



Risks Newsletter



Number 333 – 24 November 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](#).

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UNION NEWS

Call for tough action on safety 'crime wave'

There must be tougher enforcement action to tackle a workplace health and safety "crime wave", the TUC has said. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber told a conference this week there are at least 20,000 work-related deaths and 2.2 million injuries every year. He said the 241 fatalities in 2006/07 "only tells us part of the story. We have to remember the 5,000 people killed last year because of asbestos exposure, the thousand killed in work-related road accidents, the many thousands killed by workplace cancers every year, as well as those who suffer heart attacks as a result of overwork or stress." Mr Barber told the Centre for Corporate Accountability conference: "Nobody knows exactly how many people die prematurely every year as a result of work, but is certainly well over 20,000 a year - and every single one of these deaths was avoidable. The HSE estimates that over 80 per cent of injuries are a direct result of management failures. This means that the vast majority of deaths are simply down to management breaking health and safety laws. The same is true of the 2.2 million people who are suffering from an illness they believed was caused or made worse by their work." Mr Barber concluded: "To me this is a crime wave on a massive scale. A crime wave that screams out for action. Evidence shows the most effective way to change behaviour is strong enforcement action, supported by advice and guidance. And there is also evidence of a clear link between enforcement levels and injury rates. So if we know enforcement works, then why are we not doing more to enforce the law?" Part of the answer lies in the government's attitude towards enforcement, with some ministers and agencies talking up the importance of enforcement, and others actively working against it, he said. "If one half of the government sees regulation as a dirty word, then it makes life very difficult for the other half who recognise the importance of protecting the vulnerable. Unfortunately, the government seems to have been taken in by employer lobbying about so-called 'red tape'." He called for statutory safety duties on company directors and stricter penalties for safety offences. "But most of all, we want more inspections and

enforcement activity," he said. Mr Barber said cuts in the HSE budget had to be reversed to make this a possibility.

- [TUC news release](#). [CCA news release](#). [FACK news release](#). [UNISON news release](#). [Personnel Today](#). [People Management](#).
- [CCA conference papers](#).

Migrant worker misery is a pub grub ingredient

Food and snacks eaten in pubs, canteens and on trains across the country could have been prepared by migrant workers working in "Dickensian sweatshop conditions", a union is warning clients and customers. Unite is concerned that young Polish workers, some of whom are members of Unite, employed by salad and vegetable preparation company Just Prepared are forced to work all day in sodden clothing, cannot access toilets during a shift without permission and at times work up to 16 hours a day. They have no contracts of employment, no training in the safe use of knives and inadequate protective clothing. One worker cut himself on the hand so badly he almost severed a ligament, but was prevented from obtaining necessary hospital treatment. Two young Polish workers were dismissed when they spoke out. Unite is challenging their dismissal and wants the employer to address urgently employment and health and safety abuses at the company. Unite regional industrial officer, Adrian Jones, said: "These workers have experienced a very distressing time at the hands of their employer, who made the most of their vulnerability and isolation to work them as hard as they possibly could without due regard for the workers' health or safety. It is Dickensian, more in line with the nineteenth than the twenty-first century and another case of the sweatshop abuse of migrant workers." Although the employer operates in the gangmasters-regulated sector - this covers agriculture and food processing - the Gangmasters Licensing Authority has no remit to intervene to protect these workers because the

company is supplying a product and not labour. “This is a serious loophole,” he said. “Bad employers do not fear the law, either because they know they can escape detection or because, as in this case, the law does not reach them.”

- [Unite news release.](#)

Launch of cyberspace solution to cyberbullies

A teaching union has kicked off a major UK-wide campaign to combat ‘cyberbullying’ of teachers. NASUWT has created a new online resource where teachers can support the campaign and tell their cyberbullying story. Wristbands and phone charms with the message ‘Stop cyberbullying’ are being distributed. It says every school across the UK has received posters and flyers urging support for the campaign. Chris Keates, general secretary of NASUWT, said: “Whilst the government’s focus has understandably been on pupils, the workforce must not be forgotten. Teachers need protection too.” She added: “Mobile phones capture videos and pictures of teachers at work. Distorted images are transferred to the phones of other pupils across the school or onto the internet. Emails are used to abuse, harass and insult. But possibly the most destructive development is the introduction and growth in popularity of websites such as YouTube, Bebo and RateMyTeacher. These extend the opportunities for pupils to humiliate teachers. They actively encourage the abuse of school staff.” She said as a consequence of the ridicule and false and malicious allegations endured by teachers “self-esteem and sometimes their health is seriously affected. Publicly available, derogatory remarks about teachers can damage career progression. There is clear evidence that employers are trawling these sites to find out information about current and prospective employees. Whilst the government is to be congratulated on issuing guidance on the cyberbullying of pupils, there is a need to tackle specifically, in discrete guidance, the cyberbullying of teachers.”

