles audit**

Health service union UNISON is encouraging its safety reps to take part in an online audit of needle safety practices. The union, which is part of the Safer Needles Network, is working with NHS Employers to carry out the audit of compliance with ‘Blue book’ recommendations to minimise the risks of staff exposures to blood and body fluids. UNISON says it is important to gather information about local practices and safety policies on the use and disposal of sharps as well as the extent to which safer devices are being used. Although the questionnaire is being hosted by NHS Employers - an England-only organisation -- UNISON also wants health and safety reps elsewhere in the UK to fill in the

questionnaire “so that we can get a UK-wide picture of how effectively the risks of needlestick injuries are being managed.” Last month, the European Parliament’s Committee on Employment and Social Affairs called for Europe-wide legislation to protect workers from needlestick injuries. It said the law should require the elimination of needles where suitable safer alternatives are available, safer work methods and proper safety instruction and suitable measures to deal with staff exposed to a risk of bloodborne infection. The report notes: “There is evidence that the use of guidelines, awareness campaigns and other non-legislative initiatives has been ineffective.” It adds that the 2004 European Competitiveness Report “acknowledges the escalating shortage of healthcare workers as a cause for concern throughout Europe. One of the reasons healthcare may not be seen as an attractive career is the occupational safety risks that are present in the workplace on a daily basis.”

- [NHS Employers needlesticks audit](#).
- [Hazards needlesticks webpage](#). Safer Needles Network webpage on the [blue book audit protocol](#).

**More fire damage shows folly of fire safety cuts**

Firefighters’ union FBU says a sharp rise in the cost of business fires can be linked to the government’s fire service reforms. FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: “The increase in fire losses and fire damage to businesses in the first full year of the government’s reforms is truly shocking. These are people’s jobs and businesses going up in smoke, not just property losses.” He added: “We warned of the impact the cuts and changes would have. Business is now left counting the cost of these government reforms.” Association of British Insurers’ figures released last week show the cost of business fire claims had topped £1 billion for the first time. Insurers paid out £790 million in 2005 in commercial fire damage claims, a rise of 60 per cent. There was

an additional £220 million in business interruption claims as a result of fires. FBU said the figures showed its warnings that fire and rescue service cutbacks and changes would push up fire losses should have been heeded. The rise coincides with the end of national response standards for the fire and rescue service in favour of locally based response plans. “Our members are very proud of rescuing record numbers of people and saving lives, but we are now seeing a sharp rise in economic losses which often lead to a loss of livelihoods,” Matt Wrack said. “We must keep driving down the number of fire deaths, but we must also ensure that at the same time we protect businesses, jobs, homes and commercial property.”

- [FBU news release](#). [ABI news release](#).

### **HSE asbestos study fails to reassure unions**

Plans by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to take asbestos textured coatings outside of the stringent licensing requirements demanded for most other asbestos work are continuing to prove controversial. Responding to new HSE research into the fibre levels released when asbestos coatings like artex are removed, Alan Ritchie, general secretary of the construction union UCATT said that despite the asbestos management regulations being in place for nearly two years “there are still many instances of workers being exposed to asbestos when carrying out maintenance and repair work. If there are no licensing controls for removal of textured decorative coatings then these exposures are likely to increase, condemning another generation of workers to an early death and ill health from asbestos related diseases.” He added: “HSE need to recognise the reality that for very many building and maintenance workers, their employers will not put in place the appropriate controls and that deregulating an activity that has previously been licensed will send out the wrong message about the dangers of asbestos to workers and the occupants of buildings who will be at risk from these deadly fibres.” Kevin Walkin, head of asbestos policy at HSE, said:

“We’re not saying this work is no-risk - it still needs to be carried out by trained workers using appropriate controls. Licensing is an additional check on high-risk work and should reflect changing knowledge about risks to remain credible.” The new HSE report was discussed at the 14 March Health and Safety Commission (HSC) meeting. TUC commissioners expressed concern with the research, in particular its failure to cover sanding of artex. Even with this omission, the report showed that mean asbestos exposures were approaching the proposed limit, with HSE just indicating it was “unlikely” the limit would be breached. The issue is to be discussed further at the next HSC meeting in May.

