



Risks Newsletter

**HAZARDS
MAGAZINE**

Falls from vehicles
campaign 2007

Number 343 – 16 February 2008



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

- Go on, work your proper hours!
- Tube driver gets RSI compo go-ahead
- Attacks on fire crews increasing
- Concern at 'unqualified' Tube contractors
- Six figure payout for serious injury

• OTHER NEWS

- Payout too late for asbestos poster girl
- Former nurse gets asbestos cancer
- Mental health nurses face attacks
- Job applicants facing more drug tests
- Oil platform closed due to safety problems

- Safety breaches shut 10 out of 11 sites
- Family dismay at teen's work death fines
- **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**
- Canada: First conviction under work deaths law
- Global: Governments told to act on asbestos
- USA: Newspaper exposes poultry industry horrors
- USA: What to do when the watchdog won't watch?
- **RESOURCES**
- Safety crimes
- The dangerous world of child labour
- **EVENTS AND COURSES**
- Action Mesothelioma Day, 27 February 2008
- International RSI Day, 29 February 2008
- TUC courses for safety reps
- **USEFUL LINKS**

UNION NEWS

Go on, work your proper hours!

Nearly five million people are putting in an average of over seven hours unpaid overtime a week. If they worked all their unpaid overtime at the start of the year, 22 February would be the first day they'd get paid, which is why the TUC have named this date 'Work Your Proper Hours Day'. It is calling on workers to mark this day by turning up for work on time, taking a proper lunch break and leaving when they're meant to – we know, hardly radical. TUC wants you to spread the word to colleagues, friends and family. You can order workplace posters and postcards for your workplace - up to 100 each for free from the dedicated Work Your Proper Hours Day website. This year, TUC is scouring the country to find the best and worst workplaces for unpaid overtime, and is publishing an online work-life map showing where workers are fine and workers are fried. A new interactive quiz on the website will help you to find out if your workplace is afflicted with the unpaid overtime bug and rate your workplace for managing your hours. And you can pass on your experiences for inclusion on the TUC rant blog.

- [TUC news release. Work Your Proper Hours Day, 22 February 2008. Work-life map. Play the break time game. Download or order free postcards and posters. Send your boss a secret boss-a-gram.](#)

Tube driver gets RSI compo go-ahead

A Tube driver has been granted permission to sue London Underground (LUL) after developing a debilitating wrist injury. RMT member Latona Allison developed the repetitive strain injury tenosynovitis in her right wrist and now cannot work as a driver. She claims she was not given adequate training in the use of the safety brake when a new design was introduced. Ms Allison began work for LUL in 1996 and trained as a driver on the Northern Line before she was diagnosed in 2003. A County Court judge initially threw out her claim but three judges at the Court of Appeal said she did have a case and could go back to court for an assessment of

damages unless an agreement was reached. Lord Justice Smith said in a judgment that LUL should not have introduced a new design for the safety device without taking advice from an expert. The court said judges have been giving insufficient attention to risk assessments in the years since the duty was introduced. “Risk assessments are meant to be an exercise by which the employer examines and evaluates all the risks entailed in his operations and takes steps to remove or minimise those risks,” they said. “They should be a blueprint for action.” Henrietta Phillips, Ms Allison's solicitor at Thompsons Solicitors, said: “Risk assessments were intended to be a proactive duty on employers when the requirement to carry them out became law in 1992. Yet increasingly judges, when asked to decide if an employer has been in breach of that duty, drift back to the common law where a risk had to be brought to an employers' attention before an assessment is carried out.” She said the “decision is extremely good news for workers and sends a clear message to employers about their duties to protect their employees' health and safety.”

