



Risks Newsletter



Number 350– 05 April 2008



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UNION NEWS

Don't blame the workers for terminal troubles

Heathrow unions have said their members didn't cause the chaos at Terminal 5's opening last week, but they can help to solve it. Problems with baggage handling facilities led to flight cancellations, baggage mountains and a massive amount of passenger frustration. Commenting at the height of the problems, GMB general secretary Paul Kenny said: "GMB are asking the travelling public using T5 not to take out their frustrations on the GMB members who operate the check-in desks and other frontline positions. These staff are doing their very best to cope with what looks like technical difficulties." He added: "These staff did not come to work to be abused. It will not help for passengers to abuse them and will add to their demoralisation and lead to further problems." The union Unite called upon British Airways (BA) and the British Airport Authority (BAA) to work with the union on a programme to re-establish T5's reputation as the UK's flagship terminal. Unite national secretary for civil aviation, Steve Turner, said listening to this workforce will be vital as the airline and airport operator strive to stabilise operations. He said the union's members in customer services, ground handling, security and cabin crew operations "are ready to sit down with management at any time to get to work on putting these right, to protect the reputation of BA as the world's leading carrier, and ensure that T5 becomes the envy of the industry that it rightly should be and undoubtedly will become."

- [GMB news release](#). [Unite news release](#).

Teaching union calls for risk assessments

Schools must carry out proper risk assessments to protect staff and pupils, teaching union NASUWT has said. The union's general secretary Chris Keates said: "There can be no compromise on the health and safety of teachers and all who

use a school site. Risk assessments are a tool not only to prevent accident or injury but to evaluate a situation when something goes wrong to ensure it doesn't happen again." She said proper risk assessments properly used "provide a vital safeguard in a range of circumstances for staff and pupils. Claims by some schools that their failure to use them is because of bureaucratic burdens is just unacceptable wilful negligence. Employers have a legal duty of care for staff and too many simply disregard this." Addressing the union's conference last week, Judith Hackitt, the chair of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), said: "We know there are many schools and colleges where teachers are managing risks sensibly and responsibly, there are many examples of good and best practice. But it is essential that those good practices are shared and acted upon; it makes no sense for every school or college to have to learn when others have found acceptable ways of managing things."

- [NASUWT news release](#). [HSE news release](#).

Hit-and-run firefighter gets £280k damages

A firefighter knocked from his bike on his journey home from work has received over £280,000 in damages. David Frith, a member of the firefighters' union FBU from Leicester, received the award via the Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB) untraced drivers scheme after the hit-and-run incident. The 48-year-old's right knee was so badly injured that, after operations and an attempt to return to work, he had to be retired from the fire service. He said: "The driver didn't stop and has never been identified. I'm so lucky that my trade union was able to pursue this claim for me through the MIB untraced drivers scheme." FBU national safety officer Paul Woolstenholmes commented: "Not everyone is aware that successful claims can be brought where the third party driver is untraced, so David Frith's settlement goes to show the understated value of trade union membership. The service is absolutely free to members of the FBU and nothing is deducted from their

compensation.” Representing David Frith, Claire White from Thompsons Solicitors said: “This injury has had a devastating effect on David Frith’s personal life. Before the accident he was a career firefighter and planned to work until the normal retirement age. Instead, his career has been cut short and he has a wife and three daughters to support.”

- Thompsons Solicitors news release. MIB scheme.

Wire industry campaign success

A wire industry safety campaign backed by unions and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has led to dramatic improvements in accident rates. Steel industry union Community says the UK Steel Live Wire Accident Reduction Campaign, launched in July 2006, has surpassed its target of a 10 per cent reduction in accidents “by a significant margin.” Overall accidents fell in 2007 by 17 per cent and over-three-day RIDDOR reportable accidents by nearly 15 per cent. The campaign was run with support from Community, Unite and HSE. Community says particular emphasis was placed on involving employees at every level, from directors to shop floor operatives. Community national safety officer Rob Sneddon said: “We are absolutely delighted with the response from the local trade union reps. The reduction in accidents adds further credence to the figures that workers are 50 per cent less likely to have an accident in a workplace where there is a recognised trade union. I would just like to congratulate everyone for taking part in this initiative, which is the first step in making the industry a safer place to work.” The union says five sites reduced accidents “by a stunning 30 per cent”. Nine wire producing companies signed up to the campaign, which included quarterly events, monthly training workshops and a safety performance league table.

