



Risks Newsletter



Myth of the month

Number 321 – 1 September 2007



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 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

Safety reps mean action at work

Union safety reps make workplace safety campaigns effective, research for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has found. The study looked at the involvement of safety reps in HSE's better backs campaign, examining the impact of the training and support provided by Unite's Amicus section. After receiving the training, almost six out of every 10 safety reps (59 per cent) raised back safety issues with greater frequency with workmates, and 29 per cent increased the number of times they raised the issue with senior management – who were then likely to act on the recommendations. Almost a quarter of the reps (24 per cent) questioned recommended to their safety committee or senior management that new handling aids should be acquired, a proposal acted on within three months in every case. More than nine out of 10 (93 per cent) safety rep requests for new or updated training programme on manual handling techniques were acted on. Commenting on the findings, HSE chief executive Geoffrey Podger said: "This is an effective way to raise health and safety management in the workplace. Training and exposing safety representatives to new ideas on how to manage various health and safety issues is a valuable way of enabling the workforce to take action and educate those around them." Rob Miguel, Unite health and safety officer, said: "Unite believes safety reps are an essential component to ensuring safe and healthy working conditions," adding: "Our vision to encourage reps to be proactive has proved... to be a very effective way to raise health and safety awareness, leading to a more meaningful partnership between all the workforce." He told Risks: "The results prove beyond all doubt, that safety reps are an essential ingredient in achieving healthier and safer workplaces." Commenting on the HSE decision in June not to introduce new safety reps' rights ([Risks 309](#)), he added: "It seems however their rights are to be left on the shelf. If we are to bring health and safety management into the 21st century, the value of this free service needs to be well and truly recognised and rewarded with the appropriate status and rights."

- [Unite news release](#). [HSE Better Backs 2006: Worker involvement evaluation. Research with Unite Amicus safety representatives](#). RR581, HSE, 2007. Full report [[pdf](#)]. [TUC](#) and [Hazards](#) safety reps' webpages.

Action call as transport violence spikes

Rail union RMT has call for more staff and zero tolerance of violent crime as official figures this week revealed assaults on staff on Britain's rail and Tube networks rose in 2006/07 by eight per cent to 3,026 offences. The union also renewed its demand for the reinstatement of sacked guard Paul Yarwood, who RMT says unfairly sacked by 'One' following an incident with a violent and abusive fare evader ([Risks 317](#)). "It is our members who have to bear the brunt of aggressive, drunken behaviour, particularly at night and particularly when working alone, yet year on year the figures go up, and it is time to put staff safety ahead of profits," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said. He added that "when Paul Yarwood tried to deal with a violent fare evader in Colchester he ended up on the dole. The head-in-the-sand attitude of One railway perfectly illustrates everything that is bad about rail employers' attitudes towards violence against their own staff." RMT announced on 30 August that members across One had voted by a five to one margin to strike in support of Paul Yarwood. The union leader concluded: "Passengers and railway workers alike want to see more staff on stations and trains, not fewer, yet cost-cutting private rail employers - and sadly even London Underground - are looking for more cuts in station staff. We need adequate staff on every station all the time they are open and a guard on every train, including on the Tube, and we need the BTP [British Transport Police] to have enough resources to respond in time, every time."

- [RMT news release](#) and [One strike vote news release](#). [BTP news release](#).

NUT lessons on school asbestos

Schools should conduct thorough asbestos surveys and headteachers, governors and premises staff must have better knowledge of asbestos management, teaching union NUT has said. The union's briefing, prepared after teachers and staff were placed at risk when asbestos was disturbed at a Derby school and the city's council was prosecuted successfully in May ([Risks 307](#)), says visual inspections of schools for a potential asbestos risk are not enough. "Asbestos in poor condition may be hidden away in ceiling voids or behind wall panels and therefore not visible, but fibres may nonetheless seep through cracks and contaminate classrooms and other areas," the guide says. It is critical of both government and Health and Safety Executive policies which say as long as asbestos is in good condition, it should be managed and not removed. "Schools cannot say that their asbestos is in good condition unless they have taken measures to identify all of it and assess its condition," NUT says. It adds that measures must be in place to ensure building work does not create risks, with all work undertaken by approved contractors. "Protocols should be in place at school level so as to ensure that information about asbestos is passed on to contractors who are about to start work in schools." The NUT's 10-point action plan concludes: "Planned asbestos removal should take place during periods of school closure. In emergency situations, for example when asbestos in poor condition is uncovered, the area should be evacuated and sealed off immediately."