- [Ms Latona Allison \(Appellant\) and London Underground Ltd](#), [2008] EWCA Civ 71, Case No: B3/2007/0536, 13 February 2008. [Thompsons Solicitors news releases. BBC News Online.](#)

Attacks on fire crews increasing

The number of violent attacks on fire crews in England and Wales is going up despite official claims to the contrary, research for firefighters' union FBU has found. Assaults increased by 15 per cent last year but government statistics showed a fall of 68 per cent, according to ‘Easy targets?’, the research report. FBU says attacks on fire crews have become a “recreational activity” in parts of Britain. It is calling for more protection for crews, who they say regularly face being ambushed, shot at, stabbed and abused. Some people have set booby traps for firefighters, who have also been attacked with knives, petrol bombs and lengths of wood. FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said it is almost

“beyond belief” that firefighters can be attacked so viciously while fighting fires and trying to save lives. “In some areas, attacking fire crews has become a recreational activity with very serious consequences. It cannot be part of anyone's job to face abuse, threats or attacks,” he said. FBU is calling for fire crews to receive training on dealing with violent attacks, and for more money to be invested in decent protection and catching attackers. In Tyne and Wear, crews have been given “spit kits” so the attacker's DNA can be collected. Matt Wrack said: “There needs to be a government-led and funded national strategy with fire authorities required to put plans in place to tackle violence against their staff. This would replace the existing wish list of nice ideas and ‘good practice’, which don’t have to be implemented. At the moment fire authorities are being left to deal with the problem on their own without the necessary support and funding.” He said authorities in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales were “playing a more direct and active role.”

- [FBU news release](#) and full report [[pdf](#)]. [The Guardian](#). [BBC News Online](#). [BBC Wales](#).

Concern at ‘unqualified’ Tube contractors

Union leaders are concerned electrical work on the London Underground is being carried-out by unqualified contractors, according a Contract Journal report. It says officials from the electrical section of Unite are demanding urgent talks with Tube bosses to discuss the issue. They are concerned general civil engineering firms are carrying out work that only qualified electrical contractors should be undertaking. A Unite official told Contract Journal: “There is still station work being let out but on a much smaller scale. Some of that work is going to non-qualified organisations. It's alarming that these contracts are going to companies who are not registered and qualified with the electrical industry bodies. This has happened since the demise of Metronet and is symptomatic of the anarchy underground at the moment.” A Transport for London spokesperson told

Contract Journal the union's allegations would be fully investigated. He said: “We have the highest safety standards on London Underground. We are working with Metronet to investigate these claims.”

- [Contract Journal](#).

Six figure payout for serious injury

A Kent warehouse worker who suffered a serious injury in an incident involving a forklift truck has secured £150,000 compensation with the support of his trade union RMT. The name of the affected worker, his workplace and details of the incident have not been released by the union’s solicitors, but RMT general secretary Bob Crow confirmed: “Our member has suffered because of his employer’s negligence. He has a daughter to support and although he is trying to be positive about the future, he is very concerned about his vulnerability. He deserves every penny of this compensation.” Representing the man, Andrew Hutson from Thompsons Solicitors said: “Our client’s employer admitted liability for his accident and as a result he has secured substantial damages. However, he is still very young with 30 years of working life ahead of him and given his permanent and significant injury, he is concerned about how other potential employers would react to employing him if he were to lose his current job.”

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#).

OTHER NEWS

Payout too late for asbestos poster girl

The family of a poster girl for the former asbestos giant Turner and Newall has won a five figure settlement from the company after she died from the asbestos cancer mesothelioma. Martha Charlson, from Rochdale, was enlisted

