



# Risks Newsletter



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Risks is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 14,000 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

Large rise in site deaths linked to safety cuts

A dramatic rise in deaths in the construction industry must shame the government into reversing cuts in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the unions UCATT, PCS and Prospect have said. Latest figures reveal that 74 people have died on building sites already this year, an increase of 14 per cent on the 2005/06 figure. The unions say the figure for 2006/07 could rise – the reporting year only ends on 31 March. Alan Ritchie, general secretary of construction union UCATT, said: “The lives of building workers cannot be reduced to a financial cost. The government must reverse these cuts and put extra resources into ensuring that this inherently dangerous industry is made safer.” The unions say the watchdog is already suffering the combined effects of up to 350 job cuts announced last year and year-and-year real terms budget cuts since 2002 ([Risks 270](#)). Further cuts are expected as the organisation’s parent body, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), will be forced to make cuts of 5 per cent from its spending in each of the next three years. Mark Serwotka, general secretary of PCS, one of the HSE unions, said the site deaths figure “should be a wake up call to the government who should be investing in safety rather than crude cost cutting.” He added: “Cutting jobs and resources leads to fewer inspections which in turn results in tragic consequences.” Research shows that workplaces only receive an HSE inspection once every 13 years, the unions say, adding additional job losses are expected to further reduce the number of workplace inspections undertaken. Prospect negotiator Mike MacDonald, speaking on behalf of 1,750 inspectors, scientists and other professionals in HSE, said: “The government's refusal to back the call for proper resources for inspection and accident investigation ignores the stack of evidence that enforcing the law is the most effective motivator for business to improve health and safety standards” ([Risks 284](#)). He added: “In addition to the families devastated by the rise in construction site fatalities, there are numerous other lives wrecked by horrendous injuries at work who will never get justice because the cutbacks have resulted in a restriction of the accident selection criteria used to prompt an investigation.”

- [PCS news release. Financial Times. Contract Journal.](#)
- [Hazards enforcement webpages.](#)

### Unions 'encouraged' by response on language training

A government minister’s positive reaction to safety and other concerns raised by the TUC, unions ([Risks 296](#)) and safety groups about proposed changes to funding for courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) has been welcomed by campaigners. Commenting on a speech made last week by minister for higher education and lifelong learning Bill Rammell, where he indicated some free courses would be retained, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: “We are encouraged that Bill Rammell is genuinely listening to the concerns raised by the TUC and unions about the funding of ESOL courses.” He added: “Unless migrant workers can speak and read English, they are vulnerable to severe exploitation. English language skills are essential to maintain health and safety standards at work, and to protect community cohesion.” Mr Barber added: “We are pleased that the minister has signalled that a raft of evidence to provide proof of low pay, including wage slips, will be considered, so that low-paid workers will be protected.” Lecturers’ union UCU also welcomed the announced changes, but said the training should be required rather than just encouraged by the government. The union’s head of equality and employment rights, Roger Kline, said: “I welcome the changes, which are partly due to the huge public concern which has been expressed. The suggestion that funding is limited is missing the point - there is a need for greater investment and there is a professional consensus that if the DfES can't fund more, then we must explore other ways of funding.” Referring to the chancellor, Gordon Brown, he said: “If Bill can't do it, we shall ask Gordon.” John Hannett, general secretary of retail union Usdaw, said: “There is no doubt that improved language skills mean vulnerable workers are less likely to be

exploited and are essential in maintaining health and safety standards in the workplace and making sure there is greater social inclusion for migrant workers.”

- [TUC news release](#). [UCU news release](#). [Usdaw news release](#) and [ESOL campaign webpages](#).

