



Risks Newsletter



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Risks is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 15,000 subscribers and 1,500 on the TUC website. To receive this bulletin every week, click [here](#). Past issues are [available](#). This edition contains [Useful links](#) [TUC courses for safety reps](#) [Disclaimer](#) and [Privacy statement](#).

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UNION NEWS

Superhub safety rep sorts out chutes

Parcelforce Worldwide has agreed to a £1.4m package of improvements to Coventry's 'superhub' distribution centres after a union report highlighted major health and safety problems. The two centres, which opened in 2000, cost £65 million to construct and have Danish 'Crisplant' automatic parcel sorting technology capable of handling 40,000 items an hour. The system of overhead conveyors, 'tilt trays' and chutes brings the parcels down to the correct despatch point. However, the design of the system does not allow for safe access to the overhead equipment during maintenance. CWU said this "penny-pinching" on safety meant engineers "were forced to undertake bad working practices... including worst of all clambering up the parcel chutes in order to clear chute blockages, some times causing musculoskeletal injuries to joints, hurting their hips, knees and ankles." A report by CWU safety rep Jim Findlay highlighted the problems. The union raised the report's findings with the company, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the government safety minister. CWU said the system was in breach of the both the work equipment and the work at height regulations. The end result was Parcelforce Worldwide's agreement to install access walkways, ladders and platforms. A briefing from CWU national health and safety officer Dave Joyce noted: "This can be regarded as a hard fought and well won victory for the CWU which I take pride in and so should the Coventry engineers who stuck by their insistence that action needed to be taken." Engineers who have worked on the defective system will receive health surveillance for possible musculoskeletal disorders.

- CWU briefing [[word](#)].

River Clyde pilots in safety strike

Workers who provide safe passage for ships on the River Clyde took strike action this week over safety. The Pilots Group, which is represented by the union Unite, said the action was to defend the health and safety of the pilots and of maritime traffic. The union is in dispute with the

river authority, Clydeport, over new working conditions. Unite said its members had been forced into the action "as a result of Clydeport management's persistent harassment and intimidation" of its members. Unite regional Officer Andy MacFarlane, said the company had refused to enter into "constructive dialogue" with the union about changes to working practices the union believes could jeopardise safety. He said: "Management's actions have been shameless in threatening the pilots with disciplinary measures. These dedicated pilots, who are crucial to local maritime safety and economic prosperity, already operate in a high-skill, high-pressure environment where there can be no margin for error in an industry where health and safety is paramount." He added: "Management need to think again. Given the recent history on the Clyde we will not allow working conditions to be compromised in any way."

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

Napoli inquiry says profits override safety

The container ship industry is putting profits before safety, marine safety inspectors have warned in a report on the "catastrophic" failure of the MSC Napoli, which was beached off the coast of Britain in gales last year. Seafarers' union Nautilus UK said the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) report on the loss of the containership provides "a damning indictment" of the vessel's operators. The report points to design flaws and operational factors as key contributory factors in the grounding. "The investigation makes clear that this was an ageing vessel that was being pushed to and beyond acceptable operational limits," commented Nautilus UK senior national secretary Allan Graveson. He said the current regulatory regime had "allowed an inherently unsafe design, as well shortcomings in container loading, and it is important that rapid and concerted action is taken to address these." He said the Napoli incident was not the first where MAIB had highlighted "serious safety-critical failings" in a

ship operated by Zodiac Maritime Agencies, adding “we believe the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency should be taking a proactive approach to the enforcement of the International Safety Management Code within the company's fleet.” The report calls for a worldwide review of container ship design. More than 1,500 similar ships were screened following the incident, of which 12 unidentified ships required strengthening work “to bring them up to acceptable safety standards,” said the report. It said: “Speed and quick turnarounds appear to have become the focus of the industry at the expense of the safe operation of its vessels.”

- [Nautilus UK news release](#). [MAIB news release](#) and [full report](#). [The Guardian](#). [BBC News Online](#).

Shipyard exposures caused asbestosis

A Unite member has been awarded £20,000 in provisional damages after exposure to asbestos in a shipyard wrecked his health. Peter Guy developed asbestosis after being exposed to the dangerous dust while working for Harland & Wolf shipyard during the 1960s. The condition has left him unable to do gardening and other jobs around the house and he has had to give up his passion for swimming. Mr Guy, 74, was a repairer electrician for the firm and worked on board the cruise liners that came to the yard for refitting. He said he was not warned of the dangers or given any protective clothing. He contacted Unite when he was diagnosed with asbestosis in 2005. Unite regional secretary Laurence Faircloth said: “Asbestosis can be a debilitating disease and often sufferers are exposed to asbestos unwittingly in the workplace. We will continue to fight for compensation for our members who have been negligently exposed to asbestos.” Thompsons Solicitors’ Joanne Candlish, who acted for Mr Guy on behalf of Unite, added: “Mr Guy can claim for further damages if he goes on to develop other asbestos related conditions like mesothelioma.”

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#).

