



Risks Newsletter

**HAZARDS
MAGAZINE**

Falls from vehicles
campaign 2007

Number 326 – 6 October 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 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](#).

In this issue

• UNION NEWS

- Shopworkers call for attack on violence
- Scots need protection from cash van attacks
- New move to resurrect roving safety reps
- Dangerous directors must be 'personally liable'
- Worker floored by rubber door
- Relatives step up asbestos fight

• OTHER NEWS

- Factory blast inquiry will probe regulators
- ICL inquiry welcomed by campaigners
- New HSC chair wants boardroom action

- Firm fined £100,000 after site death
- Small fine for acid rotted ladder fall
- Job dream fades as teen loses fingers
- HSE warning after Romanian loses leg
- Pizza chef stabbed to death
- Liverpool council workers poorly protected
- Smoke clears for bar staff

• INTERNATIONAL NEWS

- France: Survey confirms firm's deadly stresses
- Ireland: Watchdog to pursue 'trouble free' firms
- North America: Cut lumber not safety

• RESOURCES

- Global asbestos ban plan
- Getting to grips with strain injuries

• EVENTS AND COURSES

- TUC courses for safety reps
 - COURSES FOR SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2007
 - USEFUL LINKS
-

UNION NEWS

Shopworkers call for attack on violence

Retailers and shopworkers are calling on the government to insist local authorities and police forces make retail crime a higher priority. The move comes as new figures reveal an increase in threats and acts of violence against shop staff. Statistics compiled by the British Retail Consortium (BRC) show a 50 per cent increase in incidents of physical violence against shopworkers in the past year. Over the same period recorded threats of violence against staff have more than doubled. The number of incidents of verbal abuse and threats of violence has increased by one third in the past year and the number of incidents per store has shot up by 18 per cent. BRC and retail union Usdaw are making a joint call on the home secretary to push local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, which bring together police and local authorities, to give crime against retailers and shop workers the same level of attention as they direct toward crime and anti-social behaviour in residential neighbourhoods. Usdaw general secretary John Hannett said: “We want local partnerships of retailers, shop workers, councils and police to work together to rid our shops and shopping areas of this criminal and anti-social behaviour. This not only affects retailers and staff, but customers and the wider community as well. Which makes it all the more important that we work together”. Tracy Low, who is an Usdaw rep and shopfloor worker said: “Incidents of violence, threats and abuse against shop workers are far too common. Verbal abuse is a daily experience for many and it can really grind you down. We along with retailers are asking for respect, because we feel very strongly that abuse is not a part of the job.” Full findings of the BRC survey will be released on 31 October.

- [Usdaw news release](#). [BRC news release](#).
- [Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships](#). Usdaw 'While you are looking after the shop who is looking after you?' leaflet [[pdf](#)].

Scots need protection from cash van attacks

Scottish authorities must act to protect security workers transporting cash, the union GMB has said. The union’s Scottish security branch adds that the sentences for “career criminals” who attack GMB members employed moving cash around the country are too lenient, and that official action to tackle the problem in Scotland falls short of that elsewhere in the UK. In a letter to the cabinet secretary for justice, Kenny MacAskill, the branch secretary of GMB Scottish security branch, Cal Waterson, said there was “clear evidence” of an increase in attacks on cash vans in transit (CVIT). He added: “Since 2005 the GMB national office has been working closely with the Westminster government and police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to help develop a joined up strategy for combating crime within the CVIT industry. There are clear signs that this is working in some areas, particularly Northern Ireland, Birmingham, and Liverpool. The downside to this is that the criminals go elsewhere and there is evidence to suggest that Scotland is becoming the latest attraction.” Recent armed attacks on cash vans in Scotland “were committed by people previously resident outside of Scotland,” the letter said. It added: “We hope to establish sensible local authority guidelines to ensure CVIT workers are not harassed by police and traffic wardens during the course of their duties; equally we want to see clear guidelines for CVIT workers, ensuring that they cause as little disruption as possible when carrying out these duties.” It said the sentences for these armed attacks by “career criminals” were “derisory”.