- [Community news release.](#)

New regulating rules for safety watchdogs

Standards for health and safety enforcers have been released by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in response to a new government code covering official regulatory activity. The Regulators’ Compliance Code, which from 6 April applies to all regulatory agencies including HSE and local authority workplace safety inspectors, “is a statutory code of practice intended to encourage regulators to achieve their objectives in a way that minimises the burdens on business,” says HSE in an online briefing. It adds: “The purpose of the Code is to embed a risk-based, proportionate, targeted and flexible approach to regulatory inspection and enforcement among the regulators to which it applies. This approach will ensure that regulators are efficient and effective in their work, without imposing unnecessary burdens on those they regulate.” The value of this approach in the workplace safety setting has been questioned, as a series of studies – some by HSE – have shown the majority of employers consider workplace safety regulation to be beneficial to their businesses (Risks 287). Critics warned in 2006 the government’s plans for regulators could turn HSE “into a mildly souped up advice agency, with a massively curtailed enforcement role” (Risks 253). Retail union Usdaw, however, has indicated the changes could be beneficial in the local authority-enforced sectors of the economy, where “the new standards are intended to boost partnership between local authorities and HSE and to make sure that local authorities devote adequate resources to health.”

- [HSE short guide on its role and the Regulators’ Compliance Code.](#) [Usdaw news release.](#) [Local authority enforced sectors.](#)

HSE absorbs HSC

The Health and Safety Commission (HSC) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) merged

on 1 April. The new combined body will be called the Health and Safety Executive. Announcing the merger, health and safety minister Lord McKenzie said “to face the challenges and demands of the changing world of work, now is the right time to merge the organisations into one which can provide a platform for further improvements to health and safety at work across Great Britain.” Judith Hackitt, formally chair of HSC and now chair of the new-style HSE, said: “The merger will not fundamentally change the day-to-day operations but will set the tone for closer working throughout the organisation. HSE will build on the independence, good relationships with stakeholders and in particular our relationship with local authorities to develop a revised strategy for health and safety in Great Britain.” Commissioners, including those representing union views, become non-executive directors, and members of HSE’s old board – which was comprised of senior HSE managers – become the “senior management team”, led by HSE chief executive Geoffrey Podger.

- [DWP news release](#). [HSE merger statement](#). [Usdaw news release](#).

What difference will the killing law make?

The new corporate killing law, effective from 6 April, has received a mixed welcome, with some staying it will lead to greater corporate accountability and others suggesting while there may be some large firms facing charges it lets negligent bosses off the hook. The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act is a response to widespread criticism of the existing law, after a series of failed prosecutions over disasters such as the 1987 capsizing of the Herald of Free Enterprise ferry in the English Channel, which resulted in the deaths of 193 people, and the Southall train crash in 1997. Prosecutors will no longer have to prove that an individual acted as a ‘directing mind’ and was responsible for a death - they can charge a company instead. David Bergman, executive director of the Centre for Corporate

Accountability (CCA) said the changes would mean large companies “have much more to fear. Now there is the prospect they could be held accountable.” The CBI, the employers' body, said in December there was “considerable concern” among members that new fines could be “way out of proportion.” Brendan Barber, TUC general secretary, said the act was an “important and totemic piece of legislation” which might “bring some criminal corporations to justice,” but he said doubted whether it would be effective in encouraging “changes in the boardroom.” Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK) said it felt fines did not “reflect the seriousness of the offence of taking a life by negligent management of health and safety, often over a prolonged period, saving money and cutting costs.”

- [Financial Times](#). [Personnel Today](#). [BBC News Online](#).
- [HSE](#) and [Ministry of Justice](#) corporate manslaughter law webpages. [TUC corporate accountability webpages](#). [FACK](#).
- Event: CCA conference, [Corporate homicide and safety enforcement](#), Glasgow, Scotland, Friday 16 May 2008.