to promote the image of T&N in its heyday, when her photo appeared in a booklet detailing the firm's history. The Manchester Evening News reports she was pictured working at a spotless-looking asbestos spinning machine on the factory floor at Turner Brothers premises in Rochdale in 1957. But the photo was not a reflection of the real conditions she and hundreds of fellow workers endured. Mrs Charlson, who died aged 64 in 2002, just months after retiring from the company where she had been employed from the age of 16. Daughter Louise Keefe, 39, said: "My mum died while waiting for this compensation. She knew she would not see the money in her lifetime but it was important to her to fight for a sense of justice. She felt very angry that she had worked with such a dangerous substance but had never been warned about the consequences. My mum retired on Saturday and became ill on the Sunday." All compensation claims against the company were frozen in 2001 after T&N went into administration in the UK, as a result of what has been dubbed a "bankruptcy of convenience" by US parent company Federal Mogul ([Risks 314](#)). Claims are now paid by a Trust set up by the administrators after the High Court approved a deal, which allowed claimants to receive a fraction of their entitlement. Steven Dickens, who represented the family for Thompsons Solicitors, said: "We have been engaged in one of the longest running and most difficult battles to obtain compensation for people who are suffering or have died from asbestos-related disease. I am glad that for Mrs Charlson's family the struggle is now over. It was a matter of principle for us to stand by the family and see this through from start to finish."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#).
[Manchester Evening News](#).

Former nurse gets asbestos cancer

A former nurse should get compensation for her asbestos-related illness after a health authority accepted liability for having caused her disease. A year ago Mary Artherton, 59, appealed

through the Norwich newspaper the Evening News for help in her compensation battle, after discovering that she had the asbestos cancer mesothelioma. She was exposed to the dust while working at a sequence of Norwich hospitals. Her solicitor David Cass, from Irwin Mitchell solicitors, said the appeal in the Evening News brought forward several people who remembered working conditions in the hospitals. He said: "In February last year we sent a letter of claim to Norfolk and Norwich Hospital's NHS Trust setting out what was alleged in respect of Mary's occupational exposure to asbestos." He said this was backed up by medical reports. In June 2007, the East of England Strategic Health Authority "gave instructions that it accepted liability for having caused Mary's disease through its negligence," he said. "We are currently valuing Mary's claim and hope to be able to settle on favourable terms when the full value of Mary's ongoing losses has been calculated." Mrs Artherton started as a pre-nursing student aged 17 in 1965. She said last year that asbestos lagging was on the pipes at all the hospitals where she worked, and she would have breathed in asbestos dust while cleaning. Nurses, doctors and other hospital staff have previously been compensated after developing asbestos cancers ([Risks 220](#)). Irwin Mitchell had previously secured a £1.15m settlement for the family of hospital consultant James Emerson, whose death from mesothelioma was linked to exposure to asbestos at London's Middlesex Hospital ([Risks 182](#)).

- [Norwich Evening News](#).

Mental health nurses face attacks

More than half of nurses on mental health wards have been physically attacked, a survey has found. Nurses working with older people are the most likely to be assaulted, the joint Healthcare Commission and Royal College of Psychiatrists report said. The study of 69 NHS trusts and private hospitals in England and Wales covered eight in 10 of the organisations providing in-patient care for the 30,000 mental health

patients in England and Wales. Almost half (46 per cent) of nurses in mental health wards for working age patients said they had been assaulted. For those working in older people's wards this rose to 64 per cent. Nurses reported they had suffered fractures, dislocations and black eyes. Anna Walker, chief executive of the Healthcare Commission, said: "The report highlights areas where if acted on, we know can make a difference in reducing levels of violence. Services need to concentrate on giving people meaningful activities in an environment that is designed to ensure that patients, staff and visitors are as safe as possible. They should ensure that staff have the proper training and skills and that patients get good continuity of care, without the overuse of bank and agency staff. Finally, they should have proper systems to report and manage incidents when they do happen."

Commenting on the report, UNISON head of nursing Gail Adams said: "It is clear that more needs to be done to protect staff and risk assessments, training and a good skills mix are the key to achieving that. It is vital that thorough risk assessments are carried out on each patient. The report misses the importance of the information that carers can provide about any previous history of violence." She added: "Adequate staffing levels and a good skills mix will also encourage an air of calmness on a ward. Where there are staff shortages, or a lot of agency and bank staff, the ward can become more frantic and patients will pick up on that. It is also important that all staff should also be well trained in the same techniques, so they work together to contain any violence or aggression." She said if a patient attacks a member of staff, "there should be a zero tolerance approach and if found competent, they should be liable to prosecution."