- [GMB news release](#).

New move to resurrect roving safety reps

Construction unions and contractors are calling for roving safety reps to be brought back in a bid to cut death and accident rates on sites. They

claim the reps – which operated on sites in a now defunct government backed worker safety adviser (WSA) scheme - are the best way to spread the safety message among small contractors. The three-year project backed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) came to an end earlier this year when funding dried up. Federation of Master Builders’ director of external affairs Brian Berry said: “Consideration needs to be given to resurrecting the worker safety adviser scheme. Third party advisers often have a more immediate effect on health and safety practices than site managers. Government funding for the HSE also needs to be increased to ensure that health and safety legislation is complied with.” An evaluation of the pilot project showed the programme led to improvements in “small non-unionised workplaces’ approach to safety.” More than three quarters of employers said they had changed working practices following visits by roving reps and nearly 73 per cent said awareness on site of health and safety had improved ([Risks 124](#)). A spokesperson for site union UCATT said: “Workers safety advisers are all about being pro-active when it comes to safety and they are the ideal way of reaching small sites. If we are going to be serious about this then the advisers also have to be given real teeth and the power to stop jobs when they see something unsafe.” UCATT is calling for more HSE safety inspectors and cites the case of the Republic of Ireland, where a 13 per cent increase in safety inspections last year was accompanied by a 50 per cent fall in fatalities ([Risks 317](#)).

- [Contract Journal. TUC safety reps webpages and worker safety advisers webpage. Hazards roving reps news updates.](#)

Dangerous directors must be ‘personally liable’

Safety duties on company directors are the key to reducing serious injuries and fatalities in the workplace, the union Unite has said. Speaking last week at the Labour Party conference, Unite assistant general secretary Tony Burke spoke of a company fined just £200 for serious health and

safety breaches that resulted in the death of a worker. “All the evidence shows that stronger penalties, including imprisonment and large fines for company directors are a key determinant in companies making improvements to their health and safety provisions,” he said. “Unite is clear, it is about time employers that are found guilty of killing or seriously maiming their staff go to prison.” Referring to the corporate manslaughter law that comes into effect in April 2008, he said: “Although the new law means we can prosecute organisations more easily, it will not put anyone in prison and that is what is required. We want to see included in the corporate manslaughter law a secondary duty on directors and senior managers, which means if they are directly responsible for corporate manslaughter they too can be held liable, and if necessary put behind bars.”

- [Unite news release.](#)
- [TUC corporate liability webpages. Hazard deadly business news and resources.](#)

Worker floored by rubber door

A hospital clerical officer who was injured when a large, heavy door fell on top of her has been awarded damages of £5,350. UNISON member Amy Whitcombe, 26, was working at the Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend when the incident occurred. As she walked through the large rubber doors one unhinged, knocked her to the floor and trapped her underneath. The door was so heavy she required the assistance of several hospital porters to get free. As well as being severely shaken by the incident, Miss Whitcombe sustained injuries to her knee and back. She was off work for a short period and had to undergo physiotherapy for her injuries. The manufacturer of the door, B&B Industrial Doors Limited, admitted liability for the accident and agreed the payout. UNISON regional organiser Eddie Gabrielsen commented: “This incident just goes to show that anywhere in the workplace or a public building can be a hazard if jobs, such as fitting doors, aren’t carried out

correctly.” Amy Whitcombe, the injured worker, said: “You expect your working environment to be safe, especially in a hospital where so many people are coming and going. I was in a lot of pain after the accident and even now I shudder when I walk through that part of the building. It makes you wary of any place or part of the building which potentially hasn’t been secured as it should have been.”