Oil boat deaths report highly critical

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is considering whether there were any breaches of UK legislation before the Bourbon Dolphin tragedy off Shetland. The rig support vessel capsized with the loss of eight lives in April last year. An official report presented to the Norwegian justice department on 28 March said the vessel was not suitable for the job. HSE will be submitting its own report to the procurator fiscal in Aberdeen. Norway's prosecutor has still to decide whether criminal charges will be brought against any of the parties involved in the incident. The report cited weaknesses in the vessel design and failures in safety procedures by the company, the operator and on the rig itself. The captain's 14-year-old son was among those

who died when the vessel capsized. The Bourbon Dolphin overturned when an anchor handling operation with a drilling rig went wrong. Seven of the 15 crew survived. Graham Tran, regional officer with the union Unite, said the report “pulled no punches” and was “embarrassing” for the industry. He added: “This report won’t just have an impact on how we do our business in the North Sea and UK waters. It is a global industry now so it will have a global impact.” Because the eight deaths occurred offshore and were not investigated by HSE, they will not be included in this year’s official UK work fatality statistics. This prompted Unite to call last year for HSE to publish “honest” occupational fatality figures (Risks 318).

- [Norway ministry of justice news release and report](#). [BBC News Online](#) and [earlier report](#). [Press and Journal](#) and [earlier report](#).

Aga fined for work injury

Luxury cooker manufacturer Aga has been fined £25,000 after an employee lost a thumb in an incident at its Coalbrookdale foundry. Anthony Bridgewater had been checking to see whether sand had clogged machinery when his hand hit a rotating blade, amputating his thumb and breaking his finger. Aga Consumer Products admitted breaching safety regulations. In addition to the fine it was ordered to pay £7,000 in court costs. Rhona Campbell, prosecuting for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at Shrewsbury Crown Court, said although there was an on/off switch at the side of the machine, there had been no guard fitted. The unit had been one of three fitted by ENF, which had been fined £5,000 for fitting the equipment without a guard. Ms Campbell said Aga had carried out no risk assessment on the machinery, which would have shown up the lack of a simple guard. Judge Nicholas Mitchell said Aga had a primary liability as employer and should have ensured there was no risk to workers. An Aga spokesperson said: “It’s the first prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive. For 28 years we’ve achieved British Safety Council International Safety Awards.”

- [Shropshire Star](#).

MPs vow support for meso sufferers

Members of parliament have vowed support for a campaign for better compensation for sufferers of the asbestos cancer mesothelioma. The members of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health’s asbestos sub-committee made the promise after watching a short film calling on the government to amend the law on government asbestos payouts. The film features representatives of the North East Mesothelioma Self Help Group saying bereavement compensation paid to families of mesothelioma victims in England and Wales should be increased so they come into line with payments currently made in Scotland, where families can receive tens of thousands of pounds more. Group founder Chris Knighton said: “The film really caught the attention of the MPs and brought home to them how the difference in compensation in England and Wales compared to Scotland affects people. Our members feel very strongly about this injustice.” She added: “We are pleased the MPs are now going to write to the Ministry of Justice and we hope as a result we will see a change in the law.” Ian McFall from Thompsons Solicitors said: “£10,000 is a derisory sum for the grief caused by the death of a close family member. Whole families suffer terribly when they lose a loved one to mesothelioma. They carry the emotional burden with them the rest of their lives.”

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#).

MP raises alarm over nail bars

A Labour MP is campaigning for increased protection for customers and staff in nail bars. Dr Phyllis Starkey’s 10 Minute Rule Bill, which would extend licensing for nail bars to areas outside London, was debated in the Commons

last month and will have a second reading on 25 April. The Milton Keynes South West MP was alerted by a constituent who runs a nail bar in Milton Keynes, about practices at the ‘bargain basement’ end of the beauty business. Dr Starkey is particularly concerned about the lack of training and qualifications for technicians in nail bars and the use of methyl methacrylate or MMA, a cheaper alternative to ethyl methacrylate (EMA). She said: “Long-term use of the chemical is associated with respiratory problems and serious allergic skin reactions. MMA extensions are also more rigid than EMA ones and if they get caught or jammed, the real nail can be painfully torn off.” She said MMA is banned in nail bars in the US, Australia and New Zealand. HSE’s Health and Safety Laboratory is due to report this month the findings of its investigation into health and safety in nail bars. In the US, the health risks to nail salon workers have been the subject of high profile safety campaigns (Risks 291).

- Nail Bars and Special Treatment Premises (Regulation) Bill 2007-08, [Hansard](#). [CIEH news report](#).