- [NASUWT news release. Stop Cyberbullying webpages.](#)

Contractor threat to shipyard safety

Contractors working at A&P Falmouth are undermining health and safety and long standing agreements at the shipyard, the union GMB has said. It is particularly concerned migrant workers employed by contractors at the Cornish workplace could be vulnerable to health and safety risks. GMB organiser Kevin Mason said: “GMB is seeking an assurance that all workers on site at Falmouth will receive the agreed pay rates and conditions of service that the management signed up to with the trade unions. GMB wants an assurance that the contractors operating on the site will follow the joint agreements.” He added: “GMB is also concerned about adherence to health and safety standards in this potentially dangerous industry as well as potentially unsafe working practices. Of particular concern to GMB is that some contractors are employing vulnerable migrant workers who may lack the necessary language skills and qualifications to operate safely on the site. Any fall in the standards on the site could damage the reputation of A&P Falmouth as a shipyard with a proud history of excellence. GMB is seeking an urgent meeting to discuss this matter with the yard management.”

- [GMB news release.](#)

Lack of safety at ports puts lives at risk

Government ministers got a broadside from a working tugman last week over their failure to give sufficient priority to health and safety in UK ports and harbours. Speaking at the 1st Annual UK Ports and Shipping Conference, Unite member Richard Crease said the union had serious concerns about safety. “I have worked for 26 years as a tugman at the Port of Southampton. We have been very concerned that

the government intends to continue, for the foreseeable future, broadly its present policies in regard to safety within the ports,” he told the conference. “We believe that the Department of Transport's recent Port Policy document does not give sufficient priority to the subjects of the safety, welfare and security of employment of the workforce employed in the ports industry.” Striking a note of cautious optimism he said “we note the inclusion in the Queen's Speech of a draft Marine Navigation and Port Safety Bill and will look forward to further developments which we sincerely hope will improve safety within the ports.” Mr Crease called for tighter legislation on container safety, warning national and international action must be taken before “more port workers are injured or killed” and slammed the way that official accident statistics underplayed the dangers dock workers face. “These are serious issues which the government, the industry, docks and harbour authorities and operators simply cannot duck,” he said after his speech.

- [Unite news release.](#)

Port worker receives asbestos settlement

A retired Port of London Authority (PLA) worker has received £23,500 compensation after being diagnosed with asbestos-related pleural thickening. Unite secured the compensation for Terence O’Connell, 84, who worked for the PLA from 1937 until 1975, save for the wartime years when he served in the RAF. He started as a boy messenger and by the time of retirement, was manager of the Orsett container base. While working as a customs clearing clerk in the 1950s and 1960s, he was exposed to asbestos at the South West India Docks when supervising the discharge of asbestos cargo. Mr O’Connell said: “I suffered from a very dry cough which I could not shake off. My GP referred me to hospital where I had a CT scan. I was told that I had asbestos-related pleural thickening. This came as a terrible shock and was completely unexpected. I have kept myself active and fit all my life.” Mr O’Connell’s solicitor, Paul Meehan, commented:

“Like the majority of workers at that time, Mr O’Connell was never warned by his employers of the dangers of working with asbestos. At that time, the PLA knew or should have known, that asbestos was a dangerous material and it was legally obliged to protect its workers from exposure to asbestos.”

- [Pattinson & Brewer news release.](#)