- [Healthcare Commission news release. BBC News Online.](#)

Job applicants facing more drug tests

More companies are checking on potential employees by carrying out drug and alcohol tests

on their hair, according to a supplier of testing products. Trimega Laboratories, established in 2005, announced in January it had signed a deal with the Nursing and Midwifery Council to provide its testing services in misconduct cases where drug or alcohol dependency is thought to be an issue. Trimega managing director Avi Lasarow said employers in other sectors were increasingly calling on his company's services. "More and more corporates employing high-profile executives are looking to test potential employees," he said. "If an individual has nothing to hide, then what is the problem?" Many individuals – including those falsely fingered ([Risks 335](#)) – and unions, civil liberty and statutory bodies do have a problem with workplace drug and alcohol testing, however. A November 2007 report from Hazards magazine acknowledged Britain's employers have a big drug and alcohol problem, concluding they are wasting millions on testing and firing workers. It said impairment testing is a better approach ([Risks 332](#)). This can take account of the impact of drugs or alcohol use as well as work factors like fatigue, stress and exposure to physical and chemical hazards that might mean a worker is performing under-par. The report said non-punitive, peer-to-peer counselling and support is the most effective way to ensure drug and alcohol use is dealt with effectively at work. It warned UK workplace privacy rules laid down in official Information Commission guidance mean in most cases drug and alcohol tests could fall foul of the law.

- [Trimega Laboratories news release. Personnel Today.](#)
- [Impaired thinking: The case for workplace drug and alcohol tests has no substance, Hazards, number 100, October-December 2007. TUC drugs and alcohol webpages.](#)

Oil platform closed due to safety problems

An unsafe North Sea oil platform has been closed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), according to reports. Trade magazine Upstream

says the Maersk Janice platform must remain shut down until a catalogue of serious safety failures has been fixed. Offshore unions said workers who criticised safety standards on the platform have been ‘NRB’d’ – not required back. Upstream reported that minutes from a meeting between HSE and Maersk Oil senior management revealed HSE’s dissatisfaction with the platform, with the emphasis on profits and not safety. According to the report, HSE served a prohibition notice for the field installation on 15 November last year and Maersk Oil has no current plans for starting up production again. HSE referred to more than 40 areas on Janice with outstanding maintenance problems. It also noted that lifting operations were poorly controlled. Maersk took over the Janice platform from previous operator Kerr McGee in July 2005. In mid-August 2007 the platform suffered gas leaks and production has been below 100 per cent since then. At least three employees have lost their jobs on the platform in the past few months, according to unions, after raising precisely the concerns subsequently spotted by HSE. The workers were employed by the contractor Petrofac and had been working on the platform for several years. Maersk Oil denies that any kind of “blacklist” is in place.

- [ITF Global news report.](#)

Safety breaches shut 10 out of 11 sites

Safety inspectors visited 11 building sites in Aberdeen last week - and closed down all but one of them due to “bad and dangerous” working practices. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) made random unannounced spot checks on refurbishment sites as part of a national blitz. HSE inspector Jim Skilling said: “Our inspectors were appalled at the willingness to ignore basic safety precautions. We found poor standards across some quite basic things and considered that they were simply accidents waiting to happen that could have resulted in serious injury or even fatalities. We will not tolerate poor standards and will take appropriate enforcement action proactively as well as when

an accident occurs.” He added: “Our advice to those who work in the refurbishment sector is to plan work, use competent workers and if working at height use the right equipment and use it safely.” HSE says last year over half of the workers who died on construction sites worked in refurbishment, and the number of deaths on refurbishment sites rose by 61 per cent. Throughout February it aims to inspect 1,000 refurbishment sites across Great Britain.