Brain cancer linked to mobile phone use

A top Australian neurosurgeon has warned the world's heavy reliance on mobile phones could be a major threat to human health. Vini Khurana, who conducted a 15-month “critical review” of the link between mobile phones and malignant brain tumours, said using mobiles for more than 10 years could more than double the risk of brain cancer. He has called for “immediate and decisive steps” by industry and governments to reduce people’s exposure to invisible electromagnetic radiation emitted by handsets. “It is anticipated that this danger has far broader public health ramifications than asbestos and smoking, and directly concerns all of us, particularly the younger generation, including very young children,” Dr Khurana said in a research paper published on a brain surgery website. Dr Khurana, who is a staff specialist neurosurgeon at the Canberra Hospital and an

associate professor of neurosurgery at the Australian National University, said there had been increased reports of brain tumours associated with heavy and prolonged mobile phone use, particularly on the same side as the person's “preferred ear” for making calls. Mobiles have become a piece of standard workplace equipment, with many employers now expecting workers to be assessable by phone at all times.

- [Mobile phone-brain tumour](#), Public Health Advisory, www.brain-surgery.us
- [Sydney Morning Herald](#). [The Independent](#).

Pesticide exposure ups Parkinson’s risk

There is strong evidence that exposure to pesticides significantly increases the risk of Parkinson's disease, experts have concluded. A study of people with the neurological disease found that sufferers were more than twice as likely to report heavy exposure to pesticides over their lifetime as family members without the disease. US researchers looked at the lifetime pesticide exposure of 319 Parkinson's patients and more than 200 of their relatives without the disease. The results, published in the journal BMC Neurology, showed that people with Parkinson's were 1.6 times as likely to report an exposure to pesticides in their lifetime compared with the controls. People with the Parkinson's were 2.4 times as likely as people without the disease to report heavy exposure to pesticides, classed as more than 215 days over a lifetime. The strongest associations were between people with Parkinson's who had been exposed to herbicide and insecticide chemicals such as organochlorines and organophosphates. Lead researcher Dana Hancock said: “I think there is very strong evidence now linking the two,” adding: “What we noticed in our research was that recreational pesticide use in the home and garden was more of a source of exposure than occupational use.” Earlier studies have made the link between occupational (Risks 209) and recreational use of pesticides (Risks 263).

- Dana B Hancock and others. Pesticide exposure and risk of Parkinson's disease: a family-based case-control study, BMC Neurology, volume 8:6, 2008, doi:10.1186/1471-2377-8-6, [abstract](#) and full paper [[pdf](#)].
- [The Guardian](#). [BBC News Online](#).

Toxic plane fumes inquiry call

Airline staff and passengers are at risk from toxic fumes leaking into aircraft cabins, according to the Global Cabin Air Quality Executive pressure group. The UK government says one in 2,000 flights is affected. Unions say it happens daily, causing nausea and other health effects. The group wants a public inquiry into why more has not been done to protect people and inform them of health risks. In addition to nausea, the pressure group and airline unions in the UK and USA say the leaks cause dizziness and lethargy. Their concerns stem from a process in which some of the cabin air that passengers and crew members breathe on a flight is drawn from the main engine and cooled. The air is then mixed with re-circulated air. During the process filters remove bacteria but not oil vapours that could leak into the airstream if there are faulty seals in the engine. Among criticisms levelled by the group is a charge that the Health and Safety Executive and the Civil Aviation Authority “have failed to ensure that airlines abide by health and safety guidelines and basic principles. These include proper risk assessments and the need for employers to take steps to minimise exposure to toxic chemicals by workers.” The call for an inquiry has the support of transport workers’ union Unite, the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and the Green Party. The BBC reports that Unite wants all airlines to install onboard detectors and extra filters to protect passengers and crew.

- [GCAQE news release](#). [Sky News](#). [BBC News Online](#).

- [Global Cabin Air Quality Executive](#). [AFA-CWA air quality health and safety webpages](#).