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

Relatives step up asbestos fight

A campaign set up in memory of Prospect member Roger Lowe is drawing attention to the deadly dangers posed by asbestos exposure. The daughters and wife of the dockyard electrical fitter, who died aged 68 from the asbestos-related cancer mesothelioma in December 2005, have founded a support group in his name. Daughter Jackie told a public meeting in Plymouth this week they did not want anyone to go through the trauma they suffered alone. “The hardest thing I have ever had to do was tell my two sons, aged 14 and 16, that their beloved granddad was going to die,” she said. “It is not a fashionable disease. There are no celebrity survivors to get the headlines. We have to do this for ourselves.” Miss Lowe, 35, from Brixham, added that it would help sufferers of mesothelioma to talk to other families in a similar situation. The city, with its dockyard where the material was widely used, has been identified as the UK's fourth largest 'hotspot' for the disease, with 320 people dying from mesothelioma caused by asbestos between 1985 and 2004. Cases are expected to peak between 2011 and 2015, as the condition takes between 30 to 40 years to emerge. Mr Lowe's wife Jan, Jackie and his other daughter Tracy Taylor launched the Roger Lowe Asbestos Mesothelioma Campaign in April this year. The initiative is supported by Prospect and personal injury solicitors Russell Jones and Walker. Local MP Linda Gilroy told the meeting the group would help her give sufferers a voice in Westminster.

- [Prospect news release. Plymouth Herald.](#)
- [Roger Lowe Campaign.](#)

OTHER NEWS

Factory blast inquiry will probe regulators

A public inquiry into the Stockline factory blast in Glasgow is to be set up jointly by the Scottish and UK governments, it has been announced. Unions, safety campaigners and families affected by the 2004 explosion in which nine workers died had all pressed for this kind of inquiry ([Risks 325](#)). They felt alternative forms of investigation would not have examined the role of management at the company or regulatory agencies. Owners and operators ICL Plastics and ICL Tech were last month fined £400,000 for health and safety breaches. Scotland's senior law officer, Lord Advocate Elish Angiolini, said a joint inquiry was the only way to properly address all the issues. She said: “As health and safety legislation is reserved to the United Kingdom parliament, and the investigation of deaths in Scotland fall solely under my jurisdiction as the lord advocate, only a joint inquiry could truly address all of the issues which arise as a result of this case.” Secretary of state for work and pensions Peter Hain said: “The findings of the inquiry are likely to have significance across the United Kingdom. It is vital for ministers to work together to establish a full inquiry into the events leading to the explosion and the lessons which we can learn for the future.” He added that the ICL/Stockline families group had “made it clear to me that they want to see the role that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) played in regulating these premises prior to the incident is fully investigated. I fully support them on this point. No issue relevant to the circumstances should be out of bounds.” Mr Hain concluded: “It is essential that the inquiry is thorough, transparent and exhaustive but not protracted. The families have suffered already and we do not want them to have to wait unduly for answers.” A statement from HSE said: “This

incident was thoroughly investigated jointly by HSE and Strathclyde Police, reporting to the Procurator Fiscal. This investigation led to the prosecution of two companies. HSE will co-operate fully with the Inquiry, which will provide an opportunity to present the facts arising out of the investigation and the lessons to be learnt.”

- [Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service news release](#). [DWP news release \[pdf\]](#). [The Herald](#). [BBC News Online](#). [ICL/Stockline campaign website](#).

ICL inquiry welcomed by campaigners

Unions, safety experts and the ICL/Stockline families group have welcomed the news there will be a full public inquiry into the blast. STUC general secretary Grahame Smith said STUC had worked closely with the families and was “delighted that their determination to search for the truth has delivered the inquiry they wanted. Hopefully, it will provide the answers to the questions that the families have been seeking as to how their loved ones died.” He added: “Clearly, we need to await the publication of the full remit of the inquiry but as the families have said to Peter Hain, they need to know why their loved ones died, why certain actions were not taken to properly assess the condition of the buried pipe work, and did the Health and Safety Executive’s enforcement strategy and lack of resources prevent adequate inspection of this company and also many other small businesses where workers may be at risk.” The independent group of experts that produced a damning ICL/Stockline disaster report last month, critical of the role played by the company and regulatory agencies including HSE, said: “We believe that the inquiry should be chaired by a senior Scottish judge and look at all the relevant agencies involved with regulating and inspecting the ICL/Stockline plant.” They added the inquiry should investigate the role of HSE, including the impact of “better regulation” approaches they say have led to the number and quality of workplace inspections being reduced. They also