- [NUT health and safety briefings webpage](#). NUT briefing: Asbestos – lessons to be learned report [[word](#)]. NUT circular: Asbestos – Focus on Removal in 2007 [[word](#)]. HSE guide: [Asbestos in schools](#).

Bus drivers relieved at more toilets

Bus drivers are relieved authorities have agreed to speed-up the introduction of toilets along London's bus routes. Members of bus drivers' union Unite said Transport for London (TfL) and bus operators needed to provide more toilet facilities for drivers on routes and in the workplace. The union had threatened to call a full strike ballot before their 23 August protest in central London ([Risks 320](#)) - but were heartened by a positive response to their demands, including support from London mayor Ken Livingstone. Unite organiser, Peter Kavanagh, said: "It was a very successful day which got lots of positive attention and publicity. We got commitment from the Mayor of London, in writing, and he agreed to put pressure on the London boroughs to speed up planning permission for facilities." Mr Kavanagh said "significant extra resource" had been agreed to combat what was "a very serious problem." Unite now plans to meet TfL and London councils. "It is about keeping the pressure on now," Mr Kavanagh said. TfL said it recognised the importance of adequate facilities and said it was working hard to provide them. There are an estimated 23,000 bus drivers in London.

- [This is local London. TUC/Hazards toilet breaks campaign](#).

Talks start on lean working

Long-running industrial action by civil service union PCS over the deskilling of work in HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is being suspended following the department's agreement to hold what the union termed "meaningful talks." PCS says industrial action being taken by members in processing offices in the dispute over new 'Lean' working systems will be suspended from 28 August up to 19 September. The dispute, which has been running for over a year, was prompted by staff concerns that the lean management systems had led to a culture of corporate bullying, deskilling and in some cases a risk of repetitive strain injury ([Risks 277](#)). The union said the approach was turning staff into "robots" ([Risks 268](#)). A PCS statement on the

latest developments notes: “No agreement is going to mean the end of Lean, but a sufficiently robust agreement will allow us to tame it and ensure that PCS members currently in dispute are no longer disadvantaged.” It adds: “Solid support for action from members and branches over the last 12 months has been instrumental in allowing us to return with confidence to the negotiating table. If it is necessary to recommence action, we will do so with renewed resolve and determination, significantly stepping up activities and publicity, and seeking to raise again the key issues with ministers and decision makers.” PCS concerns include individual monitoring, annual leave restrictions and problems obtaining regular display screen equipment breaks. The union wants an independent evaluation of lean working.

- [PCS news release.](#)

OTHER NEWS

ICL fined £400,000 over factory explosion

Two companies were this week fined a total of £400,000 over the explosion that destroyed the Stockline factory in Glasgow and killed nine workers and injured 40 others ([Risks 320](#)). ICL Plastics and ICL Tech had pleaded guilty to breaching health and safety legislation, admitting four offences that led to the explosion at their factory on 11 May 2004. The high court in Glasgow heard that the blast at the Stockline plant in Maryhill was caused by a build-up of liquid petroleum gas that had leaked from corroded pipes. The judge, Lord Brodie, described the situation as a “ticking time bomb” and said whatever fine he imposed would be unsatisfactory to the relatives of those who perished. “That response is by its nature an inadequate response,” he said. Local MSP Patricia Ferguson and MP Ann McKeichin said there must be a public inquiry, echoing claims by unions, former workers and bereaved relatives. Patricia Ferguson said the outcome of the case “does emphasise exactly why we have to have

the widest possible public inquiry.” The relatives and Scottish union leaders are to press Alex Salmond, the first minister, on the issue. The lord advocate is currently considering whether a public inquiry will be held and a decision is expected within a month. The court heard the corroded pipework would have cost £405 to replace and that one risk assessment was carried out by a college student doing vacation work. Lord Brodie said: “With the benefit of hindsight it seems remarkable that, through the whole period covered by the indictment, nothing was done by the accused companies to satisfy themselves that the pipe was sound and likely to remain so.” In a statement read outside court, the directors of the convicted firms said: “The companies welcome any form of inquiry that will properly establish all the facts and circumstances relating to the disaster.”

