



Risks Newsletter



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Risks is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 15,000 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

HSE union calls for ICL disaster inquiry

The union representing staff in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has called for a public

inquiry into the ICL/Stockline factory explosion in Glasgow in May 2004 that killed nine workers and seriously injured 40. Prospect says it supports the call from survivors and the families of those killed and injured for a full public inquiry. The investigation that formed part of this month's prosecution of the firm failed to answer a number of questions or provide lessons to avoid future tragedies, the union indicated ([Risks 321](#)). Michael Macdonald, Prospect negotiations officer, said a public inquiry should focus on the key issues affecting the performance of the HSE in Scotland and across Great Britain, to identify the changes needed to ensure the best health and safety protection for workers. He said the inquiry should target shortcomings in HSE and not individual HSE inspectors. "In particular the debate over Stockline should not scapegoat individuals constrained by public policy but should concentrate on improving the effectiveness of the HSE," he said. "The government needs to accept responsibility for placing a greater focus on funding than effectiveness - the victims of Stockline deserve nothing less." HSE has been forced to cut back on staff numbers and training, close offices and prioritise inspections on a limited number of target areas; slips and trips, workplace transport, falls from height and musculoskeletal disorders. Since 2003, HSE inspectors have been under instructions to look solely at these issues during inspections. Unless "matters of evident concern" are raised they cannot use their experience and discretion to look into other matters such as fire and explosion risks, structural safety and dangerous machinery. Neil Hope-Collins, Prospect HSE branch chair, said: "Our members are committed to serving the public of Scotland and trying to prevent workplace injury and ill-health but are just too stretched to do all the work they feel is necessary. We need to let skilled professional inspectors use their judgment to tackle all serious risks and turn poor workplaces into decent ones." Scotland's first minister Alex Salmond has said there is widespread support for a public inquiry.

- [Prospect news release. BBC News Online.](#)
[ICL/Stockline disaster website.](#)

Wide support for ICL/Stockline inquiry

Unions and health and safety experts have backed a call by HSE union Prospect for a full inquiry into the ILC/Stockline disaster. Grahame Smith, STUC general secretary said: "The support of Prospect is very welcome and vitally important in the families' campaign to ensure that both the Holyrood and Westminster governments ensure that the most comprehensive public inquiry is held. Only this kind of inquiry can provide the answers the families require". He added: "The STUC has always supported Prospect's campaign for increased resources for the HSE including a substantial increase in the number of frontline inspectors. We recognise the commitment of individual inspectors and appreciate the pressure that they face day in and day out trying to ensure that employers are aware of their responsibilities as duty holders and protect their workers in the workplace". The union leader said STUC has "strong concerns continued budgetary constraints and the government's deregulatory agenda can only undermine this commitment and the valuable role HSE inspectors would want to have in protecting workers." The Prospect call for a full inquiry was also backed by the academic team from Stirling and Strathclyde universities who earlier this month produced a devastating critique of safety standards at the factory and the role played by the resource starved HSE ([Risks 322](#)). In an open letter they say "the debate should not scapegoat individuals constrained by public policy but should concentrate on improving the effectiveness of the HSE." The letter adds: "The government needs to accept responsibility for placing a greater focus on funding than effectiveness - the victims deserve nothing less." Commenting on the move to targeted inspections, the letter says; "We share Prospect's concerns about these serious and damaging developments since 2003, affecting the capacity of HSE inspectors to carry out all necessary risk assessments in workplaces they visit, and believe such matters should be addressed fully in a public inquiry."

- [STUC news release. Statement from the authors of the ICL/Disaster report. The Scotsman. Daily Herald. Daily Record.](#)

MPs back airport safety campaign

Local members of parliament have pledged their support for a union safety campaign at Heathrow airport after it was revealed there has been a sharp rise in injuries to workers handling heavy luggage. Baggage handlers' union Unite says there has been a 17 per cent year on year increase in related injuries and wants the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to take action to protect workers. Labour MPs Ann Keen, Alan Keen and Virendra Sharma, whose constituencies are around Heathrow, agreed to back the campaign after meeting with Unite at last week's Labour Party conference in Brighton. "Unite is determined to reduce the number of accidents amongst our members who have to shift heavy bags at ever faster rates in all parts of airport operations," said Brendan Gold, Unite national secretary for civil air transport. "That means reducing the weight of individual items to 23 kilos. We want action from the MPs and the airlines to put pressure on the Health and Safety Executive. It is the HSE that is failing in its statutory duty to protect workers' safety. Our members are paying the price in injuries. It's an unacceptable deadlock." Unite adds that security staff are also facing additional pressures, "with the increasing number of checks and restrictions leading to increases in workload, passenger pressure and consequently stress levels." Commenting on the meeting with Heathrow MPs, Mr Gold said: "This was a very positive meeting. The MPs understand more clearly the workforce's side of issues in aviation and will take our issues up."