- [HSE Scotland news release.](#) [HSE news release.](#) [BBC News Online.](#)

Family dismay at teen’s work death fines

Safety campaigners and the family of a teenage construction worker killed as a result of the negligence of three site firms have expressed dismay at the size of the penalties imposed by a court last week. Steven Burke, 17, died on 30 January 2004 just a fortnight after his bosses have been served with a warning notice because two safety harnesses were in such poor condition. Steven was wearing a harness at the time of the tragedy, but it was not clipped to the scaffolding. Inquiries revealed his team were due to earn a bonus if their job was completed within a day. 3D Scaffolding Ltd was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay £20,000 costs last week. Site supervisor David Swindell junior, son of David Swindle, managing director of 3D, was fined £7,500 and ordered to pay £15,000 costs. Structural repair specialists RAM Services Ltd was fined £75,000 and £20,000 costs. And principal contractor Mowlem plc was fined £75,000 and ordered to pay £70,000 costs. Steven’s family and safety campaigners said they unhappy with the fines. They were also distressed the judge failed to mention an immediate prohibition notice served on 3D Scaffolding on 29 November 2005 for a very similar breach, instead saying the firm had a “good safety record” in the four years after Steven’s death. FACK spokesperson Hilda Palmer said: “No amount of money would bring Steven back or hurt the defendants whose actions and inactions led to his death, but the

family feel fines should be much greater to bring home the full seriousness of what they have done. We feel fines alone are an insufficient penalty for taking a life.” HSE chief inspector of construction Stephen Williams said: “Steven Burke’s death, at the very start of his working life was not only a tragedy, it was also entirely preventable. Had those responsible assessed the work properly and ensured that he was supervised at all times by a qualified scaffolder, then Steven would not have been killed. Our thoughts go out to his family.”

- [HSE news release](#). [FACK news release](#). [Burnley Citizen](#). [Channel M video clip](#).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Canada: First conviction under work deaths law

A Quebec employer has become the first convicted under Canada’s workplace deaths law. Transpavé, a manufacturer of concrete blocks, pleaded guilty to criminal charges relating to the death of 23-year-old Steve L’Ecuyer in October 2005. L’Ecuyer was crushed by a machine that stacks concrete blocks after pallets with concrete had backed-up on the conveyer belt. Safety watchdog the workers’ compensation board had previously instructed the company to repair the machine as the safety cut-out, a device that could have prevented the tragedy, had been disabled. The company’s own security cameras captured the entire incident on tape, evidence that was turned over to the local police. Transpavé was charged with criminal negligence causing death. It pleaded guilty and will be sentenced on 26 February. The conviction of Transpavé is the first criminal conviction of a corporation since the amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada brought in by Bill C-45 in March 2004. Known as the Westray bill, the law was introduced after a lengthy union campaign in the aftermath of the Westray mine disaster, which killed 26 Nova Scotia miners in 1992 ([Risks 131](#)). The law says organisations must take all reasonable steps to

prevent bodily harm to persons, including workers, contractors and the general public. In addition to being charged with contravention of health and safety regulations, a corporation, its supervisors or other representatives can now be charged with criminal negligence by government enforcers at the scene of a workplace accident. The Quebec Federation of Labour (FTQ) had demanded authorities bring charges against the firm in relation to the death.

- [Canadian HR Reporter](#). [FTQ news release \(in French\)](#).

Global: Governments told to act on asbestos

Governments must take urgent action to ban asbestos worldwide and to head off a massive asbestos industry promotional push, campaigners have said. Eighty delegates from unions, asbestos groups and international tripartite, enforcement and expert bodies from 33 countries met in Vienna this month to devise an effective response to the occupational and public health menace posed by asbestos. Klaus Wiesehügel, president of BWI, the global construction union federation that organised the conference, told delegates: “Asbestos should be on the agenda of all governments as the consequences of an exposure to asbestos will be much more serious than we thought a few years ago.” He said industry lobbying was focusing increasingly on developing countries. An asbestos industry-backed bid to undermine the initiative by organising a counter-conference in the same venue came to nothing, attracting just 20 delegates and a selection of industry hacks. Igor Fedotov from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) said: “All serious scientists are opposing this opinion. The best prevention is a worldwide ban!” Fiona Murie, director of BWI’s health and safety programme, said “many victims do not know that they were exposed to asbestos and, because of the long time lag between exposure and the emergence of the symptoms, asbestos diseases are not correctly diagnosed, treated, compensated or, most importantly, prevented.” A declaration agreed at