- [Patricia Ferguson MSP news release.](#) [HSE news release.](#) [The Scotsman.](#) [The Guardian.](#) [BBC News Online.](#)

Call for tougher laws after fatal blast

Demands for tougher laws to enable company directors to be prosecuted following fatal accidents resurfaced this week in the aftermath of the Stockline trial. Trade unions and families of workers killed said the penalties were insufficient and called for a public inquiry. Ministers rejected union calls to make directors personally liable for safety breaches when the corporate manslaughter and homicide bill was passed last month ([Risks 316](#)). Grahame Smith, general secretary of the Scottish TUC (STUC), said: “If you are a doctor and you are negligent, you are struck off; if you are a lawyer and you are negligent, you are struck off. If you are a company director and you are negligent in relation to health and safety, you can continue being a company director, and that is not acceptable.” He said the necessary improvements “would require changes in legislation to introduce a system where companies could be placed on corporate probation and the STUC, in light of this tragedy, would call on the

Westminster government to re-examine sentencing options for health and safety offences”. Commenting on the £400,000 fine on the Stockline companies, Hilda Palmer, spokesperson for the campaign group Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK), said: “As a penalty this fine just does not cut it for justice or for deterrence - it’s a ‘business as usual’ slap in the face to the Stockline families and to all workers.” She added: “FACK supports the families of those killed and injured in the Stockline explosion for a full and open public inquiry. We need to know how this happened, how the HSE [Health and Safety Executive] handled complaints by employees about poor health and safety at the non-unionised factory, how they used their enforcement powers to protect the workers and why the company was allowed to go on behaving badly. We demand protection for whistleblowers, and more powers for workers and trade union safety reps including roving reps to represent workers before they are injured, made ill or killed.”

- [STUC news release](#). [FACK news release](#). [The Scotsman](#). [Financial Times](#). [The Guardian](#). [BBC News Online](#).

Rewards for failure debate dogs ex-BP boss

Disgraced former BP chief executive Lord Browne topped the executive pension league in 2006 with a retirement package worth more than £1m a year. The news comes as trade unions are campaigning against excessive pension bonuses paid to senior executives while firms are cutting pension rights for shopfloor and office workers. Questions about the link between pay and performance have dogged the debate around executive pensions. Lord Browne's performance at BP was singled out by some who felt he had begun to undermine the company’s future. He announced his decision to quit this year after the company faced strong criticism for its safety record following a fire at its US Texas City refinery which killed 15 contract workers in 2005 and injured dozens more. Official reports implicated cost-cutting

and other decisions by Lord Browne’s London-based BP global board in the disaster ([Risks 310](#)). In July this year, the firm was fined for subsequent serious safety offences at the same Texas City refinery ([Risks 316](#)). It drew further criticism when pipes at its Alaskan oilfields were found to be leaking. When his departure was brought forward after press revelations about his private life, Lord Browne lost some £15m in potential bonuses due as part of his retirement package, but kept the pension. Last month it was announced he had made a comeback in the energy industry. He has joined Riverstone Holdings, a US private equity firm that invests in energy businesses, as a managing partner based in London but operating globally.

- [The Guardian](#). [Financial Times](#). [Find out more on BP’s safety record](#).

Site firms angry after safety summit bar

Major construction contractors say they are mystified as to why they have been excluded from this month's government-convened site safety summit ([Risks 316](#)). Trade paper Contract Journal says the biggest players in construction have been told they are not invited to the meeting organised by work and pensions secretary Peter Hain for 17 September in London. The summit is aimed at smaller firms working in the housing and refurbishment sectors, following a 28 per cent increase in construction fatalities this year to 77, a five year high. But major contractors believe their expertise would be invaluable in helping to reduce accidents. One senior director at a major firm told Contract Journal: “It's a complete mystery why we are not being invited to this summit and it's a real missed chance. Over the years we have tried to lead by example and show our subcontractors and their subcontractors the right way to do things, so it's strange that the government doesn't want our input on this.” He added: “They are playing around with words by calling it a forum, but what's needed is a proper summit with all sides of the industry involved to redouble the safety effort. That coupled with the

news that construction minister Stephen Timms isn't even going makes you worry about the whole focus of the event." Commenting on the safety summit, a Contract Journal editorial notes: "A much more beneficial, although costly, solution is to increase the number of HSE inspectors. That would provide a much more effective way of reaching small firms. And that way the safety message might hit home where it's most needed." Construction union UCATT has also called for better enforcement. When the latest fatality figures were announced in July, UCATT general secretary Alan Ritchie said: "It is not rocket science to realise that if you implement a rigorous inspection and enforcement regime, sites will become safer and bosses will be forced to accept their safety responsibilities. If you sit back and do little or nothing deaths will increase" ([Risks 317](#)).

