



Risks Newsletter



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Editor: [Rory O'Neill](#) of [Hazards](#) magazine.
Comments to the TUC at healthandsafety@tuc.org.uk

Risks is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 13,000 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

Don't let your first job be your last

Nearly 4,500 young people were seriously injured or killed at work last year, over 20 per cent more than five years ago, according to a new report from the TUC. The report marked the launch of a TUC campaign to protect young people at work. One person aged under 25 dies every month in a workplace accident, while thousands more are forced to take at least three days off after being hurt or injured, according to the study. 'Too young to die,' published in the TUC-backed *Hazards* magazine, is warning 16-24 year old workers to make sure they don't become one of the young workers seriously injured at work every 40 minutes in the UK or killed at a rate of one every month. The report says that despite stricter health and safety rules for the youngest workers, 16-24 year olds are at risk because their employers fail to take account of their lack of workplace experience and training. The number of "fatal and major injuries" are at a 10-year high, and have risen year on year for the last five years, the report says. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "No young person should die or be seriously injured this summer because their employer failed to take simple steps to ensure their safety. And no young person's first job should be their last." This summer the Local Government Association (LGA) is backing the TUC's 'don't make this your last summer - work safe' message as councils across the country are taking measures to ensure young people are employed safely, including spot-checks on employers and local awareness campaigns. Cllr James Kempton, vice chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said: "Councils want young people to work safely and legally over the summer. Employers who flout the law, and parents who turn a blind eye to them doing so, need to understand that authorities are willing to take a firm stance on this issue." The report calls on employers to conduct detailed risk assessments before young workers start a job and

to provide good quality training, information and supervision.

- [TUC news release. The Guardian. BBC Scotland. BBC News Online.](#)
- [Too young to die](#), *Hazards* magazine.

Scottish and Welsh youngsters need protection

Union organisations in Scotland and Wales have backed the TUC campaign for action on young worker safety. Ian Tasker, safety officer with the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), said: "There is a mistaken perception that injuries suffered by younger workers are as a result of clowning around but this is purely a smokescreen to cover the inadequate training being given to young people embarking on their careers." He added: "The STUC is currently finalising arrangement for a series of school visits and these figures emphasise the need for us to ensure young people understand and recognise workplace hazards before entering the workplace". Official figures for Scotland show fatal and serious injuries to 16-24 year olds are at a five year high, at 443 reported cases. Wales TUC general secretary Felicity Williams said: "Summer jobs are a great way for young people to gain some extra cash and important work and life experience. But they are not worth dying for." Trainee gamekeeper James Wellington became the latest teenage casualty on 4 August. The 16-year-old died in a quad bike accident while out feeding pheasants on a rural estate near Llangollen in north Wales. He was found underneath the overturned vehicle on the Plas Nantyr estate.

- [Scottish TUC news release. Wales TUC news release. Western Mail. BBC News Online. North Wales Daily Post.](#)

Track union cries foul on toilet waste

Some of Britain's busiest mainline trains have been coating track workers with an aerosol of human excrement because toilet tanks have been overflowing and spraying waste on to the tracks, rail union RMT has revealed. High-speed services on the east coast route between Edinburgh and London are covering trackside workers, and nearby properties, with a fine mist of effluent. The problem has arisen because outdated equipment at the Newcastle depot, responsible for emptying the tanks, cannot cope. Rail maintenance crews have been told to turn their backs when the worst culprit, GNER's recently-introduced Mallard trains, fly past between Darlington and Edinburgh. "RMT track workers in Darlington complained that the trains were releasing the foul-smelling and potentially dangerous spray of human waste more than 18 months ago," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said. "GNER have finally admitted that they have known for years that their trains are spraying human excrement into the atmosphere, but they have yet to stop it happening." He said the company claims the discharge was harmless. "At one point it was suggested that track workers simply turn their backs when one of these trains approached - but not only would that not stop anyone breathing in the spray, it is completely contrary to safety rules. We have evidence that passengers have also noticed the foul smell aboard the trains, and that GNER has given travel £10 vouchers to passengers who have complained." Mr Crow said that progress on a new tank-emptying facility was behind schedule, adding "GNER needs to put safety first and remove this danger now by putting speed restrictions on this stock wherever necessary."

- [RMT news release](#). [The Guardian](#). [BBC News Online](#).