Work exposures up vet miscarriage risk

Female vets run twice the risk of miscarriage as a result of exposure to anaesthetic gases and pesticides, suggests a study. The findings, published ahead of print in the journal Occupational and Environmental Medicine are based on a survey of women taking part in the Health Risks of Australian Veterinarians Project (HRAV). Of the 5,700 graduates contacted, some 2,800 responded, of whom 1,200 were women. Between them, these women reported a total of 1,355 pregnancies, 940 of which occurred while working in clinical practice, and so were eligible for inclusion in the study. Women carrying out surgery and exposed to anaesthetic gases that were not filtered out of the atmosphere, for an hour or more a week, were almost 2.5 times more likely to miscarry. Female vets who used pesticides during the course of their work were also twice as likely to miscarry. And those who performed more than five x-rays a week were around 80 per cent more likely to miscarry than those performing fewer procedures. When the researchers restricted their analyses to those women graduating more recently - between 1980 and 2000 - the results were similar. The authors warn that female vets of childbearing age “should be fully informed of the possible reproductive effects of ionising radiation, unscavenged anaesthetic gases, and exposure to pesticides.” Women should take protective measures when they are planning to conceive and during pregnancy, they warn. But all staff working in these areas should be aware of the risks and protect themselves accordingly, they suggest.

- Maternal occupational exposures and risk of spontaneous abortion in veterinary practice Online First, [Occupational and Environmental Medicine](#), 3 April 2008, doi: 10.1136/OEM.2007.035246 [[abstract](#)]. [BBC News Online](#).

RESOURCES

The Construction Chart Book

If you know the problem, then you can start working out the solution. For US construction unions, this task has just got a whole lot easier, with the publication of the Construction Chart Book. Published by the union-supported CPWR - the Center for Construction Research and Training - the book provides information on all facets of the US construction industry, including health and safety issues. The coverage goes beyond that in previous editions, with additions including topics such as the total cost of injuries and illnesses to the construction industry, the use of health care services among construction workers, expanded reporting of blood lead levels in construction workers, chronic illnesses and health risks and respiratory diseases. The publication, produced with a grant from the official National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), is a useful resource for construction unions anywhere, giving a well-structured and detailed overview of major issues facing site workers wherever you find them.

- [The Construction Chart Book: The US construction industry and its workers](#), 4th edition, 2008. [Health and safety chapter. CPWR \(Center for Construction Research and Training\)](#).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

France: Stress crisis prompts national action

An apparent workplace stress crisis afflicting French workplaces had prompted the government to launch an evaluation of the extent of the problem and to plan a surveillance system for work-related suicides. The issue reached national prominence after a spate of suicides at workplaces, including car plants run by both Renault and Peugeot (Risks 326). A new

management-commissioned report has confirmed a high proportion of PSA Peugeot-Citroen employees are stressed, with over one in five workers at one plant – the Mulhouse plant where a suicide cluster was observed - described as “hyperstressed”. Last month, the French minister of labour Xavier Bertrand announced the launch of a comprehensive survey aimed at measuring stress at the workplace. He has also said an “epidemiological surveillance system” on suicides in the workplace will be set up in 2009. A report this year from Hazards magazine cited international evidence linking about 1-in-20 suicides to workplace factors. This would suggest around 250 work-related suicides in the UK each year.

- REHS news releases on the [Peugeot report](#) and the [French government stress study. Hazards work-related suicides webpages](#).

Germany: Lidl accused of spying on its staff

German supermarket group Lidl has denied that it spied on its staff, but has admitted that it placed secret cameras in its stores. The multinational company, which also confirmed it had employed private detectives, insisted that it carried out the measures simply to combat shoplifting. Lidl was responding to a press report that it spied on thousands of its staff across Germany and the Czech Republic. The article in German magazine Stern said Lidl recorded how often staff went to the toilet and even monitored certain employees' love lives. Lidl said in a statement that it was “shocked” by the accusations. It added that it had already stopped employing private detectives and now only used visible security cameras. Peter Schaar, Germany's data protection officer, described the reports as a “grave infringement” and the state of Baden-Württemberg, where Lidl has its headquarters, said it was beginning an immediate investigation into the allegations under the country's data protection laws. Shopworkers' unions have reacted angrily. “These are measures I, for example, have only ever seen in totalitarian states,” said Achim Neumann from the Verdi

union. “The way people's dignity has been trampled on is unparalleled in our society.” The union published a ‘Black Book’ on the company in 2004, accusing the employer of oppressive surveillance, making workers do extra hours without pay and limiting toilet breaks.

- [BusinessWeek](#). [The Times](#). [BBC News Online](#). [The Independent](#). [The Guardian](#).