- [Contract Journal](#) and [related editorial](#).

Dangerous demolition firms warned on risks

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has warned demolition companies they must investigate risks prior to starting work or they could invite tragedy and an appearance before the courts. The HSE statement came after Central Demolition Limited of Bonnybridge, Scotland, was fined £50,000 at Edinburgh Sheriff Court. The firm had pleaded guilty to safety offences relating to an incident in which an employee died. Demolition worker Gideon Irvine, 44, was killed on 22 August 2004 when a large section of the former Caledonia Mill, which was being demolished at the time, fell onto him without warning as he was operating an excavator on the site. HSE inspector Murray Provan said the company had failed to obtain advice from a structural engineer. He added: "This accident was entirely foreseeable. The demolition company had not carried out a survey of Caledonia Mill as they had been contracted to do and as health and safety legislation and the British Standard for Demolition strongly suggests should be done in order to identify structural hazards to prevent

premature collapse." The inspector said: "Central Demolition's involvement at this site went back several years and it had ample opportunity to find out as much as it could. The company failed entirely to appreciate the differences in the structure and it was therefore inevitable that part of the silo would collapse prematurely."

- [HSE news release](#).

Poor safety systems cause vehicle falls

Failings in safety management are responsible for most falls from vehicles at work, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) boffins have found. The Health and Safety Laboratory reviewed over 250 falls from vehicles reported under the official reporting system RIDDOR over the last five years. The researchers looked at factors associated with the incidents including safe systems of work, type of vehicle, the part of the vehicle from where the person fell, what they were doing at the time, the location of the vehicle and other contributory factors. Failures in safe systems of work were the most significant factor identified. The lack of safe systems of work or poor risk assessments were problems in almost threequarters of incidents. Failure to follow safe systems where they did exist only accounted for 24 per cent of accidents. Most incidents happened when unloading or loading, with the most common problem found to be falls from trailers. Almost half of the forklift incidents involved people climbing on the forks to access higher levels. The report has been issued as part of the current HSE campaign on falls from vehicles.

- Analysis of RIDDOR data 2000 to 2005 – Falls from vehicles, HSL/2007/39 [[pdf](#)]. [Usdaw briefing on the research](#) and [summary of the main findings](#). [HSE falls from vehicles webpages](#).

Council apologises for asbestos failings

A County Durham council has been ordered to pay almost £26,000 for failing to warn staff that asbestos was present in one of its leisure centres. Wear Valley District Council allowed staff to work at Bishop Auckland's Woodhouse Centre, despite being alerted to the presence of asbestos. The council admitted six breaches of asbestos control regulations at Darlington Magistrates Court. It has since apologised to staff. The court was told a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation followed a complaint in January 2006 by a maintenance worker, who discovered that the plant room of the council-run leisure centre, where he had worked for many years, contained asbestos. The authority was fined £18,000 after admitting six offences under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations. It was also ordered to pay £7,722 costs. HSE inspector Richard Bishop said: "A survey had been carried out in 2001 which identified asbestos containing materials. This information was not acted upon and no-one who worked in the plant room was made aware. As a result, work that was liable to disturb the asbestos was done without the necessary precautions required by law to protect their health from exposure." The council's current chief executive, Michael Laing, and councillor Neil Stonehouse, the leader of the council, issued a personal apology to all members of staff. In a statement emailed to employees this week, they said: "We feel that we should offer any current or former staff affected by this issue a personal apology for any distress. We are sorry." Robert Batie, who worked in the boiler room for 13 years until 2003, said: "It is reasonable of them to apologise, but they weren't the people who were in charge when this happened. They were not really bothered about a few people's lives. It didn't matter much to the council then."

- [HSE news release](#), [Northern Echo](#) and [related editorial](#). [BBC News Online](#).
- [HSE asbestos webpages](#).

Asbestos blamed for man's death

A carpenter's death was caused by his working exposure to asbestos - even though no asbestos could be found in his lungs, a Gloucester inquest has ruled. Coroner Alan Crickmore recorded a verdict that Gerard Thorley died aged 69 from an industrial disease. Top asbestos expert Dr Kim Suvarna said it was more likely than not that Mr Thorley's exposure to the mineral caused his malignant mesothelioma. Before his death at Stroud General Hospital on 13 November last year Mr Thorley made a statement detailing his work with asbestos. He told how between 1954 and 1959 he worked for builders FJ Hobson as a carpenter apprentice and had to use what he believed was asbestos wool to wrap around pipework. Between 1961-71 he worked for Newman Hender and regularly had to use asbestos products, he stated. "The fibre would cause me to cough and splutter as we were not provided with any protection," he said. From 1986 to 1992, he worked for Gloucestershire County Council as an area building surveyor and his work involved checking properties for asbestos. Pathologist Professor Neil Shepherd said Mr Thorley's lungs had all the classical signs of malignant mesothelioma but he was unable to find any asbestos fibres in them. Sheffield-based Dr Suvarna believed the disease was due to the asbestos to which Mr Thorley was exposed at work. He said it was likely that the fibres had simply degraded over time.