want to see the role of the local and planning authorities, consultants and the emergency services investigated. Other issues that should be probed include the protection of safety whistleblowers and appropriately punitive penalties for serious safety breaches. A statement from the ICL/Stockline support group said its members were “relieved” there is to be public inquiry. It added: “Over the next few weeks the remit of the inquiry will become clear and, only then, will we be assured that we will discover why nine people lost their lives and what steps could, and should, have been taken to prevent this tragedy.”

- [STUC news release](#). [Universities of Strathclyde and Stirling expert group news release](#). [Statement from the ICL/Stockline families](#). [News updates on the ICL/Stockline disaster](#).

New HSC chair wants boardroom action

The new chair of the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) has called for more board level engagement and ownership on health and safety issues. Judith Hackitt - who has previously served time as a HSC commissioner - has held top posts in chemical industry lobby groups, including a stint as director general of the Chemical Industries Association. Commenting as she took up her new post on 1 October, she said: “I am delighted to return to HSC and lead an organisation that has played a crucial role in improving Britain's health and safety record. I look forward to working with members of the Commission, the Health and Safety Executive, our partners in local government, trade unions and business leaders who have all played a vital role in influencing the safety culture in this country.” She added: “With the latest figures showing 241 workplace fatalities, 146,000 serious injuries and two million reported cases of work-related ill-health, there is no room for complacency. More needs to be done in addressing the enormous challenges of improving health and safety in our workplaces. To improve our safety record we need strong and committed

boardroom leadership that focuses on real causes of harm in the workplace and not trivia.”

- [HSE news release](#) and [Judith Hackitt profile](#).

Firm fined £100,000 after site death

A civil engineering and piling firm has been fined £100,000 after an employee died dismantling a piling rig. John Walsh was killed in September 2002 when the auger drive unit of the rig flew off its stand and struck him. Dawson-Wam pleaded guilty at Croydon Crown Court to workplace safety breaches. In addition to the fine, it was ordered to pay costs of £76,128.66. The company was subcontracted by Jarvis Construction UK to pile around the perimeter of a site in the City of London to create a retaining wall for the construction of a new office block. Part of the dismantling process for the machines involved lowering the auger drive unit onto a stand. However, an improvised work method led to the drive unit flying off the stand and striking Mr Walsh. Health and Safety Executive inspector Alec Ferguson said: “Where a pulling force is exerted by using an excavator, the load can increase rapidly to very high levels, leading to a sudden release when the point of resistance is overcome. Employers need to ensure that where circumstances prevent the use of standard methods of work, then the risks arising from any method subsequently adopted should be very carefully assessed.”

- [Contract Journal](#).

Small fine for acid rotted ladder fall

A company has been fined £7,000 after its safety lapses led to a worker being seriously injured and left unable to work. Gazelle Steam Cleaning Services Ltd of Hutton, Lancashire pleaded guilty at Macclesfield Magistrates' Court to breaches of safety law. It was ordered to pay the fine and £14,257 costs. The case brought by the Health

and Safety Executive (HSE) came after employee Gary Jaundrill fell approximately three metres from a faulty ladder, suffering permanent disability. He received serious spinal and internal injuries and cuts. He has been left with two rods and eight screws in his back, psychiatric problems, constant pain and many continuing disabilities. He cannot work, and his condition is said to be still deteriorating. At the time of the fall, Mr Jaundrill was standing on the seventh rung near to the top of an aluminium ladder, power-washing brickwork he had treated with acid. The accident occurred because the ladder suffered from acid corrosion to such an extent that it snapped in two. HSE construction inspector Rob Hodgkinson said: “What happened was foreseeable and there was much that was reasonably practicable that could have been done to ensure safety. Indeed, the company took steps to improve its system after the accident had occurred.” He added: “No-one saw Gary Jaundrill fall, but having done so he was seriously injured and helpless. He couldn't move his arms or legs and he couldn't call for help - he had to wait until someone came upon him. Eventually, his colleagues did so, called for the emergency services and put him in the recovery position. He was taken to hospital where he remained for four weeks before being discharged home but in need of extensive care.”