### Union fights gloomy work plan

Communications union CWU is fighting another attempt to alter the clocks in a move that would see early morning workers spending months in near perpetual gloom. Less than nine months after failing in an attempt to alter the clocks in the UK, Tory MP Tim Yeo has launched the ‘Energy Saving (Daylight) Bill’ in the House of Commons, repeating the same proposals. The bill would change the law so as to advance time in England by one hour in summer and two hours in winter. The “double summertime” move is aimed at creating lighter evenings and darker mornings. CWU national health and safety officer Dave Joyce has been lobbying ministers in a bid to once again block the switch. He said CWU has a “powerful case” including an 80,000 postal delivery workforce that “would not benefit at all from the creation of lighter evenings but would certainly suffer as a result of working on the darker mornings when deliveries are made.” He added: “Our members would be disadvantaged in a number of ways as a result of working on darker mornings including the increased risk of more road accident casualties, assaults, slips and trips, thefts and attacks.” He said the increasing problem of attacks on postal staff could get worse if more work was done in hours of darkness. He concluded: “Those who support this and previous bills as an ‘extra daylight’ measure need to realise that you don’t get extra daylight simply by passing a new law so we need to make best use of the existing daylight. The further north you go in the winter, the fewer hours of daylight there are and in the winter it gets light much later.” He added: “The measures proposed in this Bill are not worthy of serious consideration and I’ve told MPs that the union hopes this bill won’t see the light of day.”

- [CWU news release](#).

### Vibrating injury victim secures compensation

A production worker has secured £7,000 compensation after developing debilitating hand and arm conditions caused by exposure to vibrating tools. The union GMB has secured the payout from two former employers of John Coggon, 52. Mr Coggon was diagnosed with vibration white finger (VWF) and carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) in September 2005 following his employment with National Power from 1977 to 1992 and then Newells from 1992 to 2002. The two conditions are commonly associated with work with vibrating tools, and have been the subject of a series of recent industrial disease payouts ([Risks 294](#)). Despite frequent exposure to vibrating tools, Mr Coggon was never provided with adequate protective equipment or medical surveillance to monitor the safe usage of tools. Andy Worth, regional secretary of GMB’s Midland and East Coast Region, commented: “We’re pleased with the outcome of John Coggon’s case and hope that other employers will take note and ensure that correct health and safety procedures are in place. Clearly this judgment will assist other union members who have been exposed to vibrating tools for long periods during the course of their employment.” In a second case, a GMB member injured when working for Securicor has received a £32,000 payout. Vishal Gopaul, 32, was a rear seat passenger in a Securicor van when the driver lost control of the vehicle and it over-turned. GMB organiser Paul Campbell said: “As a result of the accident, GMB member Vishal Gopaul sustained such serious injuries that he has lost his job and suffered a significant loss of earnings.”

- Thompsons Solicitors news releases on the [Coggon](#) and [Gopaul](#) cases.
- Hazards [work and health](#) and [compensation](#) webpages.

### Health service slip leads to payout

A nursing auxiliary who suffered injury to her back after falling down a steep and slippery slope at work has been awarded compensation by her employer, the Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Trust. UNISON member Jennifer Allso, 55, of Cowes on the Isle of Wight, sustained the injury in April 2005. Mrs Allso was required to use a steep slope which was slippery because it had been mopped by a cleaner. There were no signs warning the slope was wet. She sustained long-term injuries to her back, neck and shoulder. UNISON regional officer for the Isle of Wight, Peter Terry, said: "Thankfully such cases as Mrs Allso's are rare, due largely to the work of unions and our workplace representatives in working with employers to ensure they comply with their legal obligations to provide a safe working environment. However, when employers fail we do not hesitate to act." Mrs Allso said: "I'm glad that I sought professional advice to deal with my claim, otherwise I would not have secured a satisfactory level of compensation for my injuries." She added that without the support of union law firm Thompsons "I would have had to settle for a lower level of compensation offered by the Trust."

- [Thompson's Solicitors news release](#).
- Hazards [compensation](#) webpages.