- [Gloucester Citizen](#).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Australia: 'Enslaved' migrants pay with their lives

Conditions in remote Australian workplaces, where two foreigners died within three days in June, are so harsh that a leading immigration expert says they are "akin to slavery." An

investigation has exposed blatant breaches of the 457 skilled visa scheme and uncovered details of the deaths of the two workers in the Northern Territory and Queensland, and of a third man north of Perth. The investigation highlights exploitation of overseas workers, too afraid to speak out, under a scheme that allows employers to sponsor thousands of foreigners to come into Australia and do jobs locals cannot or will not do. It reveals the “extremely ugly face” of the 457 visa system, according to the immigration expert, Professor Bob Birrell from Monash University. The comments came after revelations that a university-trained Filipino farm supervisor, Pedro Balading, was thrown off the back of a Toyota truck and killed on a Northern Territories cattle station in June. A witness, who was on the back of the vehicle, says it was being driven fast on a rough road. Mr Balading, 35, left behind a wife and three young children. His wife says that in the months before his death, he complained repeatedly that his working conditions were much tougher than he had been told to expect, and that he was forced to do menial work such as fencing, in breach of his skilled visa. Two days earlier, a logger from Inner Mongolia, China, 33-year-old Guo Jian Dong, died in a remote state forest 700 kilometres west of Brisbane. A tree he was felling brushed a dead tree, which then fell and crushed him. “The specific instances... are akin to slavery,” Professor Birrell said. “That derives from the fact that these people are cowed into believing that if they move away from their contract they will have to go home. Employers are exploiting their power in the relationship.” In the other case that has come to light, a Filipino stonemason, Wilfredo Navales, 43, was crushed to death by two slabs of granite in a stoneworks north of Perth in March. Mr Navales’ family says he died doing labouring he was forced into, rather than using the skills for which he was ostensibly brought to Australia.

- [The Age news item](#) and [in-depth report](#). [Sydney Morning Herald news report](#) and [‘Dead men working’ special video report](#). [ABC Online](#).

Canada: Safety needles to become mandatory

It’s been a few years since the Service Employees International Union began a national safer needles campaign in Canada to help ensure the safety of its members. But the efforts of the union are paying off. After years of pressuring Ontario’s provincial government to implement a policy requiring the use of safety needles in all of its hospitals ([Risks 233](#)), the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has said safety needles will be mandatory in Ontario hospitals by 1 September 2008. Jennifer Biro, a representative from the SEIU Local 1’s Niagara office, called the announcement “awesome.” Every year, 33,000 health care workers in Ontario are injured by needles, putting them at risk of contracting any of 33 different illnesses – many of them life-threatening. “One accident is one too many,” Biro said. “The disease that can be spread are just amazing. I think our life is more valuable than the bean counters realise.” Although the safety needles are about 10 per cent more expensive than the traditional needles currently in use at most hospitals, she said they could help save the province money in the long term. “Even though it seems to cost a little more, overall the costs are lower because you’re not having the injuries and the costs related to that.” Provincial governments in Manitoba ([Risks 185](#)), Saskatchewan ([Risks 182](#)) and Nova Scotia have already introduced safer needles laws. Research cited by unions shows in facilities where safety needles are in use, up to 90 per cent of sharps injuries are prevented.

- [SEIU news release](#) and [Safer Needles Now campaign webpages](#). [Welland Tribune](#).
- [Hazards needlesticks webpages](#).