- [Unite news release.](#)

Six figure payout for dental nurse allergy

A dental nurse who had to pack in work after developing occupational dermatitis has received a £200,000 payout. The 50-year-old UNISON member, who has not been named, worked for the Central Manchester Primary Care Trust and had been an NHS employee for over 30 years. She developed the debilitating skin condition as a result of using latex gloves between 1980 and 2004. In 2003 she noticed that her wrists had become uncomfortably itchy. She was referred for tests and then told in January 2004 by a doctor that her condition was latex related and that it was so serious that she could no longer work safely in a dental surgery. Caroline Bedale, UNISON branch secretary, said: "Latex products are a known danger to dental and other healthcare workers because they are at increased risk of latex allergy. This case demonstrates the critical importance of all employers having proper policies, not only to protect staff from developing latex allergy, but also for the safe handling of patients with known or suspected latex allergy." Imogen Wetton of Thompsons Solicitors, who provided legal support for the woman, said: "The impact of a latex allergy causes no end of difficulties for sufferers." She added: "She has to avoid any rubber handled items and wear cork inner soles. She has to sleep with cotton gloves on and has to regularly apply steroid creams. She has to avoid washing up and ironing. She can't even use the TV remote control as it has rubber buttons. The list goes on and on and it's a living nightmare for sufferers." Ms Wetton concluded: "The Trust ought to have known by 1996 at the latest that the powdered latex gloves were a potential danger to users yet it was not until September 1998 that a memo was issued for the gloves to be changed to a non powdered alternative and only then when existing stocks were exhausted. There could and should have been alerts to the dangers and risks much earlier and they should have provided a non latex alternative."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

Collapsing cab seat compo payout

London Underground is to pay damages to a train driver who was injured when his cab seat collapsed. Train drivers' union ASLEF secured the compensation for the unnamed member. According to the injured man: "My accident happened as I was sitting, leaning slightly forwards, in order for my right hand to operate the lever to operate the train. As I did so, I leant on the arm rest on the driver's seat on my left hand side and suddenly the back of the seat collapsed forward. My body twisted and I injured my lower back and between my shoulders and my neck. I was out of work for over eight weeks as a result of my injuries." He added that other drivers had concerns. "Not only have at least two of my colleagues had problems with the chairs, I would say that the majority of my colleagues have encountered problems with the chairs at some point or other. The drivers' seats are very old. I have noticed that in a great many of the carriages, the lever controls for the chairs have moved from the right hand side to the left hand side of the chair, doubtless because the controls and ratchets are heavily worn." His legal adviser, Zillur Rahman, from Thompsons Solicitors, said: "Had it not been for the support and financial backing of ASLEF, this member would have been unable to continue with his claim and secure the compensation he deserves for the injury caused by London Underground." The amount of damages has not been disclosed.

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

Driving test centres "unsafe", says union

Britain's "neglected" driving test centres are unsafe and insanitary, the driving instructors' union has said. Unite is calling for urgent repairs to the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) test centres. "The DSA seems to have been preoccupied with opening its 65 new multi-purpose test centres, which are due to be completed by October next year," said Richard Grindrod of Unite's Driving Instructors Democratic Union section (DIDU). "As a result

some of the existing centres have been neglected and are literally deteriorating before our very eyes. There is a lack of heating at several centres and some even have a single outside toilet for driving test candidates, driving instructors and examiners, both male and female." He added: "We believe the DSA, which has a monopoly in the provision of tests and regulation of training facilities, must act urgently to provide civilised facilities for candidates taking important tests which are central to the maintenance of road safety." Driving test fees are set to increase by 30 per cent, said the union.

- [Unite news release.](#)

Pssst... want a union safety job?

If you've got a burning desire to be a safety officer with a national union, now's your chance. GMB is looking for a health, safety and environmental research and policy officer, to be based at its national HQ in London. The person will report to the head of health and safety. GMB says the successful applicant "will have a clear understanding of trade union approaches to health, safety and environmental issues and a detailed knowledge of current and future planned UK and European legislation affecting health and safety. In addition you will be expected to be aware of current and proposed legislation around environmental issues which affect GMB members." The union adds that in addition to being computer literate, applicants "will either be educated to degree level or have an equivalent mix of skills and experience."