- [UCATT news page](#). [HSE news release](#) and full report [[pdf](#)]. [HSE revised asbestos webpages](#).

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **Concern grows about school asbestos risk**

The deaths of more teachers from asbestos related cancers is leading to increased concern about exposures in schools. A Carlisle primary school is at the centre of the latest health scare after its former headteacher died from an asbestos-related cancer. Governors at St Cuthbert’s Roman Catholic school have sought advice from Cumbria County Council on organising an asbestos survey after Ian White, 66, died from mesothelioma on Christmas Day. North-east Cumbria coroner David Osborne has alerted the Health and Safety Executive to Mr White’s death, and the potential presence of asbestos in the school. A retired caretaker from the school, Paul Blackshaw, has confirmed that ceilings in the school were made from asbestos tiles. He recalled staff being advised to avoid using drawing pins in the ceiling for fear of releasing dust. Speaking at another asbestos inquest last week, coroner David Osborne said: “At one time, we would get two or three a year, and perhaps not even that. But we seem to have been getting almost one every week at the

moment and I gather that is a consequence of exposure which took place probably many years ago.” Michael Lees, whose wife Gina, an art teacher, died in 2000 from mesothelioma, is campaigning to highlight the school asbestos risks. Mr Lees, who lives near Hartland in North Devon, said that throughout her 30-year teaching career his wife would display pupils' artwork by hanging it from ceilings with asbestos tiles, which would have exposed her to the fibres. He said he did not want to spread panic among school staff, pupils and parents, but did want action taken to ensure the risk from asbestos fibres was halted. “My aim is to stop teachers and everyone else being exposed to asbestos in schools,” he said. Local Tory MP Geoffrey Cox has raised the issue with education secretary Ruth Kelly. A Hazards magazine report last year on Britain’s workplace cancer epidemic included a number of cases of teachers who had died from the asbestos cancer mesothelioma ([Risks 234](#)). Official figures show more than 70 teachers died from the cancer between 1991 and 2000.

- [News and Star. Western Morning News. Cumberland News.](#)

### Washing work clothes caused mum’s cancer death

A pensioner died because she used to handwash the clothes of her son and husband which had been contaminated with asbestos. At an inquest at Oxford Coroner's Court David Gardiner said his mother, Constance Mary Gardiner, used to regularly wash his work clothes when he worked in the installation industry between 1965 and 1973. Giving evidence Mr Gardiner, 57, said he used to mix big vats of asbestos powder with water. He said: “I used to wear overalls and my mother handled them as well. They would be extremely dusty and she would shake them out, probably in the back garden, before she washed them.” Mrs Gardiner was likely to also have been exposed to asbestos when she washed her late husband Daniel's work clothes when he worked as an electrician at the Cowley Pressed

Steel Company in the 1940s. Oxfordshire coroner Nicholas Gardiner recorded a verdict of death by industrial disease after directly linking the cause of Mrs Gardiner's death to the time she was exposed to asbestos. He said: “I'm satisfied that Mrs Gardiner was probably exposed to asbestos which was almost certainly from her son's overalls and quite likely from her husband's and I am recording a verdict that she died of the industrial disease mesothelioma.” The coroner also recorded a verdict of death by industrial disease on Bryan Lewis, 65, who had worked as a carpenter in the 1950s and 1960s and who also died of mesothelioma.