Staff get sun cream to stop skin cancer

Hundreds of council staff are to be given sun cream to protect them from skin cancer. The move by Argyll and Bute Council follows a union campaign on outdoor staff safety. The

council has fitted dispensers at depots and ordered tubs of cream to be carried in every vehicle after the issue was raised with council bosses by GMB safety representative Stephen Johnstone. The 44-year-old refuse lorry driver said he presented a *Glasgow Evening News* article on the union campaign to a joint meeting the unions had with management. He said: "We had a discussion on sun creams during which head of roads Stewart Turner read the article and said I was right." John McClean, GMB's national health and safety officer, said he was "delighted" that factor 30 sun cream is being given to 300 street sweepers, refuse staff and gardeners and traffic wardens. A council official said employees' health was of "paramount importance". Skin cancer cases across Scotland have tripled since the 1970s and claim almost 200 victims every year.

- [Glasgow Evening Times](#).

CWU exercises its pedal power

Safety concerns have won out over penny pinchers in Royal Mail, which runs the largest working fleet of cycles in the UK, communications union CWU has said. After CWU pressure, an injection of £3 million has begun and a Royal Mail embargo on replacement bicycles has ended. "Royal Mail has seen sense in the nick of time and has managed to avert any serious accidents due to old cycle stock," said Dave Joyce, CWU's national safety officer. It says the company has now reinstated a policy requiring cycles to be replaced every seven years. "The withdrawal of the cycle replacement budget was based on a false assumption of a bicycle surplus and turned out to be a huge mistake," said Dave Joyce. "Those holding the purse strings ignored warnings and six months into the financial year delivery offices were running into problems. The finance board has had to back-pedal on this issue and has ended up paying this year and last year's cycle budgets together. Hopefully lessons have been learnt from this." Royal Mail operates a fleet of around 32,000 cycles on mail delivery rounds and

employs by far the largest cycling workforce in the UK covering millions of miles annually. Dave Joyce said the specification for the new cycles should be “safety led, not cost driven. At the end of the day you only get what you pay for and a Royal Mail cycle has got to withstand daily arduous use.”

- [CWU news release](#).

Amicus wants action over offshore safety

Offshore union Amicus is calling for urgent action to address serious safety concerns in the sector. A meeting of union officers this week discussed offshore safety and in particular “the role and effectiveness” of the Health and Safety Executive’s offshore division ([Risks 267](#)). Amicus national officer Alan Harvey said the meeting “was essentially about how best to secure a safe working environment in the offshore sector. It is therefore critical that we have an independent and effective HSE (Offshore Division). This is an area that our members offshore expect to be addressed immediately.” The union is seeking a meeting with the three trade union representatives on the Health and Safety Commission, saying it wants HSE to be told “to be more pro-active in the policing of offshore safety.” Amicus will also seek a meeting with safety minister Lord Hunt and will call on Shell to create an independent review panel into recent revelations about lax safety practices ([Risks 263](#)). Amicus regional officer Graham Tran said: “It is necessary for immediate action to be taken on the very important issue of offshore safety and to win back the confidence of the offshore worker in relation to safety matters. The offshore worker must have confidence that any safety concern can be raised either internally or externally and that they will be taken seriously and the strongest action taken against any person or company in breach of health and safety regulations.”

- [Amicus news release](#). [The Scotsman](#).

Fire crews concern at cuts and soaring injuries

Merseyside fire crews have expressed concern at official figures showing a “scandalous” 118 per cent rise in the number of local firefighters injured at emergency incidents in the last three years. Their union FBU says the findings have heightened concerns for firefighter safety in the face of demands by senior management for a further cut of 120 firefighters. A parliamentary answer revealed injuries at operational incidents in Merseyside from 2001/02 to 2004/05 rose from 60 to 133. Les Skarratts, Merseyside FBU secretary, said: “Merseyside fire crews have seen the biggest increase – 118 per cent - in injuries at operational incidents over the last three years. It is the worst increase in the entire fire service over that period, and it is scandalous.” He added: “Our concerns about the impact of further cuts on our safety are genuinely and honestly held and these independent official figures demonstrate why. This is not about theory or unfounded anxiety, it is because a 118 per cent rise in injuries in Merseyside in three years is truly appalling.” Local fire crews are holding a strike ballot over plans to cut the 120 emergency response firefighter posts – one in 10 of the workforce - 15 emergency fire control operator posts and axe four fire engines at night time. “It is not cost cutting senior managers or councillors who will face that appalling dilemma, it is the fire crews at the scene,” Mr Skarratts said. “We have very good reason to have concerns over safety as these dreadful official independent figures demonstrate.”