- [HSE news release](#).

Job dream fades as teen loses fingers

Car-mad Sheffield teen Wade Savage may have to abandon his hopes of becoming a mechanic after losing three fingers whilst working at a holiday job. The 16-year-old was injured at Holdsworth Packaging Ltd, where his work involved running general errands and assembling cardboard boxes. Last month he was cutting up some cardboard using a machine but as he did so, his hand was dragged into the blades. “Suddenly my fingers were being pulled into the machine so I pulled them out as quickly as I could,” he said. “I went into shock as an immense pain hit me and I realised that three of

my fingers had been severed.” His mother, Cyria, said: “What happened to Wade has been hard for the whole family and as a result I want to raise awareness of the importance of safety at work.” The family is represented by David Urpeth, of Irwin Mitchell solicitors. He said: “It is well-known that young workers are at a greater risk of injury than older, more experienced workers. Employers who take on young staff have a legal obligation to protect their welfare. In this case, a young man's life has been tragically affected.” The safety regulations covering workers under the age of 18 are more stringent than those for adult workers.

- [Sheffield Star. TUC young workers webpages. Hazards young workers news and resources.](#)

HSE warning after Romanian loses leg

Employers must ensure all workers including migrants are informed about safety procedures, the UK safety watchdog has said. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) warning came after a Romanian worker lost his right leg at a London recycling firm. Ethos Recycling Limited, formerly known as Sweeney Environmental Limited, of Uxbridge was fined £35,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,904 at the City of London Magistrates Court on 26 September 2007, after pleading guilty to two safety breaches. Nicolai Danut-Puiu, 38, a Romanian national who understood little English and had been working as a labourer at the site for a few weeks, was in the loading shed sorting waste when he was struck by a 20 tonne loading shovel. His right leg had to be amputated. HSE's investigation found that there were no clearly identified walkways on site, which meant that heavy plant and pedestrians had to operate in dangerously close proximity to each other. Zameer Bhunnoo, HSE's investigating inspector, said: “With the increase of foreign workers in Britain, it is essential that companies who need their skills take care to ensure workers fully understand what is required of them, and how to avoid risks in the workplace. In addition, the risks arising from the movement of vehicles in the workplace

must be properly controlled. Workplace transport continues to be one of the main causes of fatal and major injuries.”

- [HSE news release. TUC vulnerable worker webpages and migrant workers webpages. TUC migrant workers' safety guide \[pdf\]. Hazards migrant workers webpages.](#)

Pizza chef stabbed to death

A murder investigation has been launched after a pizza chef was stabbed to death with his own kitchen knife in Clapham, south London. The man, believed to be Mojtaba Hidari, was pronounced dead by a doctor outside Pizza Go Go. Iranian-born Mr Hidari, who was employed at the takeaway, was attacked as he was preparing ingredients. Officers were called by the London Ambulance Service (LAS), which had sent a fast response car, an ambulance and air ambulance to the scene after they received reports of a stabbing. The murder is being investigated by the Homicide and Serious Crimes Command, led by DCI Mick Duthie. In the USA, occupational homicide is the top cause of death in official work fatality figures, contributing about 800 deaths each year to the workplace toll. In the UK, murders while working are not included in workplace fatality figures, which also exclude deaths in road traffic accidents while working and work deaths investigated by other enforcement authorities, including the Civil Aviation Authority and the Marine Standards Agency ([Risks 325](#)).