- [Oxford Mail.](#)

### Asbestos kills 57 year old

A man who had lived a healthy life died aged 57 as a result of asbestos exposure more than 30 years ago. Allen Hurst worked stripping buildings in his 20s. An inquest heard the Potters Bar resident died from mesothelioma on 18 December. Coroner Edward Thomas said at an inquest in Hatfield that he had no doubt Mr Hurst died of an industrial disease. He said: “There were five years when there was most probably clear exposure to asbestos.” At the inquest Mr Hurst's wife Shirley said she would like to help other families dealing with the disease. She said: “If I could I would like to speak to another woman or man that has a similar problem. I have been there, got the T-shirt.” She added: “I think it's important that people are aware now of how serious this asbestos problem is and also of the necessity of complete pain relief. This illness is terribly painful and I didn't realise how much a person could go through until I saw Allen go through his last four months.”

- [Welwyn and Hatfield Times.](#)

### Inquiry begins after pesticide incident

A worker was hospitalised after an alleged chemical incident in which 19 people, including firefighters, were reported to be hurt. The worker at a chemical transport firm in Middlesbrough fell when cleaning a tank which had contained the herbicide paraquat. Colleagues who went to help him were also reported to be affected, as were some members of fire crews which raced to the scene. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is investigating the incident, which happened at Bulkhaul Limited on Middlesbrough's Riverside industrial estate last Saturday morning. A Cleveland Police spokesperson said: "A worker was cleaning out one of the tanks which had paraquat in it. He was overcome by fumes and some of his colleagues went to assist him. But they too were overcome and it was then that the emergency services were called." He added: "Special shower decontamination units were deployed, but unfortunately some of the emergency crews got it onto their skin and also needed to go to hospital." Later reports say the symptoms were not caused by inhalation of fumes, and added the tank was empty but had not been cleaned. Unions have been involved in an international campaign to ban the highly toxic pesticide ([Risks 203](#)).

- [Hartlepool Mail](#). [BBC News Online](#).

### Kids face heightened pesticides risk

New studies have highlighted a massively increased risk to children from common pesticides. US research published in the journal *Pharmacogenetics and Genomics* concludes newborn infants are as much as 65 to 164 times more vulnerable than adults to two common agricultural pesticides. The new study looking at the chemicals chlorpyrifos (Lorsban) and diazinon - which are used on many common crops including almonds, lettuce, peaches, grapes, tomatoes and soybeans. The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has filed a brief in a related lawsuit, charging the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with

failing to protect children from hazardous pesticides. EPA banned chlorpyrifos and diazinon for household use in December 2001 and December 2002 respectively, largely due to their hazards to children, but allowed continued use on agricultural crops. A study in Ecuador has found children whose mothers were exposed to pesticides while pregnant had increased blood pressure and diminished ability to undertake some simple tasks compared to a control group. The findings, published in the March issue of the journal *Pediatrics*, "suggest that more attention should be paid to protecting the developing brain and that we should seriously consider adopting and enforcing a greater margin of safety in protecting both fetuses and children from potential toxic exposures," said research team leader Philippe Grandjean of Harvard University.

- [NRDC news release](#). [Harvard School of Public Health news release](#).
- Pesticides Action Network UK list of health and environmental effects of pesticides [[pdf](#)] – the definitive guide to pesticide risks.

### Boffins get to the bottom of seat problems

An international study has found good seat design can reduce vibration through a lorry seat by a third. Sweden's National Institute for Working Life says it has established that lorry seats can be improved to reduce vibration-related complaints. "Today's seats have some damping effect, but only against vertical vibrations," said vibration researcher Lage Burström, vibration. The new driver's seat, developed in partnership with a lorry manufacturer, is also able to cut vibrations from side to side and front to back. "The prototype seat which we have developed improves damping by up to 30 per cent," said Burström. "It works particularly well in off-road vehicles and in boats, and reactions from professional drivers who have tried the seat have been extremely positive." Burström collaborated with researchers from six European countries over three years. Researchers in the different countries concentrated on specific types of

vehicle – lorries, tractors, construction equipment, locomotives and boats. The new lorry seat will be on the market later this year.