- [FBU news release](#).

Union cover pays off again

A member of entertainment union BECTU has secured £4,000 in compensation following a road traffic accident on the M40. Dave Williams, a studio rigger from High Wycombe, was awarded the payout thanks to support from

BECTU's free legal assistance scheme, even though the injury was not sustained at work. Mr Williams suffered a whiplash injury and was off work for three weeks after his car was rear-ended. He said: "Before the accident I was unaware that my union membership covered road traffic accidents as well as accidents at work." He added: "I doubt I would have had such good legal representation and secured so much compensation if I'd simply used the solicitors offered by my insurer." Gerry Morrissey, BECTU assistant general secretary, said: "We are increasingly concerned at the way in which insurers organise legal representation for members without asking them if they are union members and then pointing out that they are entitled to legal representation through their union. We hope that cases such as Dave Williams' will help to raise awareness that BECTU provides high quality legal advice and representation for work and non-work related accidents and injuries, and that family members are also covered for non-work related accidents including road traffic accidents."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)
- [Hazards compensation news and resources.](#)

OTHER NEWS

Jail terms for attacks on health staff

Two violent thugs were jailed in Scotland last week for separate vicious attacks on health service workers. UNISON member Lynn Sutherland was punched and kicked by a 17-year-old, after responding to a 999 call to his house last September. She was so badly hurt that she was unable to work for six months. Graham Donnelly was sentenced to 18 months at Hamilton Sherriff's court. UNISON said the sentence might help "stem the rising tide of violence against our members." The court heard Donnelly's mother had called an ambulance after her son had consumed a cocktail of drink and drugs. But he attacked Sutherland, injuring her

so badly that she has only recently returned to work, and is currently performing light duties. Passing sentence, Sheriff Marie Saint said: "It has to be made clear that paramedics and other emergency service officers will be protected from this kind of behaviour." Lynn Sutherland said: "I was off work for six months after this assault. If it hadn't been for the support I got from UNISON, this whole incident would have been even more traumatic." Kidney dialysis patient Donald Gibson, 37, was given a nine-month jail term for abusing nursing staff at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. The convicted rapist was sentenced at Edinburgh Sheriff Court on charges of aggravated assault and racial abuse. He had previously pleaded guilty at Edinburgh Sheriff Court to assaulting nurse David Walker in April and of racially insulting hospital security guard Martin Schulz in October. Sheriff Gordon Liddle sentenced Gibson to six months for assaulting Mr Walker and three months for racially abusing Mr Schulz. The sentences are to run consecutively.

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

Violence at work linked to clinical depression

Employees subjected to real or threatened violence at work run a major risk of becoming clinically depressed or suffering other stress related disorders, new research has concluded. A study in the September 2006 issue in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* found the magnitude of the risk was in direct proportion to the amount of workplace violence experienced. The findings are based on an investigation of more than 14,000 Danish hospital patients between the ages of 18 and 65, who were treated for depression or stress related disorders between 1995 and 1998. These patients were then compared with 38,000 people without mental ill health problems, but matched for age and sex. The prevalence of real and threatened violence was highest among those working in health, education and social work sectors. Exposure to violence boosted the risk of depression by 45 per cent in women and 48 per

cent in men, compared with those in workplaces without any risk of violence. Stress related disorders were around a third more likely in women and 55 per cent more likely in men. Threatening behaviour boosted the likelihood of depression by 48 per cent in women and stress related disorders by almost 60 per cent in men. The magnitude of risk was directly proportional to the amount of violence experienced at work. The authors say the risk of psychiatric problems among employees exposed to violence is well recognised and is reflected in guidance from the European Commission and the International Labour Organisation. “Despite these efforts, there seems to be no decrease in work related violence, threats, and harassment,” they say, adding the study “points to the importance of preventing and minimising violence and threats at work as well as providing satisfactory organisational and individual support for victims.”

- Joanna Wieclaw and others. Work related violence and threats and the risk of depression and stress disorders, [Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health](#), volume 60, pages 771-5, September 2006.