China: ‘Comfort money’ after 181 miners die

The families of 181 miners presumed dead after two pits were flooded on 17 August have each received 2,000 yuan (£132) in “comfort money”

from local officials. “This is not a big amount, but it helps in some way to comfort them,” the official in charge of the fund in Shandong province said. A team of officials paid 2,000 yuan to each bereaved family plus an additional 200 yuan (£13) to each individual family member. The tragedy at the two mines near the city of Xintai is one of the worst disasters to hit China's infamously dangerous coal-mining industry. Days after the tragedy, Beijing classified it as a “natural disaster” rather than an industrial accident, freeing authorities and mine owners from any obligation to pay workers’ compensation to the families. The government claim was at odds with state media reports that said the disaster could have been avoided if officials had heeded flood warnings at the mines. Torrential rains caused the Wen river to burst its banks, sending water pouring into the mines that sit 10 kilometres apart. Workers from an earlier shift, who eventually escaped, reported the rising water levels and submerged work areas at the Zhangzhuang mine where 171 were drowned, but the management did not immediately respond. “I feel very angry,” the brother of one miner told the South China Morning Post. “Yes, the rain was heavy, but the management of the mine should be held responsible for making them work in such conditions.”

- [Hong Kong Standard](#). [China Labour Bulletin](#). [ICEM In-brief](#).

South Africa: Threats to inspectors must end

Construction industry employers must allow labour inspectors onto their construction sites to carry out inspections or face “the full might of the law”, South Africa’s labour minister has said. Membathisi Mdladlana called on employers to cooperate after an inspector was threatened with death by an employer after issuing a notice to stop dangerous work at a construction site. “Employers who threaten labour inspectors in the course of their duty, will face the full might of the law,” said the minister. Earlier this year, the labour department's director general Vanguard Mkosana led labour inspectors around

Pretoria to see whether the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and other construction regulations are being observed. “It is important that we intensify our vigilance and enforcement, particularly in the construction sector in the light of preparations for the 2010 World Cup,” he said at the time.

- [BuaNews](#).

USA: Tragedies spur calls for a union voice

Non-union workers at the Utah mine where six miners died in a 6 August collapse ([Risks 319](#)) and three workers were killed on 16 August in the abortive rescue efforts have asked mining union UMWA to be their representative in discussions with the company and the US Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). In a highly contentious move, however, the official mines safety watchdog this week turned down the request. Commenting on the rebuff, USWA international president Cecil E Roberts said: “This is a travesty that will have the effect of silencing the voices of the families of those still missing in the mine as this investigation moves forward. This action means that there will be no independent voice at the table in MSHA’s investigation, questioning the actions of both the company and the federal government in this disaster.” He added: “This outrageous action only confirms the rationale for our previous call for an independent, bi-partisan investigation of this disaster by Congress. By denying the families any participation in this investigation, MSHA is ensuring that it will be investigating itself in this tragedy, and American coal miners deserve better than that.” Under US mine safety law, non-union miners can request the expertise of the UMWA in the event of a disaster or other safety incident. Global union federation ICEM said that like Sago, the Utah tragedy came after production and the pursuit of profit was put ahead of safety considerations. Murray Energy had been engaged in retreat mining at the south end of the 5,000-acre Crandall Canyon Mine when a bump - or shift of earth and rock resulting from excavation - occurred. UMWA termed the work

methods “a recipe for disaster.” On 16 August, another bump occurred during the rescue, killing three rescue workers including an MSHA inspector and injuring six others. Miners at the non-union Sago mine also designated UMWA as their representative after the disaster that claimed the lives of 12 West Virginia miners in January 2006 ([Risks 238](#)).

- [UMWA news release](#), [ICEM In-Brief](#).

RESOURCES

Work Stress Network News

The latest issue of the UK Work Stress Network’s newsletter is now available free online. In addition to the regular round-up of stress news, there’s coverage of recent developments at the Health and Safety Executive, the new corporate crime law and the rise in workplace fatalities.

- Work Stress Network News, Summer 2007 [[pdf](#)] and [back issues](#).

EVENTS AND COURSES

TUC fringe on work and health, 10 September, Brighton

Radiographers’ union SOR has organised a fringe meeting at this month’s TUC Congress in Brighton on the theme ‘Health, work and well-being: Is the government doing enough?’ Speakers include union national safety officers Kim Sunley of SOR and John McClean of GMB, RCN nurse adviser Sharon Horan and Jane Ingham of RCN’s Society of Occupational Health Nurses Forum.

- SOR fringe meeting, 12.45pm-2.00pm,

Monday 10 September, Keats and Shelley Room, Library Terrace, Thistle Hotel, Kings Road, Brighton. SOR fringe meeting flyer [[pdf](#)].

- More on the TUC Congress – see the final agenda [[pdf](#)]. The safety debate is scheduled for Thursday 13 September.

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2007

- [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](#).
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