Drivers get slip up payouts

A bus driver and a lorry driver have received compensation after slipping at work. London bus driver Stephen Jacobs received £6,000 compensation after falling on a wet floor after leaving a toilet at a terminus. The Unite member hit the doorframe of the canteen door as he fell, dislocating his left little finger and suffered a soft tissue injury to his left hand. He said: “My fingers were strapped together for 6 weeks and when the strapping came off I could barely move my fingers and had to have physiotherapy to help me to move my little finger again.” His solicitor, Deborah Smith, said: “Cresswell Office Services Limited strenuously defended the claim and settled just two weeks before the trial was due to be heard. They claimed the floor was dry, as their cleaner had removed the signs once the floor had dried, blaming wet weather. Given the overwhelming evidence in support of my client’s claim, this is a difficult argument to comprehend. I am pleased that Mr Jacobs has finally been awarded the compensation to which he was clearly entitled.” Simon Omer, an HGV driver with supermarket chain Sainsburys received £5,250 after slipping and injuring his left knee. The Unite member slipped on the steps of a works vehicle. Representing Mr Omer for the union, Marcus Weatherby, from Pattinson & Brewer solicitors, said: “The step in question should have been covered with anti-slip material. The metal step was smooth, slippery and hazardous. Had there been a non-slip surface, this accident would have been avoided”.

- [Pattinson & Brewer news releases on the](#)

[Jacobs](#) and the [Omer](#) cases.

Six figure payout for job ending injury

A Merseyside man whose life has been seriously impaired as a result of a serious back injury at work has received a six-figure payout from Glen Dimplex Cooking. The 61-year-old Unite member from Prescot, worked as a facilities engineer for the firm and sustained a serious back injury when he fell down a damp sloping grass verge whilst reading meters at one of the firm's factory buildings. He was awarded £250,000 compensation in the union-backed claim. The injured man explained: "I injured my back very badly but I still tried to continue working for four months. I was given pain killing injections which allowed me to return to work part time in but I was unable to continue any further." He added: "I had an operation on my back in March 2004 and was sadly retired in April 2005. The accident has ruined my life; I now live with considerable pain and I've had to give up most of my pre-accident activities." Unite regional secretary Laurence Faircloth commented: "This was a very serious accident that could easily have been avoided had the employer carried out his obligations to provide a safe working environment with the support of risk assessments."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

OTHER NEWS

'Tougher' work tests for disabled

New incapacity benefit tests planned for next year mean fewer sick and disabled people will qualify as being unable to work. Work and pensions secretary Peter Hain said the changes, due to be introduced in October 2008, will end "sick-note Britain." The Department for Work and Pensions estimates that about 2.64 million

people currently claim incapacity benefits. The new work capability assessment, which will cover the entire UK, is being introduced alongside the employment support allowance - which will replace incapacity benefits for new claimants from next autumn. At the moment more than 60 per cent of the people who apply for incapacity benefits are successful, but only 50 per cent of people who take the new test are likely to pass it. Those who fail will be expected to seek work. Tests such as being able to walk more than 400 metres (437 yards) or being able to climb 12 steps without the aid of a banister will be abolished. The new test will look at other skills, such as a person's ability to use a computer keyboard or a mouse. Mr Hain said: "We want to help people, not punish people. This is about giving people opportunities because you are better off in work - the evidence shows that."

- [DWP news release. Transformation of the Personal Capability Assessment - Technical Working Group's Phase 2 Evaluation Report.](#)

Concerns about new work capability tests

Disability, work policy and union organisations have warned changes next year to the incapacity benefit system risk penalising and harassing the sick and those with disabilities. Commenting on the new incapacity test to be introduced in October 2008, Sophie Corlett, policy director at mental health charity Mind, said there was a danger that those forced to return to work prematurely would see their health deteriorate, meaning that "their chances of working actually diminishes." The TUC said returning the sick to work required cooperation, not coercion. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The government must get people back to work through access to rehabilitation and support. Government pilots, such as Pathways to Work, have shown that this is the most effective approach. Removing benefits or introducing new tests will only force people back to work before they are ready. This will not benefit UK business or the taxpayer." The Work Foundation's David

Coats said it is important the government “does not begin pandering to ill-informed sentiments”. He said: “Evidence gives little credence to ‘sick-note Britain’: sickness absence in the UK compares favourably with most European countries. In addition, the fact that some disabilities are ‘psychological’ as opposed to ‘physical’ does not make them less ‘real’. Although the occupational illnesses that affect the most people in the UK remain conditions such as back pain and muscular injuries rather than stress or anxiety.” Phil Gray, chief executive of physios’ union CSP said: “Investment now in rapid early intervention and rehabilitation by physiotherapists will lead to long-term savings - for the NHS and for the wider UK economy.”

- [Mind news release](#). [Disability Alliance news release](#). [CSP news release](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Daily Record](#). [Personnel Today](#).