Violent crime payouts move could bring delays

Delays in compensation payments to the victims of violent crime could rise massively following the Home Office's shock decision to close the London office of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA), civil service union PCS has warned. PCS says the move, yet to be publicly announced, will see the closure and relocation to Glasgow of the London office, with the loss of 150 jobs by September 2007. It says the move will also lead to the disbandment of the highly trained special incident team which was set up to process applications from those injured in the 7 July bombings. In addition, with two-thirds of national oral appeal cases from the victims of crime being handled by London-based presenting officers, PCS fears that the quality and quantity of resolved decisions will drop sharply, as untrained replacements take time to come up

to speed. PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka commented: “At the heart of this decision is the desire to cut costs which is clearly not in the interests of the victims of crime or their loved ones. The loss of highly skilled, trained staff will lead to delays for victims of crime receiving compensation and runs contrary to the government's desire to rebalance the justice system in favour of the victim.” He added: “Two years ago the government sought to make a case for privatising the CICA, but their own management expert told them it was efficient, well run and offered value for money. The CICA needs to think again about the closure of the London office and start making the needs of victims a priority.” Workplace victims of violent crime are also compensated under the CICA scheme.

- [PCS news release](#).

Boss goes free after manslaughter verdict

The owner of a stone-cutting company has received a suspended sentence after being convicted of the manslaughter of a 22-year-old employee. Michael Shaw, managing director of Change of Style, bypassed vital safety equipment on a stone-cutting machine. He originally denied the manslaughter charge but changed his plea during the trial and received a two-year suspended prison sentence. David Bail suffered massive head injuries in the accident at the Hampshire factory on 13 May 2003, when he was caught in a stone-cutting machine and crushed. At the June trial, Mark Dennis QC, prosecuting, told the jury at Winchester Crown Court that Michael Shaw and his 25-year-old son, Gavin - a fellow director - were responsible for the death of Mr Bail because they put “profits before safety”. Mr Dennis said the automated machine, which cut stone for kitchen worktops, had light sensors around it that immediately stopped it when someone broke the continuous light. It also had hinged guards which, if lowered when the machine was working, would break a circuit and stop it. But the court heard that when the machine had been

installed in 2000 these devices were not activated. Shaw and his company were also fined £70,000. Gavin Shaw was fined £1,500 for one breach of health and safety legislation. He had earlier been cleared of a charge of manslaughter on the direction of the judge, due to the lack of evidence.

- [Workplacelaw.net. Centre for Corporate Accountability manslaughter webpages.](#)

Lorry drivers jailed after death crashes

Two lorry drivers have been jailed for causing death by dangerous driving in separate road traffic accidents. James Wingfield, 36, was jailed for three years after admitting three counts of causing death by dangerous driving when he appeared at Peterborough Crown Court. His lorry ploughed into a car killing Stacey Gitsham, 26, and her son Joshua, two, and 11-week-old Georgia, in December 2005. The court heard that Wingfield was not speeding at the time of the accident on 8 December, but that the crash was the result of a “prolonged period of inattention.” Judge Nicholas Coleman said Wingfield would serve half his sentence before being eligible for parole and would be disqualified from driving for at least three years. In a second incident, lorry driver John Payne, 31, who was using his mobile phone just before he smashed into a stationary car and killed 23-year-old Trinity Taylor, was jailed for four years. Payne, who had admitted causing death by dangerous driving, was also banned from driving for seven years. Sentencing Payne, the Recorder of Winchester Judge Michael Brodrick, said: “Anyone wanting an illustration of using mobile phones in a vehicle only has to look at the facts of this case.”

- BBC News Online on the [James Wingfield](#) and [John Payne](#) cases.

Essex firm fined £15,000 for cement burns

A construction firm has been fined £15,000 and ordered to pay £7,000 costs after a plasterer suffered serious cement burns. Kevin Creak was working for Loughton-based Galliard Homes in central London on 10 March 2005. Mr Creak is a plasterer by trade but he had been asked to lay a cement floor. London Magistrates Court was told there had been no risk assessment or method statement completed for the work, and neither Mr Creak nor the site manager were aware of the dangers of working with wet cement. Whilst carrying out the job Mr Creak knelt in concrete for approximately 5 hours, but didn't use any protective equipment. As the chemicals in cement attack nerve-endings first, he was not aware of the serious burns he was suffering until he had finished the job. Following the hearing, HSE inspector Lisa Chappell said: “This was a very unfortunate series of events that led to serious injury for Mr Creak. Cement is widely used throughout the construction industry and requires a thorough risk assessment.” She added: “The prosecution has highlighted the company's failures to identify the hazards associated with cement, and to provide suitable information, training and appropriate protective equipment to employees.” She said a suitable risk assessment would have identified that equipment such as kneepads and non-permeable clothing would have protected Mr Creak during the screeding operation. Galliard Homes pleaded guilty to safety offences.