the conference said participating organisations were “committed to promote the global ban of all forms of asbestos from the construction industry and from all other industrial sectors; to promote the effective regulation of work with in-situ asbestos in demolition, conversion, renovation and maintenance works by law; to work for the elimination of diseases caused by asbestos; to promote social justice for those affected by asbestos.”

- [BWI news release](#). Vienna Declaration from the Building and Woodworkers International Asbestos Conference, made in Vienna, February 2008 [[pdf](#)].

USA: Newspaper exposes poultry industry horrors

A newspaper that spent 22 months investigating conditions at a major North Carolina poultry supplier has uncovered a horrific pattern of worker exploitation and injuries. The Charlotte Observer probed working conditions for the mostly migrant workforce at House of Raeford, a chicken- and turkey-processing company with annual sales of nearly \$900 million, and that employs 6,000 people at eight plants in three states, processing 29 million pounds of meat a week. Editor Rick Thames said “the neglect of these workers exposes an ugly dimension to a new subclass in our society. A disturbing subclass of compliant workers with few, if any, rights. Same as slaves and sharecroppers, same as the cotton mill workers derisively termed ‘lintheads,’ this subclass is now a scorned bunch. And yet they help power our economy. We live in houses they built. We drive on highways they paved. We eat the chicken and turkey they prepared.” An editorial adds the immigrant worker “are being exploited, abused, then thrown away when they are injured or when they speak up. Companies can get away with it, in part, because politicians in Washington don’t have the conscience or will to fix failed immigration policies.”

- [AFL-CIO Now](#). [Charlotte Observer news series and videos](#) and [related editorial](#).

USA: What to do when the watchdog won’t watch?

A series of devastating workplace disasters have focused attention on US safety watchdog OSHA – which appears to have been neither watching nor acting. For the second time in two months, America has witnessed a catastrophic industrial explosion involving multiple fatalities. On 19 December 2007, the small T2 Chemicals in Jacksonville, Florida, detonated in a towering mushroom cloud, killing four workers. Last week, the Imperial Sugar plant outside of Savannah, Georgia, exploded, killing eight workers. Not only were both of these disasters preventable, but the factors that caused both blasts – reactive chemical explosions and combustible dust explosions - had been subjects of Chemical Safety Board (CSB) regulatory recommendations to OSHA, recommendations ignored by the agency. A 2002 CSB report on reactive chemical hazards identified 167 serious incidents in the US involving uncontrolled chemical reactivity from January 1980 to June 2001. Forty-eight of the incidents resulted in a total of 108 fatalities. In November 2006, following a series of fatal combustible dust explosions over the previous two years that resulted in 14 fatalities, the CSB issued a report that identified 281 combustible dust incidents between 1980 and 2005 that killed 119 workers and injured 718. OSHA’s disastrous – disaster-pocked - enforcement-lite, regulation-lite approach has been a model embraced to differing degrees by enforcement agencies elsewhere, including in the UK. With expectations of OSHA low, some are now saying workers need to take their safety at work into their own hands. In an opinion piece in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Les Leopold, director of the New York-based Labor Institute, said: “Starved for funds, limited by court rulings, pressed by corporate lobbyists and crippled by the ideology of deregulation, OSHA is failing to adequately protect workers.” He added: “Now

that we've tried deregulation and it has failed catastrophically, it's time to try a more radical approach: Train and deputise at least one worker in every facility to serve as an inspector, legally empowered to order corrective action.” It’s a conclusion that resonates elsewhere. In the UK, unions have pressed for extended union safety reps rights. Some places have actually won these rights – trade unionists in Australia can have a right of entry to workplaces to investigate members’ safety concerns ([Risks 334](#)). In Sweden, roving reps have had a positive impact, spreading the “union effect” across entire regions ([Risks 303](#)).