Corporate killers must face mega-fines

Companies whose neglect results in deaths should face fines running to hundreds of millions of pounds, government law advisers have said. A corporate accountability group, however, has said the proposed penalties are still “simply too low.” The Sentencing Advisory Panel (SAP) advised last week that firms found guilty in court should be hit with penalties of as much as 10 per cent of their annual turnover. After the Hatfield train derailment that claimed four lives in 2000, health and safety convictions led to maintenance firm Balfour Beatty being fined £7.5 million and Network Rail £3.5 million. If it was fined 10 per cent of its latest annual turnover, Balfour Beatty would have to pay up almost £200 million and Network Rail £600 million. The SAP advice comes ahead of the new corporate manslaughter law, which takes effect next April and introduces in a legal principle of “senior management failure.” SAP said that a firm convicted of a first offence of corporate manslaughter after pleading not guilty should pay a fine of five per cent of its turnover, averaged over three years. Depending on how badly the company had behaved, the fine could range between 2.5 and 10 per cent of

turnover, it added. In its consultation paper, SAP said judges should also name and shame guilty companies, even making them take out adverts to publicise their convictions. These “publicity orders” will hit firms’ share value and order books, the advisers said. David Bergman, executive director of the Centre for Corporate Accountability (CCA) was critical, saying the fines proposed were lower than those for breaches of European competition law, and adding “in light of the seriousness of the criminal offence of corporate manslaughter, our initial response is that the proposed levels of fines are simply too low. The CCA also believes that the current provisions in the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 - principally fines and publicity orders - fail to address the need for a full range of effective corporate penalties available to the courts.”

- [CCA news release](#). Sentencing guidelines news release [\[pdf\]](#). [Sentencing guidelines website](#). [Evening Standard](#). [Daily Mail](#).
- Consultation paper on sentencing for corporate manslaughter [\[pdf\]](#), responses by 7 February 2008.

Wimpey fined £300,000 over trench tragedy

George Wimpey (North East) Ltd has been fined £300,000 after an incident in which a site worker employed by a sub-contractor was crushed to death. Neil Dunstan, 41, died when a 9ft trench he was working in collapsed on him. A second worker, Karl Buck, 28, was badly hurt in the accident at a building site near Skelton on 8 March 2004. George Wimpey (North East) Ltd and sub-contractor AW Cowan (Groundworks) Ltd were sentenced at Teesside Crown Court last week for criminal health and safety offences. Judge Peter Bowers said the tragedy was “entirely avoidable” in a situation amounting to “gross negligence”. The judge fined Wimpey £300,000 and ordered the firm to pay £28,367 costs. Bryan Cox QC, prosecuting, said the trenches should have been supported, but these safety measures had not been put in place. He

said the trenches had collapsed on an earlier date, 16 February, which should have alerted workers to the danger. AW Cowan (Groundworks), which employed both Mr Dunstan and Mr Buck, admitted failing to ensure the health and safety of its employees at the site. It was fined £20,000 with £5,000 costs. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector Michael Brown said after the case: “This fatality and the serious injury could easily have been prevented if the appropriate safety measures had been taken. Trench collapses are entirely avoidable. Without suitable support, any vertical face of an excavation will collapse; it's just a matter of when. If heavy machinery is operated on the edge of the excavation, as happened in this case, an earlier collapse is inevitable. Excavation work has to be properly planned, managed, supervised and carried out to prevent accidents.” George Wimpey’s parent company, Taylor Wimpey – Britain’s largest house builder - had a revenue of £2,671.9 million in the first six months of 2007. Its first half profits before tax were £140.9 million.

- [HSE news release. Taylor Wimpey Interim Results Statement 2007. Northern Echo. The Gazette.](#)

Inspector unearths more dust disease

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector Andrea Robbins has unearthed a second case of a stonemason suffering a potentially fatal dust disease. Dunhouse Quarry Co Ltd of Staindrop, Darlington, was fined £3,750 and ordered to pay costs of £8,177.40 after an unannounced inspection by Ms Robbins discovered the employee had contracted silicosis and that a number of others had been exposed to levels of respirable crystalline silica (RCS) in excess of the workplace exposure limit. Silica dust levels had previously been found to be over 100 times than the current legal exposure limit. In October, Robert Thomas Charlton, trading as Border Stone Quarries, was fined £6,000 plus £7,602 costs at Tynedale Magistrates' Court, after Ms Robbins discovered another case of silicosis in a