- [GMB vacancy, health, safety and environmental research and policy officer: further details and job application form.](#)
Closing date 12 October 2007.

OTHER NEWS

Airline cabins to be tested for fumes

Pilots’ union BALPA has welcomed a government decision to test the cabins of commercial jets for toxic fumes. The move comes after a government-backed report called for an investigation into whether pilots are being disorientated by poor quality air. The Department for Transport (DfT) hopes to begin tests this year after warnings from airline pilots and academics that cabin fumes are an under-reported problem. The committee on toxicity said there was a “large body of anecdotal and descriptive evidence” linking ill-health among crew with poor air quality, but further work was needed to show if there was a definite link. “Overall the committee concluded that the available evidence, although limited, together with information from pilots, supported further investigation of neuro-psychological impairment in commercial pilots,” said the report. It recommended that the DfT test thousands of flights on a range of aircraft for the presence of harmful fumes such as carbon monoxide, although it said it was “not possible to conclude” that there was a causal link to ill-health. Pilots’ union BALPA maintains that air crew have been made ill by air being sucked in through jet engines, becoming contaminated with oil fumes, and then pumped on board through air ventilation systems. “We believe that all stakeholders in our industry need to work together to better understand the problem on contaminated air, and we will press for this bipartisan approach to continue,” said BALPA chair Mervyn Granshaw. The committee on toxicity’s report follows a recent study that found that 27 commercial jet pilots had suffered memory loss and cognitive failure corresponding with symptoms of exposure to toxic organophosphates. The study by Sarah Mackenzie-Ross, a neuro-psychologist from University College London, revealed that pilots from airlines including British Airways and Flybe had suffered memory lapses, fatigue and dizziness.

- Statement from BALPA to the Committee on Toxicity [[pdf](#)]. Committee on Toxicity update

paper [[pdf](#)] and [webpages](#). [The Guardian](#).

Three more die offshore

Three more workers have died in offshore, but none of these fatalities will be included in the Health and Safety Executive’s occupational fatality figures. The men died after an incident on a gas rig standby vessel in the North Sea, the boat’s operators say. Aberdeen-based Vroon Offshore Services said they died on the Viking Islay in the BP Amethyst gas field off the East Yorkshire coast. The men were named as Finlay MacFadyen, 46, from Aberdeen, Robert O’Brien, 59, from Leven in Fife, and Robert Ebertowski, 40, from Gydnia, Poland. They were securing an anchor chain in a storage area in the boat’s bow when the incident happened. The Viking Islay, a 53-metre emergency response and rescue vessel, was supporting the EnSCO 92 drilling rig on BP’s Amethyst field when the incident happened. An investigation will be carried out by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch, not the HSE. This means the deaths, which occurred 25 miles off the Yorkshire coast, will not be recorded in the official UK work fatality figures. Last month, offshore union Unite called for “more open” and “honest” offshore accident figures ([Risks 318](#)). Regional officer Graham Tran said: “In October last year we lost four lives when the Meridian vessel sank whilst on duty for an oil operator, a further seven lives were lost when a helicopter ditched off Morecambe Bay when transporting oil and gas workers. These incidents are reported as maritime and aviation” ([Risks 289](#)). Criticising HSE’s latest offshore fatality figures, he said: “Nothing is to be gained by trying to hide behind more favourable headlines. These incidents have happened, lessons have to be learned and the full facts have to be in the public arena, this includes all relevant statistics.” Post mortem examinations this week failed to identify the cause of death of the three men. Police are now waiting for the results of toxicology tests.

- [BBC News Online](#) and [follow up story](#). [The Scotsman](#). [The Herald](#).