- [This is local London. US NIOSH guidance on occupational violence.](#)

Liverpool council workers poorly protected

Workers at Liverpool City Council are not being provided the legally required level of occupational health support, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has said. HSE has issued

the local authority with an improvement notice requiring it to improve occupational health services for its 19,000 staff or face legal action. It said the council at the moment only acted after workers had become ill, but was not taking the necessary action to prevent work-related ill-health. The HSE move follows similar action against Dundee council last year ([Risks 292](#)). HSE investigators recently visited the Liverpool council and found it was not carrying out regular checks or screening to protect the health of its staff. In fact, the contract awarded for occupational health by the authority did not even include provisions to try to prevent illness and injury among the council employees. OH Solutions, the company which operates the council's occupational health service, said apart from hearing tests for call centre workers, it was only contracted to provide services after an employee became ill or was injured. A Liverpool council spokesperson said a project team had been established to draw up an action plan to implement the changes needed to comply with the improvement notice. An HSE spokesperson told the Liverpool Daily Post: "The belief was that the council reacted to illnesses well once they occurred but was not proactive in preventing them."

- [Liverpool Daily Post](#).
- [Trade union guide to occupational health services](#).

Smoke clears for bar staff

England's smoking ban has led to healthier workplaces in the hospitality industry, according to new research. In the first report into the impact of the English ban, which was introduced in July, scientists discovered firm evidence of its benefits. Researchers from Edinburgh and Aberdeen universities analysed the saliva of 39 non-smoking workers before and after the smoking ban came into force. The researchers found that non-smoking hospitality workers had four times less cotinine – a by-product of nicotine and indicator of tobacco smoke

exposure – in their saliva in August than they had in June. The level of cotinine is taken as a good indication of how much cigarette smoke has entered the body. They calculated that on average, employees' exposure was the equivalent to smoking 190 cigarettes a year before the legislation, and this dropped to the equivalent of around 44 cigarettes after. The researchers assessed the air quality in almost 40 venues across the country – including pubs, bars and restaurants. They found that levels of 'small particles' in the air contained in cigarette smoke dropped from near hazardous levels in June to levels that are similar to the outside air in August. Prior to the legislation, 84 per cent of employees thought second hand smoke at work put their health at risk. One month on, just over half of employees believed their health was better as a result of the law. The impact on businesses turned out to be better than business owners expected in June, when over half said the law would have a negative effect on their trade. When asked in August 70 per cent said the law had a positive or no impact on their trade.

- [CRUK news release](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Hazards smoking news and resources](#)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

France: Survey confirms firm's deadly stresses

A trade union survey has confirmed high levels of work-related stress at a French car factory that has been hit by a series of suicides ([Risks 312](#)). In recent months, five employees of the Peugeot Citroën factory in Mulhouse, in the east of France, have killed themselves. These deaths came at a time the firm was pushing through a large-scale work reorganisation programme to in a bid to lower production costs. Press reports say unions at the factory decided to undertake a working conditions survey. The 800 responses from 4,000 questionnaires handed out indicated that almost two-thirds of employees (63 per cent) believed their work was becoming more strenuous. Among those whose work has

undergone restructuring, the percentage was higher still, at 68 per cent. About eight out of every 10 workers complained of high stress levels. A third of these employees had problems sleeping and 70 per cent said they were irritable due to work. Suicides linked to work stress have recently captured the headlines in France. Car manufacturer Renault has also seen an increase in suicides that have been linked by unions to stressful working conditions. In the past year, four employees working at the Renault technical centre have taken their own lives ([Risks 316](#)).

- [ETUI-REHS news report](#). [More on work and suicide](#).