stonemason at a separate quarry ([Risks 327](#)). “Breathing in the very fine dust of crystalline silica can lead to the development of silicosis, which in its most acute form can result in premature death,” she said. “It is vital employers monitor dust levels to assess the risk of exposure to RCS, and that they put control measures in place to reduce the levels to which employees are exposed, and consequently reduce their risk of developing silicosis.” Commenting on the latest prosecution, she said: “What makes this particular situation worse is that the company had previously commissioned the services of an external company to carry out atmospheric monitoring of dust levels, including RCS but did nothing to act upon the findings despite one employee being exposed to levels up to 45 times the maximum exposure limit as it was then, which was three times higher than the current workplace exposure limit. This prosecution serves to publicise the need for employers to be vigilant in identifying substances which can affect their workers' health.” Silica exposure can also cause cancer and autoimmune diseases.

- [HSE news release.](#)

Oil firms ‘must improve safety’

North Sea oil companies have been told that more must be done to improve their offshore safety record. The instruction follows a three-year investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Its ‘KP3’ report revealed a wide variation in performance across the sector and “worrying” variations within some companies. The report said some senior managers failed to make ongoing maintenance a priority. Ian Whewell, head of HSE's offshore division, said: “To prevent major accidents it is vital that companies have effective process safety systems to ensure plant and equipment is properly maintained and working as intended. Our advice to the industry is clear - when looking at and testing systems and procedures on installations, companies must ensure that all those parts that need to work together to prevent a major incident do precisely that.” Health and Safety

Commission chair, Judith Hackett commented: “Whilst the sector has co-operated fully with us over the last three years, there can be no mistaking our message to those in the boardrooms of the oil and gas offshore companies – there is still much more to do and those in a position of leadership must ensure that systems, procedures and best practice is adopted to achieve the goal of the UK continental shelf becoming the safest offshore sector by 2010.” Malcolm Webb, chief executive of Oil and Gas UK, conceded “the report highlights that there is work still to be done and that in some areas we are not yet where we need to be.” HSE recently upheld a number of claims by offshore unions that Shell was not doing enough to ensure safety offshore ([Risks 332](#)). Graham Tran, regional officer of the Unite union, said the report indicated that there were a number of “bad players” who were putting lives at risk for the sake of a barrel of oil. “Oil companies will make huge profits; there is no excuse for falling short on safety”, he said. “Oil companies must implement the proper procedures and make the necessary upgrades to these installations immediately. Otherwise it’s time to name and shame the bad players and have them removed from the North Sea”.

- [HSE news release](#) and [related reports](#). [BBC News Online](#).

Migrant workers killed in van smash

Three migrant workers were killed and another eight workers hospitalised in a head-on crash at Croft, near Skegness, at about 7am on Tuesday 13 November. The collision involved a white Leyland van travelling south and a black Rover 600 going in the opposite direction. The dead were Polish woman Irena Polak, 47, from Skegness, who was a passenger in the van, and Lithuanians Zenonas Buza, 22, and Sandra Bredelyte, 22, both from Wrangle, near Boston, who were in the front of the Rover. The Reverend David de Verny, the migrant workers' chaplain for Lincolnshire, expressed his concerns about the general safety of foreign workers being

transported on county roads each day. He said: “There are hundreds of these mini vans across the county and over the border. There is a criss-crossing every morning and every evening. In a way I am surprised there has not been an accident like this since the last one.” Mr de Verny urged foreign workers worried about the conditions of their transport to get in touch with police or the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA). Mrs Polak’s son, Simon, 24, said: “Like me, my mother came to the UK in search of a better quality of life.” He said initially she worked for a local horticultural business. At the end of that contract she started work for a Benington-based vegetable processing company. The tragedy evoked memories a Valentine's Day 2006 car crash in which five migrant workers from Grantham, Lincolnshire, were killed ([Risks 244](#)).

- [Lincolnshire Echo](#).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Canada: Asbestos exports on the increase

A major sales drive by Canada’s asbestos industry has seen asbestos exports to some developing nations increase dramatically. Exports to Brazil in the period January-August 2007 were three times the volume for the same period in 2006. Canadian asbestos exports to the Dominican Republic doubled and Bangladesh saw its imports increase by 69.9 per cent. An analysis of official figures by the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS) notes that even as proposed legislation to ban asbestos in the US was being discussed in the Senate, the country's use of asbestos rose by 15.4 per cent. “The seemingly insatiable Canadian thirst for asbestos profits has incentivised JM Inc. and LAB Chrysotile Mines, rival Quebec asbestos companies, to cooperate in the creation of a joint sales agency: Chrysotile Canada Inc (CCI) which will, so industry lobbyists say, help the industry counter stiff overseas competition,” wrote IBAS coordinator Laurie Allen. Seventy-five per cent of