Call to treat site deaths as real crimes

Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK) has called for the real possibility of jail terms for employers after serious safety crimes lead to a workplace death. The campaign group was commenting after a site foreman and building company director were fined a total of £20,000 on charges relating to the death of a work who was crushed by a truck. Alex Hayden, 28, was driving for A & A Building Services when his lorry fell down an embankment in Stoke-on-Trent on 31 August 2005. Foreman Paul Nolan and director Darren Atkins were convicted of breaching the Health and Safety at Work Act. Nolan was cleared of manslaughter after a 13-day trial. A judge at Stafford Crown Court fined Nolan, 43, £5,000 and ordered him to pay £1,000 costs. The court heard he had been responsible for health and safety on the site. Atkins, 42, director of A & A Building Services and Nolan's manager, was fined £15,000 plus £7,700 costs. Both men had denied all charges against them. The company was fined £55,000 and ordered to pay £6,000 costs after admitting at an earlier hearing that it had breached safety laws. The court heard Mr Hayden had been driving the nine-tonne truck for two months, during which time he had been involved in two other accidents and had not received proper training. There were no safety bars in place or a trained 'banks man' to stop the truck falling on the day of the fatal incident. The prosecutor said the guilty men had "failed to take even the most simple and obvious safety measures", adding "the accident was foreseeable and his death should not have happened". FACK spokesperson Hilda Palmer commented: "FACK feels that employers who flout the law so blatantly should be convicted of manslaughter and sent to prison as it is a serious crime to take a life by gross negligence, and a mere fine is not enough. It will not deter other criminal employers and the penalty does not fit the crime." She added: "FACK urges all building workers to join a trade union and for families of those killed at work to contact us so we can work together to stop deaths on building sites and in all workplaces."

- [Families Against Corporate Killers \(FACK\) news release](#) and [website](#). [HSE news release](#). [BBC News Online](#).

Six-figure fine after "avoidable" death

A company has received a six-figure fine after a 20-year-old worker was killed in a "totally avoidable" incident at a building materials yard. Merseyside firm Grundy and Co Excavations Ltd was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay £9,034 costs at Warrington Crown Court after pleading guilty to safety offences. The court heard that employee Joshua Beswick died on the 1 September 2004 while walking across the company's yard in Widnes. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector John McGrellis said: "Joshua Beswick, a 20-year-old labourer was killed instantly when he was struck by a wheeled loader. This was a totally avoidable accident, had safe-working systems been in place. Every effort needs to be made to separate vehicles and pedestrians to avoid tragic consequences." He added: "People being hit by vehicles, people falling from vehicles, objects falling from vehicles onto people and vehicles toppling over in the workplace are a common cause of accidents which has been identified as a priority by the Health and safety Executive. This case graphically illustrates that companies should ensure that safe working systems are in place for the safety of all their employees."

- [HSE news release](#).

Small fines for workplace crimes

Large fines for safety offences remain the exception, as recent cases illustrate. Carole Ann Hible, trading as removal company 'Specialised Movers', received fines totalling £9,000 with £4,335 costs this week after the death of an employee. An HSE news release said Hible pleaded guilty, so Market Drayton Magistrates

gave credit for her prompt guilty plea and dealt with the case themselves, rather than in Crown Court where higher penalties are available. Lorry driver Stephen Michael Warner, an employee of Specialised Movers, died when a CNC grinding machine slipped from a forklift truck and crushed him. Hible, as the sole trader of Specialised Movers, was fined £4,000 for failing to ensure that the forklift truck she provided for removal activities was maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair. She was also fined the magistrates' court maximum of £5,000 for failing to ensure that the lifting operation was planned properly by a competent person, appropriately supervised and carried out in a safe manner. HSE inspector Grayam Barnes indicated the death was the result of serious safety deficiencies. He said: "In this case the forklift truck was grossly under capacity for the job demanded of it and known to have a bad oil leak in the lifting mechanism. Competence and training in all health and safety matters also needs to be regularly reviewed and renewed to prevent such tragedies." In a second case, Community Waste Ltd was fined £6,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,600 last week after forklift driver Andri Halonka was severely injured when the forklift truck he was driving overturned. The average penalty per conviction secured by HSE in 2005/06 was £29 997. This figure includes 13 fines in excess of £100,000 which, when removed, gives an average of £6,219.

- [HSE news release on the Hible case](#) and [HSE news release on the Community Waste case](#) and [construction management webpages](#).
- [HSE enforcement statistics](#).