Global: Studies reveal neglected toll of work cancers

New studies have confirmed the numbers of workplace cancers has been massively underestimated. Investigators from Massey University's Centre for Public Health Research in New Zealand have called on family GPs and cancer specialists to be better informed about their patients' occupations current and past in the hope of improving diagnosis and treatment. They say work-related cancers affect between 700 and 1,000 people a year in New Zealand and kill 400 yet fewer than 40 cases a year are notified to the Labour Department. Their call follows findings of their research highlighting the potential risk of bladder cancer, published this year in the International Journal of Cancer, and of non-Hodgkins lymphoma, published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. The researchers say around 20 per cent of the workforce is or has been in a job that exposes them to increased risk of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. New Zealand's National Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee estimates the social and economic cost of each occupational cancer death at NZ\$3 million (£1.9m) a year so if estimates of 400 deaths a year are correct, the total bill is around NZ\$1.2 billion (£0.5bn) annually. Massey researcher Professor Neil Pearce said there was widespread ignorance about the risks of job-related cancers. “In fact, the vast majority of doctors don't know what job their patients have now, let alone 20 years ago. In 90 per cent of cases, the connection with occupation is never made.” In Japan, the government last week grudgingly released the names of 2,167

companies and offices around the nation where workers had received compensation for asbestos-related illnesses. Campaigners say the list will enable those who lived near the companies or who had family members who worked there to get checked for diseases such as the asbestos cancer mesothelioma.

- [Sunday Star Times](#). [Massey University research outline](#). [Asahi Shimbun](#). [Global union zero cancer campaign](#).
- Conference: [Occupational and Environmental Cancer Prevention - from research to policy to action at international, national and workplace levels](#), Friday, 25 April 2008, University of Stirling, Scotland. Further information, including [conference programme](#), [contact details and fees \(including union reductions\)](#).

South Africa: Lobbyists fail to block asbestos ban

A new law banning asbestos in South Africa took effect last week. Environmental affairs and tourism minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk said the regulations prohibit the use, processing, manufacturing, and import and export of any asbestos or asbestos-containing materials (ACMs). Penalties for the continued use of asbestos are a fine of no more than R100,000 (£6,250), a prison term of no more than 10 years, or both. South Africa mined crocidolite (blue), amosite (brown) and chrysotile (white) asbestos extensively from the late 1800s until 2001. Van Schalkwyk said the country had been continuing to phase out asbestos since 2003 and therefore the impact on the economy would not be huge. A grace period of 120 days is to be allowed to give any person or merchant currently dealing in asbestos or ACMs to clear their stock. He said requests by Zimbabwe and Canada to be exempt from the prohibition had been denied. However under strict conditions and if registered with the department, South Africa would allow Zimbabwean products to pass through its borders while in transit. South Africa had been

the world's fifth largest producer of chrysotile asbestos, the only form of asbestos in current usage. Remaining producers, particularly Canada and Russia, are involved in a well-resourced campaign to promote asbestos exports to developing nations (Risks 345) and to resist bans or other controls on the cancer-causing mineral (Risks 347).

- [South African government news release](#) and [asbestos regulations webpage](#). [Mail and Guardian](#). [International Ban Asbestos Secretariat](#).

USA: Site workers rushed to an early grave

In the shadows of the cranes, steel and concrete upon which Las Vegas has pinned its addiction to growth, a body count has emerged. Nine construction workers have died in eight accidents since the end of 2006 at the towers that are redefining the Las Vegas skyline. That's as many deaths in 16 months as were reported during the entire 1990s building boom on the Strip. The San Francisco office of federal safety watchdog OSHA is considering an investigation as part of its oversight of Nevada OSHA, and the District Council of Ironworkers for the Nevada region is working with unions and contractors to review safety issues. Mark Ayers, president of the national union federation AFL-CIO's Building and Construction Trades Department, is awaiting permission from Perini Building Company Inc, the general contractor on CityCenter and other Strip projects, to send in a team of safety experts in search of answers. "Something is inherently wrong, but we don't know what it is yet," Ayers said. The site workers on the Strip, however, do have an answer. The pace and scope of the construction is dizzying. The workers describe construction sites that are crowded with equipment and people, combined with consistent - though often unstated - pressure to do everything at top speed. While chugging after-work drinks at a bar nearby or chatting with buddies outside a union hall, workers sometimes wryly and nervously

refer to the CityCenter site as "CityCemetery" or "CemeteryCenter."

- [Las Vegas Sun](#) and follow up article on the [official enforcement failure](#). [The Pump Handle](#).

EVENTS AND COURSES

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR APRIL TO JULY 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 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