Ireland: Watchdog to pursue 'trouble free' firms

Just because a firm does not report any accidents, doesn't mean accidents are not occurring there, Ireland's safety watchdog has said. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) says companies with a history of not reporting or under-reporting workplace accidents are about to come under additional scrutiny. HSA chief Martin O'Halloran said that under-reporting of workplace accidents was a symptom of a lack of proper attention to health and safety issues within a firm. From 1 October HSA inspectors have been under orders to zero in on firms with suspiciously low accident reports. Announcing the initiative earlier this year, Mr O'Halloran said: "The evidence available to us is that there is wide scale under reporting of accidents and serious incidents. It is our belief that under reporting is good indicator of a poor safety culture and practice in a firm." Jim Lyons, chair of the HSA board, said: "We continue to rigorously enforce the law while at the same time working to build a national culture of health and safety in the workplace. In the UK, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has recently stressed it intends to concentrate its enforcement effort on firms with poor safety records. However, evidence that under-reporting is widespread in the UK ([Risks 296](#)) and the logical suspicion it will be the more responsible firms that are most

likely to report accidents, could result in this strategy seeing the most irresponsible companies even less likely to fall under HSE's gaze.

- [HSA news release](#).

North America: Cut lumber not safety

On 29 September 2007, the United Steelworkers union (USW) organised a North America-wide "Cut lumber, not safety" day of action at Home Depot stores in 150 cities. The action was in support of more than 7,000 forestry workers in British Columbia (BC), Canada, on strike against companies including Western Forest Products, Interfor and Weyerhaeuser since 21 July ([Risks 324](#)). The campaign borrows techniques targeting consumers that have been used successfully by environmental campaigners. "We would like consumers to avoid purchasing these labelled products and we urge Home Depot and all other retailers and distributors to avoid carrying these wood products," said USW Western Canada director Steve Hunt. Thousands of USW members, leaders, activists and families have handed out flyers about the dispute at stores throughout the USA and Canada. By focusing on customers, the union intends to escalate the strike and catch the attention of company shareholders. "We will stand by our members for as long as it takes," said Leo W Gerard, USW international president. "The desire for corporate profits should not be an excuse to strip workers of their rights and dignity, let alone their well-being and ability to provide for their families." Since January 2005, some 65 BC forest workers have been killed.

- [USW news release](#). [BWI news release](#). [Vancouver Sun](#).

RESOURCES

Global asbestos ban plan

Top international agencies are pushing forward with a plan for a worldwide asbestos ban. While asbestos is banned throughout the EU and in a number of other countries, usage of the fatal fibre in some developing nations has been increasing. Now the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have prepared an 'Outline for the development of national programmes for elimination of asbestos-related diseases.' ILO says: "This Outline has been developed to give effect to the ILO 2006 resolution on asbestos adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2006 and to the WHO position paper on elimination of asbestos related diseases. The document is intended to assist countries in establishing their national programmes for the elimination of asbestos-related diseases (NPEAD). It is a tool for increasing policy coherence for reducing and finally phasing out the use of asbestos and asbestos-containing materials."

- [ILO publication alert](#). Outline for the development of national programmes for elimination of asbestos-related diseases [[pdf](#)]. ILO 2006 resolution on asbestos [[pdf](#)]. [WHO position paper on elimination of asbestos related diseases](#) [[pdf](#)].

Getting to grips with strain injuries

Three simple letters - MSD – identify the leading cause of occupational illness in Europe, according to the European trade union safety thinktank, REHS. Its new guide to musculoskeletal disorders – MSDs – provides a “summary of the current scientific knowledge of this complex group of pathologies, examines the connection between MSD and changes in the organisation of work and proposes ideas for a necessary trade union mobilisation against this exploding health problem.” The REHS guide is a useful addition to a union rep’s or trade union education centre library on the issue. This year’s European health and safety week, 22-26

October, is on the MSD theme, so there’s another reason to buy a copy.

- Musculoskeletal disorders. An ill-understood pandemic. [Further details and online order form](#).
- More on Euroweek: [TUC course briefing and application form](#) [[pdf](#)]. [TUC 21-26 October 2007 Euroweek webpages](#). [TUC RSI webpages](#). TUC guide on inspections [[pdf](#)]. Inspection and report forms are also available on the [HSE safety reps' webpages](#). [HSE better backs campaign](#).
- [TUC Education MSD training courses](#). Courses: London - 22/23 October, Congress House; Manchester - 22-23 October, City College; Glasgow - 24-25 October, Stow College, West campus; South Wales - 24-25 October, Bridgend College.

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