Minister backs jail for health worker abuse

The government is injecting £97 million into hospital security, to help protect staff from intimidation and violence. Health secretary Alan Johnson announced the extra money this week, in his a speech to the Labour party conference. He said: "We know there is no more important

resource for the NHS than the staff who work for it. But too many suffer harassment, intimidation and violence. To give greater protection we will issue personal safety alarms to those NHS staff who need them, as part of a £97 million boost to the NHS security budget." The money, which will be spread over four years, will ensure better security in hospitals, including improved training for staff to deal with aggressive behaviour, Mr Johnson said. The government says £29 million of the new money will be spent on 30,000 safety alarm devices for lone workers. As well as including an alarm function, the device will help locate the user and link to a trained individual who can summon help if needed. The remaining £68 million will fund a range of security measures including additional security management specialists and staff training in personal safety and conflict resolution. It will also be used to increase the number of prosecutions where staff are assaulted. The government says that while there has been a substantial increase in the number of prosecutions - 850 in 2005/06 compared to 51 in 2002/03 - this is still too low compared to the number of assaults that are reported. Alan Johnson said: "Although we have seen a sixteen-fold increase in prosecutions since 2003, more needs to be done. NHS staff dedicate their lives to caring for the sick and in return they deserve respect. Anybody who abuses our staff must face tough action and the possibility of jail." Ministers refused to include in the new corporate manslaughter act any explicit new duties on employers that could have resulted in the possibility of jail when they harm their staff.

- [DH news release](#). [UNISON news release](#). [NHS security management webpages](#).

Government action on schools bullying

Teaching unions have welcomed action by the government to tackle bullying in England's schools. The package of measures announced this week by Ed Balls, secretary of state for children, schools and families, includes an online cyberbullying campaign, new guidance and a

short film to help schools tackle bullies who use the internet or mobile phones to bully other children or abuse their teachers. Ed Balls said: “The vast majority of schools are safe environments to learn in. However, we know that behaviour, particularly bullying, is a key concern for parents and bullying of any kind is unacceptable.” He added: “We now have an advanced approach to cyberbullying, thanks in no small part to the cooperation of the industry, teaching unions and charities. This guidance gives teachers and parents all the knowledge they need to tackle the problem effectively in schools.” Steve Sinnott, general secretary of teaching union NUT said: “Bullying destroys lives; whether they are children’s or teacher’s.” He added that the campaign “will reinforce teacher’s efforts to stamp out bullying in schools and remind parents of the crucial role they have in preventing it.” NASUWT general secretary Chris Keates, said: “Teachers will be particularly pleased that the secretary of state has recognised that the focus on pupils being cyber bullied should be matched with equal concern about the increasing numbers of teachers who have become victims of vicious and debilitating abuse.” And ATL general secretary Mary Boustead said: “The number of calls from ATL members who have been bullied has significantly increased over the past year – with 17 per cent reporting having suffered from cyber bullying. The government’s guidance should help save pupils from future bullying, but we now need to see the same support for staff. All schools and colleges should have policies to protect their teachers and support staff from cyber bullying, and should make a commitment to fully support anyone who is a victim.”

- [DCSF news release](#). [ATL news release](#). [NASUWT news release](#). [NUT news release](#).
- [Government information about preventing and tackling cyberbullying](#). [Online campaign](#). [Full guidance on Teachernet](#).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Australia: Unions call for strong nano rules

Australia’s top union body has added its voice to that of other campaigners concerned about the risks posed by the unregulated development of a massive nanotechnology industry. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) has joined the international coalition of public interest, environmental and trade union organisations signed up to the ‘Declaration on the principles for the oversight of nanotechnologies and nanomaterial’. Other signatories include global union organisations ITUC, IUF and IFJ and US national union federation AFL-CIO ([Risks 317](#)). ACTU national safety officer Steve Mullins said: “By signing this declaration, the ACTU is sending the clear message that profit at the expense of workers lives will not be tolerated. Governments and business are falling over themselves to make Australia a commercial hub for the potential 2.5 trillion dollar nanotechnology industry but lip service is being paid to the occupational health and safety risks.” He added: “Already hundreds of products containing nanomaterials are on the market, including popular sunscreens. The ACTU is concerned about the research showing the potential for serious health impacts on workers exposed during the manufacturing of products using nanomaterials.” The ACTU safety officer added: “There is no government regulation in Australia to control the unique risks posed to workers or consumers or to regulate the manufacturers and importers of nano-products. This is a potential time bomb.” Earlier this month, the European Commission announced it was the world’s largest public investor in nanotechnology.

- ACTU news release [[pdf](#)] and [briefing](#). [IUF news release](#). [ICTA Principles for Nanotechnologies](#) [[pdf](#)]. [EC news release](#) and [nanotechnology webpages](#). [Hazards nanotechnology news and resources](#).