### Soap firm settles for scaly skin

Toiletries giant PZ Cussons has paid out £10,000 to a former employee who developed occupational dermatitis. The 35-year-old TGWU member from Nottingham was required to wear latex gloves to protect his hands from workplace chemicals. At the start of 2005 he began to develop skin problems and was subsequently diagnosed with irritant contact dermatitis caused by the gloves. When the PZ Cussons plant in Nottingham was closed down in 2006, the

claimant was made redundant. The company refused to settle the case, so court proceedings were issued. A medical expert retained by the union's legal advisers confirmed that the claimant would be more susceptible to irritants in the future and may well suffer outbreaks of dermatitis for at least five years. The final sum included additional compensation to reflect the risk of the claimant finding himself seeking work for a longer period of time. This is because he had to be careful regarding the type of jobs he can undertake. "The claimant was left with a vulnerability to develop contact dermatitis again should he come into contact with the same gloves in the course of employment," said TGWU regional industrial organiser, Peter Whipps. "The simple fact is that chemicals are dangerous if they are not handled properly." Latex exposure can cause dermatitis and asthma. In some cases, people can suffer potentially fatal anaphylactic shock.

- [Thompson's Solicitors news release](#).
- Hazards [work and health](#) and [compensation](#) webpages.

### Make 28 April an official memorial day

A petition is asking the UK government to give official recognition to 28 April, Workers' Memorial Day. The initiative is the brainchild of Dorothy Wright, a founder member of Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK). The initiative has the backing of safety campaign and union organisations. Amicus has urged its members to sign up to the petition. In email alert the union said: "Most workers don't die of mystery ailments, or in tragic 'accidents.' They die because an employer decided their safety just wasn't that important a priority." It adds tens of thousands die as a result of work-related accidents and diseases each year. "The country should remember them on this day, as they do in other countries and by doing so reduce this slaughter," Amicus concludes. The deadline for signing the petition is 28 April 2007 – Workers' Memorial Day itself.

- [Sign the Workers' Memorial Day petition. UNI news release.](#)
- [Hazards Workers' Memorial Day news and resources. FACK website.](#)

## OTHER NEWS

### More payouts and faster for asbestos disease

Government proposals that will speed up government payouts to people suffering from the asbestos cancer mesothelioma and that for the first time will include compensation for those not exposed while working, have been welcomed by unions. Work and pensions secretary John Hutton this week set out proposals to provide faster compensation to all people diagnosed with mesothelioma. Under current rules only people who contract the disease from exposure to asbestos at work are eligible to claim a lump sum from the state. The proposals would provide up-front financial support to people who were previously not eligible, including those who were: exposed to asbestos from a relative (for example, from their overalls); exposed to asbestos environmentally (for example, lived near a factory using asbestos); the self-employed; and those who can't trace their exposure to asbestos. The minister said the government is "committed to ensuring that everyone with mesothelioma can receive compensation, irrespective of their employment history. This legislation would mean that once diagnosed, every sufferer should receive a substantial payment within six weeks of making a claim." TGWU director of legal services Fergus Whitty said: "It is vital that sufferers of mesothelioma receive payments speedily as the disease can develop rapidly, so we welcome the government's proposals." He added: The union notes that the number of cases will peak in the year 2025, so assistance for mesothelioma sufferers should continue to be improved." Amicus deputy general secretary, Graham Goddard, commented: "We welcome the government's position to accelerate the time

people have to wait for compensation from this cancer." He added: "Finally after years of campaigning, the government will now also include secondary sufferers who contract the disease, which is now the most common cause of work-related death, from family members or just happen to live near a factory which used asbestos." TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "People who have worked with asbestos and who, as a result, are suffering from mesothelioma don't have time on their side so the government is to be congratulated for ensuring that the victims of this terrible disease get quicker access to justice and compensation." The move was also welcomed by the Tory's shadow minister for work, Andrew Selous.