- [HSE news release.](#)

Alarm sounds on mobile phone tracking

Campaigners have expressed concern about the possible introduction of new technology that could allow employees to be tracked by their bosses at any time and place during the working day. Scottish company Trisent has developed a tracking device which can be installed in a standard mobile phone. The firm said a code of practice would protect workers' privacy, as the person with the phone would be “fully aware” that their location could be tracked. However,

public sector union UNISON said the devices could damage trust and confidence between employers and staff. A spokesperson for UNISON Scotland said: “There are a large range of adverse impacts of this sort of technology, including damage to staff privacy and to the trust and confidence between staff and employer, whether proposals are demeaning to staff, and who has access to the information.” Civil rights group Liberty said as technology becomes more advanced, it is also opened up to greater abuses. “Just because you give up eight hours a day to an employer does not mean that they own you,” said Liberty spokesperson Doug Jewell. “There is no reason for an employer to know where you are 24/7.” Trisent said a test launch had been successful and that it had many applications for the new technology. “Until now, tracking the location of people and vehicles has been an expensive, slow and inaccurate business,” said Dr Gordon Povey, Trisent's founder and managing director. He said the technology had safety applications, and could help keep track of lone workers. Safety studies have linked excessive workplace scrutiny to lower performance and higher rates of stress and strain injuries.

- [BBC News Online](#). [Personnel Today](#).
- [Health and safety and workers' privacy](#) and [Hazards workplace surveillance guide](#).

Inquest into ConocoPhillips fire death

An inquest has opened into the death of a worker caught in a flash fire at a Teesside oil refinery. The man, in his 50s but who has not so far been named, died on Sunday 6 August. He was one of two workers who suffered first-degree electrical burns in the electrical fire at the ConocoPhillips site at Seal Sands on 19 July ([Risks 267](#)). A ConocoPhillips spokesperson said: "We can confirm that we received that bad news Sunday afternoon. He had worked at the terminal for many years and was a valued employee and colleague. Our condolences and heartfelt sympathies are with his family and

friends at this time.” A Health and Safety Executive spokesperson told local paper the *Evening Gazette* that the electrical supervisor's death changed the nature of its inquiry. She said: “The investigation will continue but will now take the form of a fatal incident inquiry, and the HSE will be speaking to the police and the coroner regarding the future direction of the investigation.” The second injured man, who is in his 30s and from Billingham, is now out of intensive care and his condition is said to be “progressing”. The company's Teesside plant was completed in 1975 and is designed to store crude oil for further shipment. The facility also separates natural gas liquids into ethane, propane and butane. A year ago, Conoco Phillips was ordered to pay more than £1m for breaching health and safety regulations after an explosion at its Humber refinery, described by HSE at the time as the most serious chemical incident in Britain for decades ([Risks 231](#)).

- [Evening Gazette](#). [BBC News Online](#).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Bahrain: India's plea on migrant labour camps rejected

Bahrain has rejected India's request for joint inspection of labour camps in the kingdom. India's plea came after a fire killed 16 Indian construction labourers in one of the camps. An official said although the Bahrain Ministry of Labour is keen to cooperate with everybody, including embassies, labour inspection is the Kingdom's internal affair. “However, if the embassy requests, we can provide it with statistics and information about our inspection activities,” the *Bahrain Tribune* quoted a Ministry official as saying. The rebuff came after Indian ambassador Balkrishna Shetty called upon the ministry to involve the embassy in official labour inspections to ensure the adequacy of safety measures in workers' camps. In the aftermath of the 30 July labour camp

blaze in which 16 workers from Tamil Nadu perished and several others were injured, Bahrain's prime minister, Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, said the living and safety conditions found in the building housing workers for the Royal Tower Construction Company were unacceptable. Indian ambassador Balakrishna Shetty, who visited the scene with the prime minister, said the company was warned in January about safety concerns, but had not taken any action and was still flouting labour laws. He said the workers were living in overcrowded rooms with unhealthy conditions. The building housed only Indian workers.