- [CSB news release](#). [The Pump Handle](#). [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) and [related news item](#). [Kansas City Star](#). [Augusta Chronicle](#). [BBC News Online](#). [AFL-CIO Now](#).

RESOURCES

Safety crimes

‘Safety crimes’, produced by top UK corporate crime academics Steve Tombs and Dave Whyte, warns workplace deaths fail on the whole “to attract the interest if the politicians, the media or – least forgivably of all – the knowledge industry of criminology.” The book is concerned with the nature of production and how this impacts on the decisions made in boardrooms. It also deals with how infrequently these decisions, however deadly, lead from the boardroom to the courtroom. It is not filled with stories of comic book villains with no concern for the consequences of their actions, portraying safety crimes as bad deeds by bad people. But boardroom decisions made with a key objective of maximising profit have consequences, and safety can be a casualty. Nice guys can kill you. The book is critical of the drive towards greater “self-regulation”, where firms are exhorted to behave better and safer – an approach that assumes safety is a concern of equal importance throughout the organisation, from mailroom to boardroom. Instead it demonstrates that safety

crimes are the product of profit seeking; they do not represent a breakdown of the production system but are themselves a product of it.

- Safety crimes. Steve Tombs and Dave Whyte. ISBN 978 1 84392 085 4. £19.99. [Willan Publishing](#).

The dangerous world of child labour

David Parker produces beautiful books. Exquisite black and white photographs give his award-winning publications the quality and feel of the best coffee table books. But his elegant, intimate work exposes a dark world of exploitation. A doctor and acclaimed advocate for the rights of children, he documents the daily work undertaken worldwide by over 300 million under the age of 16, from textile workers, to brick makers, sex workers to soldiers. Parker’s latest book, ‘Before their time: The world of child labor’, has extraordinary scope, both geographically and occupationally. Children clean elephant stables in India and search for conch shells in the tangled roots of Nicaragua’s mangrove swamps. Tiny Bolivian children mine tin in dust and darkness. Garbage picking seems to occupy the waking hours of kids from Mexico to Indonesia – anywhere poverty looms large. In his foreword to the book, US senator Tom Harkin notes: “Parker depicts these children in their full humanity. Because his photographs make us identify with the children, we realise our responsibility to act.” More people should see this book. More people need to act.

- Before their time: The world of child labor. David Parker. ISBN 978 1 59372 024 7. The Quantuck Lane Press. £22.99. [WW Norton and Company Ltd](#).

EVENTS AND COURSES

Action Mesothelioma Day, 27 February 2008

Action Mesothelioma Day, on 27 February involves local activities nationwide to raise awareness of mesothelioma, an incurable cancer caused by exposure to asbestos, and to campaign for prevention of asbestos exposures today and better treatment and benefits for those affected by past exposures. Join a local event – or if there isn't one, consider organising your own.

- Asbestos Forum [Action Mesothelioma Day webpage](#) and [events listing](#). [LabourNet UK](#). [Action Mesothelioma website](#).

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

International RSI Day, 29 February 2008

Union reps should start gearing up for International RSI Day, the last day of February every year. In 2008 - a leap year - that means Friday 29 February. Whether you do a workplace risk assessment, a bodymapping session or just a bit of general awareness raising, make sure you do something. Unions can order a special 'Repeat after me' RSI day poster from the Hazards Campaign. The massively popular posters, produced by Hazards magazine, say: "Repeat after me: Too much, too fast, too often is too painful too stand. Repetitive strain injuries. Don't let them repeat the same old mistakes."

- ['Repeat after me' poster](#). [Email the Hazards Campaign for poster order details](#).

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR JANUARY TO MARCH 2008

- [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