- [DWP news release. TUC news release. TGWU news release. Amicus news release. Conservative Party news release. Yorkshire Evening Post. The Herald. The Courier. Western Daily Press.](#)
- [Action Mesothelioma. Hazards asbestos webpages.](#)

### Car mechanic gets asbestos payout

A car mechanic has been awarded £300,000 compensation from former employers after he contracted the asbestos cancer mesothelioma as a result of working on cars with asbestos brake and clutch pads. Jonathan Hutchinson, 50, was diagnosed with mesothelioma in 2003. He underwent an operation in 2004 where one of his lungs was removed, which is thought to have prolonged his life. Mesothelioma typically kills within two years of diagnosis. Mr Hutchinson worked as a garage mechanic for a range of firms in the 1970s and 1980s and stripped out brake pads which contained asbestos dust. Wilcox and Co, a large coach building firm, was the main company involved in the out-of-court settlement. The payout has secured his family's future after he was forced to stop working. "I hope that other people who suffer terminal illness can find a way to deal with it," he said. "Perhaps seeing that I received radical surgery will encourage

them and give them some comfort.” Britain’s mesothelioma epidemic is currently claiming about 2,000 lives a year. The numbers are rising and cases are now being seen in people without major workplace exposures. Leigh Carlisle, 27, developed the condition after walking past a factory on her way to school ([Risks 297](#)). An inquest this week found former secretary Jean Hook, who died aged 74 in January, died from the industrial disease mesothelioma caused by exposures 50 years ago when she worked in a Hull plumbing and builders’ merchants.

- [Bucks Free Press. Telegraph and Argus.](#)

### Asbestos use study supports global ban

The findings of a major study which correlated asbestos usage with asbestos related diseases “strongly” supports a global asbestos ban, the authors say. An international team of researchers calculated asbestos consumption levels per person per year from 1960 to 1969 and compared this with the number of deaths from mesothelioma and asbestosis from 2000 to 2004. They said the 31 to 44 year time lag corresponds to typical “latency periods of diseases related to asbestos.” The analysis covered 33 countries including the UK, with these accounting for 63 per cent of all asbestos consumption in the period from 1960 to 1969. Writing in *The Lancet*, the authors report “this ecological study incorporating country-specific data revealed clear and plausible positive relations between amounts of historical asbestos consumption and deaths from diseases associated with asbestos. These relations were most apparent in men, but were also apparent in women.” They concluded: “Historical asbestos consumption alone explained the bulk of the variance in subsequent death rates from such diseases. Our results lend support to the notion that all countries should move towards eliminating the use of asbestos.”

- Ro-Ting Lin, Ken Takahashi and others. Ecological association between asbestos-related diseases and historical asbestos

consumption: an international analysis, *The Lancet*, volume 369, pages 844-849, 2007 [[abstract](#)].

- [International Ban Asbestos Secretariat.](#)

### RMT welcomes call for joint rail crash inquiry

Rail union RMT has welcomed a call by MPs for a joint public inquiry into the Potters Bar and Grayrigg train crashes. Commenting on the eve of International Railway Workers' Action Day on safety, 13 March, RMT urged MPs to add their names to an Early Day Motion tabled by Glasgow MP Ian Davidson, that calls for an inquiry to include consideration of the effects of the continued industry fragmentation on rail engineering work. The motion points to the similarities between the two crashes and the concern that normal inquiries are “insufficient to prevent a recurrence of this type of accident.” RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: “The call is growing for a full public inquiry into Potters Bar and Grayrigg and whether ending fragmentation of rail engineering and creating a single command structure is the best course of action to protect rail passengers and workers.” He added that a joint inquiry “must necessarily also examine the adequacy of safety management systems in place, and whether the continued fragmentation of rail engineering poses increased safety risks. It must also ask the key questions of whether putting all railway activity under the control of a single organisation would improve safety, and what contribution the constant pressure on Network Rail to reduce its costs might have had made to the tragic events.” The Office of Rail Regulation, which took over safety responsibility for the railways from the Health and Safety Executive in 2004, is not solely concerned with safety, but has also got responsibility for overseeing the “efficient” operation of the railway system.