- [NIWL news release.](#)
- [HSE guide to monitoring whole body vibration induced back pain in drivers.](#)
- [HSE vibration webpages.](#) [TUC vibration webpages.](#)

### **Deadly legacy of Britain’s coal mines**

Workers who toiled for decades in Britain’s coal mines are suffering disability and early death as a result. John Iorwerth Miles had had been a face worker at Cynheidre Colliery in South Wales. A Llanelli inquest was told he died aged 71 from the dust disease pneumoconiosis, complicated by pneumonia, emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Coroner John Owen returned a verdict of death by industrial disease. In a second case this month, an inquest heard Thomas Ernest Bayley worked down the mines from the age of 14, and died aged 78 from an industrial disease. The North Staffordshire man had retired from the mining industry in 1987 due to ill health. A post-mortem concluded that Mr Bayley died from respiratory failure due to chronic pulmonary and heart disease. Coroner Ian Smith said: “His cause of death is industrial related and my final verdict is that he died from an industrial disease.” Since a government scheme was set up in the late 1990s, hundreds of thousands of miners have received compensation for just two of the many common industrial diseases affecting those who have worked in the industry ([Risks 247](#)). The figures suggest there is a hidden epidemic of work-related ill-health in the UK.

- [Evening Post.](#) [The Sentinel.](#)
- [Hazards work and health webpages.](#)

### **Firms fined after tractor death**

Two firms have been fined after a Blackburn man was killed by a tractor while working outside a Toyota car plant. Magistrates heard that Bernard Place, 56, was behind the tractor as it was reversing outside the Burnaston factory. He was using laser equipment to make sure the land, which was being developed for a car park, was being properly levelled on 27 August 2003. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector David Jordan, who investigated the case, told the court that Mr Place got into a blind spot behind the vehicle. “It is clear the driver of the grader did not see him and reversed over him,” he told Southern Derbyshire Magistrates' Court at Ilkeston. He said the driver was “competent”, adding that the vehicle’s blind spot could have been remedied by fitting closed circuit TV or convex mirrors. Magistrates ordered Blackburn firm Combined Associates to pay fines totalling £25,000 and costs of £2,296. It admitted failing to ensure the safety of an employee and failing to provide plant equipment which was safe. Costs of £2,296 were also awarded against the firm. Colchester-based sub-contractor CA Blackwell Ltd was fined £15,000 fine and £2,052 costs. It admitted failing to prevent people being exposed to risk. Speaking after the case HSE inspector David Jordan said: “It is vitally important construction sites are well organised to ensure workplaces are safe. This accident could have easily been avoided if greater care was taken planning and carrying out the work.”

- [Lancashire Evening Telegraph.](#) [Derby Evening Telegraph.](#)

### **Man fined after shoving rail worker onto track**

A man who pushed a rail worker onto the track and then wrestled with police attempting to arrest him has been fined £90 and £75 costs. Manuel Dellaquilla, 23, said he had been seeing off one of his friends at the station and had been drinking. He told Redhill Magistrates' Court: “I gently shoved him and he slipped off the edge of the platform. Know what I mean? It wasn't my fault. I was drinking, but I knew what I was

doing.” Lee Harris, prosecuting, said police were called to reports of rowdy behaviour at Redhill train station at about 5.40am on 19 February. Attending officers were told that the defendant had pushed a staff member onto the tracks. Police interviewed Dellaquilla and said he appeared to be drunk and was uncooperative and aggressive. He was arrested and a struggle began in which he had to be wrestled to the floor and was taken to Epsom police station. On the way to the police station, he continued to be aggressive in the police van by banging the side of the cage and stamping his feet. Rail companies and unions have pushed a “zero tolerance” approach to violence to staff. A report last month revealed that violent crime on trains or at railway stations has risen dramatically in the last five years ([Risks 244](#)).

- [Redhill and Reigate Post](#).