India: Deadly neglect in a Bangalore factory

An Indian garment worker who fell ill at work last week and had to wait hours for permission to leave her workplace, died in hospital later that day, the global union representing workers in the sector has revealed. It says the tragedy bears a striking resemblance to a incident that occurred at the same factory just three months ago, in which a pregnant worker gave birth unassisted outside the factory gates after being denied assistance when she went into labour during her shift. The baby died. Neil Kearney, general secretary of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF), said: "Workers at Shalini Creations in Bangalore report that when Padmavathi started vomiting on Tuesday morning and asked to leave, the production manager was abusive and shouted at her 'Why do you need leave? So you can go and die?'. When she was finally allowed to leave, she collapsed in the street and was taken to hospital, where she died soon afterwards." The global union leader added: "How many more workers will die before the company decides to stamp out the abusive behaviour of its managers and supervisors? Clearly, management learned nothing from the previous tragedy". ITGLWF has sought a meeting with India's minister of state for labour, Shri Oscar Fernandes, to discuss this case and the notoriously bad working conditions in Bangalore's booming garment industry. The global union has also called on Texport Overseas, the parent company of Shalini Creations, to launch an immediate investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Padmavathi.

- [ITGLWF news release.](#)

Iraq: Campaign aims to protect journalists

The global union for journalists and news safety leaders have welcomed the launch of an Iraq-based campaign aiming to stem the tide of violence against news media which has claimed the lives of 226 journalists and media staff since the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the

International News Safety Institute (INSI) are calling on governments and aid agencies to give their full support to the Iraqi Media Safety Group (IMSG). The safety group has been formed by a coalition of the two Iraqi journalists' syndicates and media organisations including Al Iraqiya Satellite TV, Al Sumariya Satellite TV, Al Diyaar Satellite TV, Al Fourat Satellite TV and Al Baghdadiya Satellite TV. "This launch is a massive step forward in the fight for improved safety in Iraq," said Aidan White, IFJ general secretary and INSI director Rodney Pinder in a joint statement.

"International support for safety-related work in the media sector which is urgently needed should be channelled through the safety group." The IFJ and INSI are also calling on the Iraqi government to actively support the group. The IMSG is an initiative led by the Iraqi Syndicate of Journalists and the Kurdish Syndicate of Journalists, based on a plan agreed in a meeting with media organisations sponsored by the IFJ and INSI in Irbil earlier this year. The group's work is being directed from a safety office established in Baghdad, which is aiming to develop high profile connections with government officials and media owners.

- [IFJ news release. Iraqi Media Safety Group.](#)

Vietnam: Dozens killed in bridge collapse

A section of a bridge under construction in southern Vietnam collapsed on 26 September, killing dozens of workers. Casualty figures are uncertain, but some reports say up to 60 workers died and 150 were injured. The bridge was being built across the Hau River, a branch of the Mekong River, in the southern city of Can Tho. The 1.7 mile Japanese-financed bridge, started in 2004, was to be the largest suspension bridge in Vietnam. A contractor with a Chinese company working on the bridge said 60 people were killed. State-run Vietnam TV said 48 casualties had been confirmed with scores unaccounted for. At least 150 people were being treated for injuries and hospitals were running out of beds, officials said. Doctors and nurses were sent from

Ho Chi Minh City, 170 kilometres away, to help. Official media said the collapse of a section of bridge on land next to the Hau River was the worst bridge accident in Vietnam, which is ramping up infrastructure projects to keep pace with an economy growing at more than 8 per cent a year. Most of the dead and injured are Vietnamese. Three Japanese contractors - Taisei Corp, Kajima Corp and Nippon Steel Engineering Co Ltd - were on site the day of the collapse.

- [The Age](#), [The Seattle Times](#), [BBC News Online](#), [MSNBC](#).

RESOURCES

Stress at work resources

TUC's Northern Region has made resources from its workplace stress seminar available online. It says powerpoint presentations on stress priorities for the public sector and a series of case studies "will be of interest to all trade union safety reps", together with a workplace inspection tool.

- [Stress resources](#).

Health and safety and disability equality

The Health and Safety Executive says its new 'health and safety for disabled people and their employers' web resource "promotes good practice in disability equality at work and health and safety risk assessment." HSE says the microsite provides: An introduction to disability discrimination and health and safety law; advice for people doing health and safety risk assessments; advice for disabled people; and links to further sources of information, including grants. The site has been developed jointly by HSE and the Disability Rights Commission (DRC).

- [HSE safety and disability equality microsite](#).

EVENTS AND COURSES

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](#).
- **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](#).
- [HSE Books](#), PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA. Tel: 01787 881165; fax: 01787 313995