- [RMT news release.](#) Check to see if your MP has signed up to [Grayrigg derailment and railway safety](#), EDM 1087. [Find your MP – you just need to know your postcode.](#)

- ‘Safety first’, 13 March, [Railway Workers' International Action Day](#), International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

### Jail term reduced for Tebay deaths

A rail boss jailed for the manslaughter of four track workers killed by a runaway trailer at Tebay in February 2004 ([Risks 172](#)) has had his jail term cut by Appeal Court judges. Mark Connolly had his sentence cut from nine years to seven, but the three top judges dismissed his appeal against his convictions. Connolly, 44, was jailed last March after he was convicted of four manslaughter charges and linked health and safety offences over the tragedy in February 2004 ([Risks 249](#)). After a hearing at London's Criminal Appeal Court Lord Justice May declared his convictions entirely “safe” - but concluded that his nine year sentence was “rather too great.” The judge also upheld the manslaughter convictions of Connolly's accomplice, crane-operator Roy Kennett, 29. Kennett, who was tried alongside Connolly, received a two-year sentence after he was convicted of the same four manslaughter counts and a health and safety offence. The prosecution said Connolly - boss of MAC Machinery Services - deliberately disconnected the trailer's hydraulic brakes because it was cheaper than repairing and maintaining the wagons properly. And Mr Justice Holland made a specific finding that he had disabled the brakes to maximise his profit. Christine Burgess, whose son Darren was one of four men killed in the February 2004 tragedy, said she was “disgusted” at the reduced sentence, adding that her family was serving a life sentence because of their loss. “We would still have our loved ones if it wasn't for him,” she said. “Seven years for four people's lives – where's the justice? We certainly haven't had any.” RMT last month said there had been at least 10 potentially lethal runaways on rail tracks since Tebay, and called for all track renewal work to be brought back in-house ([Risks 294](#)).

- [Lakeland Today](#). [News and Star](#). [Morecambe Today](#).

### Small fine after worker is paralysed

A firm has been fined £15,000 after inadequate training led to worker being paralysed in a workplace fall. SFJ Ltd, of Bangor, North Wales, which had pleaded guilty to safety offences at an earlier hearing, was also ordered to pay costs of £7,500 at Caernarfon Crown Court following the incident in February 2005 in which Clive Forbes received his injuries. He was assisting with the unloading of a cement mixer from the back of a pick up truck. His supervisor was not adequately trained to operate the excavator used to lift the cement mixer from the vehicle. Mr Forbes was lifted into the air with the cement mixer and fell, sustaining the injuries which led to his paralysis. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector Debbie John said: “This was a tragic set of circumstances which led to this accident, but it demonstrates how important it is to be properly trained to use machinery or any kind.” She added: “HSE is also currently running a campaign on the dangers of falling from height, and this case once again provides a reminder that it can be extremely dangerous to fall even from a relatively low height.” HSE said every year, around 70 people are killed, and a further 2,000 injured as a result of incidents involving vehicles at work.

- [HSE news release](#). [HSE transport webpages](#). [HSE falls webpages](#).

### Deep vein thrombosis threat to office workers

Workers who spend excessive amounts of time at their desk could be putting their lives at risk, according to a study. The Medical Research Institute in New Zealand found a third of patients admitted to hospital with deep vein thrombosis (DVT) – blood clots in a deep vein - were office workers who spent hours at a computer. The clots can travel to the heart, lungs or brain, causing chest pain, breathlessness or possible death from a heart attack or stroke.

Symptoms include pain, swelling, redness and dilated surface veins on the skin. The worst affected workers were managers, IT workers and taxi drivers, according to the research. The condition has been dubbed “economy class syndrome” because passengers sitting on long-haul flights without space to stretch out were considered as most at risk. The study, to be published in the New Zealand Medical Journal, examined a sample of 62 people admitted to hospital with blood clots, and found a third (34 per cent) had been sitting at their desk for long periods. Lead researcher Professor Richard Beasley said some office workers who developed clots sat at their screens for 14 hours a day. He added: “Some of them were going three to four hours at a time without getting up.”