### **Euro MP starts campaign to cut long working hours**

A report claiming Britain's long working hours lead to an unhealthy, unproductive workforce has been launched by Green MEP for London Jean Lambert. Mrs Lambert, vice-chair of the Green Party in the European Parliament and co-ordinator of the committee on employment and social affairs, called on the UK government to end the UK opt-out option from the working time directive's 48 hour working week ceiling. She said: "We are now seeing record levels of sick leave due to long hours and stress. Sadly the British work culture is such that stress is seen as a weakness and so instead of being treated gets worse, costing both the individual and the business." Mrs Lambert said that long hours were part of showing a commitment to your job and that most people were either pressured into signing the form which waived employees' right to refuse to work more than 48 hours a week or did not realise what they were signing. "The Greens simply argue that the UK adheres to a maximum 48-hour week and, where intensive work has occurred, the employee is given compensatory rest through time off," she added.

- [Jean Lambert MEP news release](#). I must work harder? Britain and the working time directive [[pdf](#)]. [This is local London](#).

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **Canada: Push for new cancer prevention law**

The Canadian government must do more to prevent cancers caused by industrial chemicals, campaigners have said. They are pushing the new Conservative government to ban or phase out some chemicals altogether. Cancer rates in Canada are rising sharply. In the 1970s, one in five Canadians could expect to develop cancer in their lifetimes, according to official cancer statistics. Today, the chance for men is one in 2.4 and for women one in 2.7, and the rate is predicted to rise. During the 2006 election, the Conservatives promised Can\$260 million (£129m) to go toward a national cancer strategy, part of which would focus on cancer prevention. Campaigners are to honour this commitment. The Labour Environmental Alliance Society (LEAS) says there must be better regulation. The new edition of its CancerSmart guide identifies known and suspected carcinogens in household cleaners, pesticides, personal care products and plastics. Over the last two decades, the guide says, manufacturing industries have introduced tens of thousands of new chemicals into Canadian homes, workplaces and the environment. "The World Health Organisation estimates that at least 25 per cent of cancers worldwide are caused by exposure to environmental carcinogens, such as pesticides and chemicals," said LEAS vice-president Larry Stoffman, who is also a safety specialist with the foodworkers' union UFCW. "The information that's in this new guide can help reduce that exposure and lower the cancer risk. That's a real contribution to cancer prevention." TUC warned last year that work cancers are killing unprecedented numbers in the UK, and called for urgent government action ([Risks 234](#)).

- [The Hill Times. LEAS news release.](#)
- [Labour Environmental Alliance Society. Hazards work cancer guide.](#)

**China: Premier stresses union role in work safety**

Trade unions should and can play a major role in work safety supervision, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said this week. Trade unions at all levels should be fully involved “especially in work safety supervision” to better safeguard workers' interests, the premier said. The All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) will soon begin to play a bigger role in monitoring workplace safety, he said, adding he was upset about the death toll caused by mining and industrial accidents throughout the country. Wen made the remarks at a press conference following the conclusion of the annual session of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature. The session agreed a five year plan to improve workplace safety ([Risks 247](#)). WEN said it is imperative to strengthen safety training for workers. “We shall promote their awareness of safety and strengthen their ability of self-protection,” the premier said. In response to a question from a French reporter about the independence of China's trade unions, Wen told the press conference: “Trade unions in China are workers' own organisations, and they are not set up by employers.”