- [The Hindu](#). [NDTV.com](#). [Indian Express](#).

India: Dozens feared dead in mafia mine

Authorities in eastern India say they have given up hope of rescuing a number of workers trapped since 2 August in an abandoned coal mine. They say between 30 and 40 people are inside the mine in Jharkhand state. Villagers say the incident happened when water from the nearby Damodar river flooded the mine. The Gangtekuli mine was closed by the state-run Eastern Coalfields Limited company seven years ago. But BBC reporter Subir Bhaumik said that though it is illegal to operate a abandoned mine, a mafia continued to hire villagers to go down and pick up coal. Divers from the eastern city of Calcutta tried to carry out a rescue operation at the mine - on the border of Jharkhand and West Bengal states - but failed, officials say. The army told local authorities it would not be able to join rescue efforts because water from the river was still gushing into the mine and there was no information on the precise whereabouts of those trapped.

- [BBC News Online](#). [DNA India](#).

USA: Officials failed to act on Ground Zero perils

Emergency crews exposed to dust after the collapse of the World Trade Center were poorly protected and now have lung problems equal to 12 years of age-related respiratory damage, new research indicates. Lung tests of 12,000 rescue workers in the year after the disaster showed those present in the very early stages of rescue suffered the most damage. Montefiore Medical Center in New York researchers compared lung function with tests carried out before the attacks. An ongoing study showed some still had breathing problems, they said. Dr Gisela Banauch and colleagues at Montefiore Medical Center in New York were able to look at the respiratory function of New York City Fire Department workers from 1997 onwards because routine lung tests are carried out every 18 months as part of routine medical screening. They compared previous results with tests they carried out in 12,079 rescue workers in the 12 months after the World Trade Center collapse. There was a substantial reduction in forced expiratory volume - the amount that can be breathed out in one second - in the year after 11 September 2001, they report in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*. Those exposed in the first couple of days after the collapse had significantly more frequent and more severe respiratory symptoms than workers who arrived later. The findings have caused consternation in New York. The *New York Daily News* addressed the major concerns in a series of blisteringly critical articles. One said: "To read the studies is to confront both governmental inaction and a question: Why? Why were recovery workers put in harm's way, falsely assured they were safe and lacking respiratory protection? And why has so little been done to aid them? The answers, it seems certain, were, first, ignorance; second, a determination to get New York moving at all costs; third, bureaucracies that let everyone dodge responsibility, and fourth, a desire to minimise liability."

- [Confined Space](#). [New York Daily News](#). [BBC News Online](#).
- Gisela I Banauch and others. Pulmonary

function after exposure to the World Trade Center collapse in the New York City Fire Department, *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, volume 174, pages 312-319, 2006 [[abstract](#)].

- [HSE news release](#) and [extended news release](#). Self reported Work-related Illness survey 2004/2005 [[pdf](#)] and headline statistics [[pdf](#)].

RESOURCES

Negotiating smoke-free workplaces

In summer 2007 all workplaces in England will follow Scotland and become smoke-free. Wales is likely to follow suit. A new TUC guide for union reps advises them on 'Negotiating smoke-free workplaces.' TUC says safety representatives and stewards should not wait until the new law takes effect before negotiating their smoke-free agreements. This guide covers what the new laws say, and what union representatives need to do now. It includes a draft workplace policy on smoking.

- [Negotiating smoke-free workplaces - a guide for union representatives](#). [Yahoo News](#).

Updated workplace health stats from HSE

A report published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) this week shows that an estimated two million British workers suffer ill health, which they believe was caused or made worse by work. The 'Self reported Work-related Illness survey 2004/2005', which fleshes out headline figures published in November, indicates that, of the two million, around 600,000 workers were affected by the illness for the first time in the last year. These figures equate to around 28 million working days lost to the British economy every year. HSE chief executive Geoffrey Podger commented: "28 million days is a huge loss to the British economy. HSE is working with employers, trades unions and other government departments to bring this down."

EVENTS AND COURSES

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2006

- [Northern](#), [North West](#), [Southern & Eastern](#), [Yorkshire & Humber](#), [South West](#), [Midlands](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#)

USEFUL LINKS

- **Visit** the TUC 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.
- **What's new** in the [HSC/E](#) and the [European Agency](#).
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