- [BBC News Online](#). [New Zealand Herald](#).

### Europe catches UK’s deregulation obsession

The UK government has welcomed a decision by governments from across the European Union “to follow the UK's lead and reduce red tape arising from EU law by 25 per cent” ([Risks 287](#)). Cabinet Office minister Hilary Armstrong hailed the European Council move last week as a crucial step towards improving the competitiveness of European business and a win for the UK. EU heads of government agreed a target to reduce administrative burdens by 25 per cent by 2012, in 13 policy areas, including company law, health and safety and transport, which have been identified by the European Commission as imposing the largest administrative burdens on business. Hilary Armstrong said: “Red tape is both costly and irritating for business, particularly SMEs [small and medium-sized enterprises]. In a globalised economy, we have to get rid of unnecessary bureaucracy if we are to compete successfully.” The EU move was welcomed by UK employers’ organisation CBI. Deputy director general John Cridland added: “The UK's target to reduce red tape by 25 per cent has already started to focus civil servants' minds on the need to lighten the regulatory load, and to shift ingrained attitudes

towards risk and regulation.” A year ago, TUC urged employers’ organisations to “stop the red tape whinge.” TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said “they lose support the moment they start saying that essential protection for people at work, such as protection from asbestos, is no more than red tape. The red tape campaign is spin, smoke and mirrors” ([Risks 249](#)). It says the UK has less than half the workplace safety regulations it had 35 years ago ([Risks 280](#)).

- [Cabinet Office news release](#). Council of the European Union: Presidency conclusions, 8/9 March 2007 [[pdf](#)]. [European Commission red tape action programme](#).
- [Hazards news on safety enforcement and “red tape”](#).

### Consultation on REACH chemicals enforcement

The government has published a consultation document on the enforcement of the REACH chemicals safety regulations in the UK. REACH - Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals - was agreed by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers on 18 December 2006. The government says REACH will come into force across the European Union on 1 June this year, with the UK required to have an enforcement and penalties regime in place no later than 1 December 2008. REACH will apply not only to chemicals manufacturers or suppliers, but to any business which uses chemicals - so a wide range of businesses will be affected by the enforcement arrangements proposed. Defra and the devolved administrations are encouraging industry, trade unions, environmental groups, health and safety professionals and others to comment on the proposals for enforcement. It says “the aim is that REACH should be effectively enforced in ways which minimise the burden for both businesses and for public authorities.” In October last year, the government announced that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) had been asked to take on the role of UK “Competent Authority” for REACH.

- [Defra news release. Enforcement of REACH in the UK](#), Consultation document, closing date for responses 4 June 2007. [Consultation webpages](#).
- [HSE REACH helpdesk](#): 0845 408 9575. [TUC guide to REACH](#).

“What we want to see is a judicial inquiry into this incident to look at not just the adequacy of the accommodation provided in these remote areas, but we also want to see an inquiry into the emergency plans and emergency policies which operate in that north-west area.” Other firms in the region used huts secured with steel cables and implemented evacuation plans.

- [AMWU news release. Courier Mail. Yahoo News. The Australian](#).

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Australia: Union outrage at cyclone deaths

Western Australian police say they will conduct a thorough investigation into the circumstances which led to the deaths of three people during cyclone George, which battered the state's Pilbara region last weekend. Unions have expressed outrage that workers died after one firm opted to leave its staff in the path of the cyclone in unsecured huts – the huts were tossed through the air by winds that gusted at over 140 miles per hour. Craig Allan Raabe, 42, died in a Perth hospital from injuries he received at a Fortescue Metals Group railway camp south of Port Hedland. A catering employee at the same camp, 47-year-old Debra Alexandra Till, was also killed. A third person, 74-year-old Sydney Desmond Baker of nearby Indee Station, was also found dead after the cyclone, but it is believed he died of natural causes. Local police said they would be coordinating an investigation into the deaths, alongside safety watchdog Worksafe. The Australian Workers Union (AWU) launched a scathing attack on the mining company following the tragedy. AWU's Tim Daly said: “This company had plenty of opportunity to get those people out of that site. They knew well in advance what was coming and I think it's not only a tragedy but a disgrace that people weren't evacuated.” The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) said its members were sent back to the campsite where two people died during the cyclone, but administration workers for Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) were evacuated to safer sites in Port Hedland. The union's safety officer, Darren Kavanagh, said:

### Canada: Van deaths highlight farm safety problems

A highway smash last week in British Columbia that killed three farmworkers and injured five others highlights the need for improved safety laws, unions have said. This van, packed with 17 farm workers, flipped on the Trans-Canada highway near Abbotsford last Wednesday, killing three female workers. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said the van had been designed for 10 people, but the regular seats had been replaced with wooden benches, and not all of the passengers were wearing seatbelts. Jim Sinclair, president of the BC Federation of Labour, said: “Again and again, we learn we need more inspections and better enforcement of safety laws.” He added that the province's Liberal government had failed to act, and instead had “used their first term to water down standards protecting working conditions and scrapped the inter-agency inspection team needed to effectively crack down on bad employers in this industry.” The Liberals rescinded regulations enforcing inspections of farms and farm vehicles, as well as minimum-wage rules for migrant farm workers. Charan Gill, secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Farmworkers Union, said: “There's nobody inspecting the vans used to transport the workers. They say they go on the farms to inspect but they don't any more. The conditions for farmworkers haven't improved.” Jim Sinclair added: “The provincial government must act now, before another accident, to step up

inspection and enforcement and take immediate steps to improve worker safety.”

- [BC Federation of Labour news release](#).  
[NUPGE news release](#). [CBC News](#). [The Tyee](#).  
[Global and Mail](#).

### Global: Journalist safety campaign wins top award

The leaders of the US labour movement have voted to award a flagship human rights award for 2006 to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in recognition of the global trade union body’s work in defence of media workers around the world. The AFL-CIO executive council voted last week to present the 2006 George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award to the IFJ for “its members’ commitment to telling the story at the risk of their lives.” In a statement the AFL-CIO said: “We ask IFJ general secretary Aidan White to accept this human rights award on behalf of such journalists as Daniel Pearl of The Wall Street Journal, a member of The Newspaper Guild-CWA who was brutally executed on videotape; Russian investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya, who was gunned down in her apartment building; murdered Mexican journalist Roberto Marcos Garcia; Colombian journalist Santiago Rodríguez Villalba, who was killed by extreme right-wing paramilitaries; and murdered Iraqi journalist and Associated Press cameraman Aswan Ahmed Lutfallah.” The award recognises the IFJ’s campaigning work on the safety of journalists, its actions in promoting a United Nations Security Council resolution adopted in December ([Risks 287](#)), and the role of the IFJ’s International Safety Fund in providing humanitarian assistance to the victims of violence in media.

- [IFJ news release](#). [AFL-CIO Now](#) and full AFL-CIO statement [[pdf](#)].
- [IFJ International News Safety Fund](#).  
[International News Safety Institute](#).

## EVENTS AND COURSES

### National stress conference, 10 November, Birmingham

The UK National Work Stress Network’s 2007 conference will be on the theme of “Enforcing the stress management standards.” The event will feature a speaker from the groundbreaking ‘Whitehall II’ research programme, the UK’s biggest ongoing occupational health study and the one that has turned up links between job insecurity and lack of control to increased risks of heart disease, depression and long-term sick leave. An HSE stress person will also speak, and there are plans to feature an employer’s experiences implementing the stress management standards.

- [National Work Stress Network conference](#), Saturday 10 November 2007, Hillscourt Conference Centre, near Birmingham. Delegate fees are £50 (£17 unwaged). Accommodation can be provided for an additional cost.

### TUC courses for safety reps

#### COURSES FOR JANUARY TO MARCH 2007

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