Canadian asbestos exports go to Asian countries, the analysis shows. The top five regional markets are India – which imported C\$25,196,357 (£12,420,000) worth of Canadian asbestos between January and August 2007, followed by Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand and Bangladesh. The IBAS analysis cites Dr Barry Castleman, an internationally respected expert on asbestos, who criticised the Canadian government and industry line justifying safe “controlled use” of Canadian asbestos in developing nations. He commented: “Anyone who says there's a controlled use of asbestos in the Third World is either a liar or a fool.”

- [Canadian asbestos: The naked truth](#), IBAS, November 2007. New [International Ban Asbestos Secretariat \(IBAS\)](#) website.

New Zealand: Worker participation key to health and safety improvements

“Involving workers in managing health and safety at work is a key to improving our record in this area,” NZCTU secretary Carol Beaumont has said. Her comments followed the release this week of the New Zealand government’s Workplace Health and Safety Strategy second progress report. “Workers want safe workplaces and to feel confident that they will return home from work at the end of each day, and so health and safety is a core union concern,” she said. “For our part, we are proud to have trained 18,000 health and safety reps elected under the Health and Safety in Employment Act. Elected health and safety reps make an important contribution to improving New Zealand’s safety culture. This representative model of worker participation is a significant step towards a productive, participative workplace. We want to continue to build on this, and increase the representation of different groups of workers as reps.” Amendments in 2002 to occupational health and safety legislation, the influx of new elected safety reps and national coordination introduced through the tripartite Workplace Health and Safety Council and its strategy were all positive steps, Ms Beaumont said. “Through

the Workplace Health and Safety Council and in other ways, we will continue to work with government and business to keep momentum going on improving our health and safety performance, for the betterment of all New Zealanders.”

- [NZCTU news release. NZ Department of Labour news release, snapshot report and Workplace Health and Safety Strategy webpages.](#)
- [NZCTU’s Worksafe Reps website.](#)

Ukraine: A hundred feared dead in mine blast

At least 90 miners died in an 18 November blast at a mine in Ukraine, making it the worst mining accident in the nation's history, officials say. The explosion, caused by a build-up of methane gas, occurred more than 1,000m (3,280ft) below ground in the Zasiadko coalmine, in Donetsk, East Ukraine. Fires hindered rescue efforts. The head of the Ukrainian Free Miners' Union, Mykhailo Volynets, said it was now certain that all the missing men had died, which would mean the final fatality figure was 100. Prime minister Viktor Yanukovich said on Sunday that a safety watchdog had reported that miners were working in accordance with regulations. “This accident has proven once again that a human is powerless before the nature,” Mr Yanukovich said, according to the Associated Press news agency. But President Yushchenko said the government had “made insufficient efforts to reorganise the mining sector, particularly the implementation of safe mining practices.” Global union confederation ITUC said it wanted an enquiry to be set up as quickly as possible, in consultation with trade union organisations, to establish the circumstances behind the disaster. “The ITUC shares the grief of the families mourning the miners killed in this disaster”, said ITUC general secretary Guy Ryder. “Everything must be done to ensure that safety is ensured in the mines on a permanent basis.”

- [ITUC news release](#), [BBC News Online](#) and [related photographs](#).

RESOURCES

Cancer resource on YouTube

Top UK toxicologist Professor Vyvyan Howard has taken awareness raising on occupational and environmental cancer out to the YouTube generation. Two video clips warn that what you breathe, swallow and touch at work and where you live can seriously affect your chances of developing cancer – and this risk has increased dramatically as a consequence of industrialisation.

- [The rise in cancer - Part 1](#), [The rise in cancer - Part 2](#).
- [Global union zero cancer campaign](#).

ACTION

Have you made slips and trips fall?

Lots of you out there have got to grips with trips, slips and falls at work, so tell us how you did it. TUC is seeking union case histories to be included on a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) slips, trips and falls campaign website and other resources. Just jot down a couple of paragraphs describing what you did and why you did it – and if you have evidence it really worked, better still. Photographs are welcome too.

- Email your case histories before 30 November to the [TUC health and safety department](#), [HSE falls webpages](#).

EVENTS AND COURSES

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 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