- [People's Daily. CSR Asia.](#)
- [China Labour Bulletin.](#)

**Global: Union warning on bird flu epidemic**

Foodworkers are in the frontline of a potential bird flu catastrophe and if an epidemic is to be avoided must be protected from the disease and from victimisation for raising safety concerns. The warning comes from IUF, the global foodworkers' union federation. It says there is a

very real concern that if the H5N1 virus responsible for avian flu mutates and becomes capable of human-to-human transmission, “then we could witness a global influenza pandemic like the one in 1918 which killed more than 50 million people.” Avian influenza outbreaks have occurred in 30 countries in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East, infecting and killing hundreds of thousands of birds, and prompting the culling of millions more in a desperate attempt to contain its spread. “As of 6 March 2006, we know of 173 people infected with the H5N1 strain of avian influenza virus; and 95 of these people died,” says IUF. “Among the 95 deaths officially reported were three poultry workers (China, Thailand, and Indonesia). But there are unknown numbers of poultry workers who have been exposed to the virus - with blood tests in Japan and Indonesia, for example, showing prolonged, low-intensity exposure without signs of serious illness - and many cases have gone unreported.” The global union body adds: “Despite this very serious risk to public health, few national and international policies and guidelines seriously address this linkage between poultry workers and public health.” IUF says in many countries workers are not informed of the risks, are poorly trained and protected and may not act if they fear dismissal or punishment for reporting suspected outbreaks to the authorities. “In other words, when trade union rights are repressed, workers on the frontline in the battle against a global viral pandemic are effectively disarmed,” it says.

- [IUF news release](#) and [factsheet. New IUF avian flu webzone.](#)
- [Hazards infections webpages.](#)

**India: Moves to expand asbestos mining**

The Indian government is looking to expand asbestos mining in the country. It has asked the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) to work out necessary safeguards to resume mining. A study conducted by IBM to assess the feasibility of lifting the ban on new and renewed mining

licences, imposed in June 1993, recommended that the ban could be lifted if workplace asbestos exposures were controlled. “IBM has been asked to work out necessary safeguards/measures in consultation with CPCB [Central Pollution Control Board] subject to which chrysotile asbestos mining can be permitted so as to ensure workers’ safety,” a 10 March government news release said. India, Southern Africa and Indonesia have been key areas for a renewed asbestos industry push to resurrect global asbestos trade ([Risks 247](#)). The new PR campaign has relied heavily on materials provided by the Canadian government-backed asbestos industry lobby group, the Chrysotile Institute, which claim chrysotile asbestos presents no health risk. This flies in the face of the position taken by the major occupational health bodies, safety organisations, the International Labour Organisation and the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Unions are campaigning for a global asbestos ban ([Risks 246](#)). It will be a major theme for events on the 28 April Workers’ Memorial Day this year.

- [Indian government Ministry of Mines and Minerals news release. NewKerala.com.](#)
- [International Ban Asbestos Secretariat.](#)

## RESOURCES

### HSE cooks up kitchen back pain remedy

A new HSE guide is aiming to raise employer awareness of the serious back pain risks facing kitchen staff. The guidance, which is available free online, offers practical information on good manual handling techniques and lifting aids that will be useful to any section of the hospitality industry. It also offers specific information for kitchen staff on significant risk areas such as pot washing, dishwashing, preparing food, storage and cleaning. The most recent official accident statistics show 62 per cent of all manual handling accidents in the hospitality industry

involve pushing and pulling, lifting and carrying, handling and awkward body movements.

- [HSE news release.](#) Preventing back pain and other aches and pains to kitchen and food service staff [[pdf](#)]. [HSE hospitality industry webpages.](#) [HSE better backs campaign.](#)

## EVENTS AND COURSES

### TUC courses for safety reps

#### COURSES FOR JANUARY TO MARCH 2006

- [Northern, North West South East, Yorkshire and the Humber, South West, Midlands, Scotland](#)

#### COURSES FOR APRIL TO JULY 2006

- [North West, South East, Yorkshire and the Humber, South West, Midlands, Scotland](#)

## USEFUL LINKS

- **Visit** the TUC [http://www.tuc.org.uk/h\\_and\\_s/](http://www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/) website pages on health and safety. See what’s on offer from [TUC Publications](#) and [What’s On in health and safety.](#)
- **Subscribe** to [Hazards](#) magazine, supported by the TUC as a key source of information for union safety reps.
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