Payout deal for stressed teacher

A teacher who said his job ruined his health has been paid a “substantial” sum as compensation for his ordeal. Andrew Massey, 54, has been unable to work since going sick with stress from New College in Leicester. The NUT member received the undisclosed out-of-court settlement after taking legal action against Leicester City Council. He says that despite many years successfully dealing with difficult children, he was left a broken man because of poor management and a collapse in discipline. During his time at the college between 1999 and 2004, Mr Massey, a design teacher, said he spent much of his time dealing with fights and trying to control unruly behaviour. He said: “There were assaults on staff, assaults on pupils and all management would say was ‘We’ll sort it out’ but they never did.” Mr Massey broke down one day and has not worked since. He said: “Now I get worked up at the slightest thing. Before I started my speech therapy, it would take me 90 seconds to say my name. I’ve lost my ability to read more than a paragraph. You should be able to teach children without boys wanting to grope the girl in front of them or batter the boy next to them or smash up someone's work.” Peter Flack, assistant secretary of the NUT's Leicester branch, said: “This problem is certainly getting worse. The pressures are far greater. There are new demands, league tables, government targets - and in some schools declining behaviour, which puts enormous stress on teachers.” He added: “Councils have to take action to eliminate the stress teachers are under. Far too often it is ignored.” Education work regularly tops the TUC safety reps’ survey for the sector reporting the most problems with stress. A report this year highlighted a spate of work-related suicides in school staff.

- [BBC News Online](#). [Leicester Mercury](#). [Hazards suicide report](#).

Lecturers are stressed and insecure

An independent report on college staff satisfaction has revealed a dedicated workforce that is deeply dissatisfied and facing stress, bullying and insecurity. 'FE colleges, the frontline under pressure?' found that while students are happy with college staff, the staff are far from happy with their jobs. UCU believes low pay, mounting work pressures and deep dissatisfaction pose a recruitment and retention challenge in the sector. The report, produced for UCU by the Learning and Skills Network, found half of UCU members in colleges do not feel valued by their employers, the same proportion reporting they can't achieve a good work-life balance. More than half of teaching staff say their work space and equipment is inadequate, with the problem even worse among part-time staff. And only 31 per cent of teaching staff feel secure - compared to the UK average for all jobs of 57 per cent. Stress is widespread and 47 per cent of respondents said they feel their college tolerates bullying. UCU general secretary Sally Hunt said the sector "can't survive on their exploitation." She added: "Learners are very satisfied with their college lecturers. Lecturers deserve the satisfaction that comes from fair treatment, respect and just rewards." The union warned the sector could face a recruitment crisis unless the quality of working life improves.

- [UCU news release](#) and full report, FE colleges, the frontline under pressure?, UCU/LSN, April 08 [[pdf](#)]. [Personnel Today](#).

GMB pushes cash van case

Security workers' union GMB is keeping up the pressure for new safety measures to protect workers transporting cash and valuables. A two-day Nottingham conference convened by the union this week looked at the "scandalously high level of attacks against security workers delivering Britain's cash and valuables." The

event was attended by 80 union members, Home Office minister Vernon Coaker, representatives from the security and banking industries and senior police officers. The conference was the latest stage in GMB's campaign, which has involved the British Security Industry Association (BSIA), the Home Office and police. Earlier this year GMB and BSIA asked the European Commission for help to reduce "the number of attacks to the level of other EU countries as 76 per cent of Cash and Valuables in Transit (CVIT) attacks recorded in the EU occur in the UK" ([Risks 348](#)). GMB national secretary Gary Smith, said: "No matter what, the levels generally are too high and in London efforts need to be redoubled." He added that preventive efforts have been shown to work. "Figures released by the British Security Industry Association earlier this year show a 28 per cent drop in cash-in-transit attacks since the implementation of a proactive partnership initiative between the police, GMB trade union, and the banking, retail and security industries, which has been strongly supported by government ministers," he said.

- [GMB news release](#).

OTHER NEWS

MPs warn safety is under-funded

There is "widespread concern that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is inadequately funded," undermining its ability to carry out its work, MPs have warned ministers. The Commons Work and Pensions Committee report called for more "front line" health and safety inspectors, more frequent site visits, bigger fines and more prosecutions, all measures running counter to HSE's practice over recent years. Numbers of inspectors employed by HSE had fallen by more than 15 per cent since 2003, it said. Citing figures obtained by Hazards magazine, the report said employers were likely to receive an HSE site inspection every 14.5 years compared with an average of every 7 years in

2001/02. Studies had suggested there was a link “between the decline in the inspection rate and increases in fatal injuries,” the committee said. MPs were also concerned that, despite a more recent rise, prosecutions had fallen “almost continuously since 1999-2000.” The report added: “Current levels of fines for health and safety are too low and do not provide a sufficient deterrent.” Ray Hurst, president of safety professionals’ organisation IOSH said: “The government must listen to the Committee’s reported concerns and ensure that the Health and Safety Executive is adequately resourced to do its job properly, including much needed additional HSE workplace inspections.” The government’s Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 settlement allowed for a 3.6 per cent nominal increase in HSE’s net resources during the next three years. Lord McKenzie, health and safety minister, told the committee that this was “slightly better than flat cash”. That was a good result, he said, since the DWP as a whole was required by the review to cut its spending by 5 per cent a year in real terms.

- [The role of the Health and Safety Commission and the Health and Safety Executive in regulating workplace health and safety](#), House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 21 April 2008. [Financial Times](#). [The Telegraph](#). [IOSH news release](#). [IOM news release](#). [Personnel Today](#). [Building](#). [Contract Journal](#). [Hazards enforcement webpages](#).

Ministers urged to heed report findings

The TUC and the unions representing Health and Safety Executive (HSE) staff have urged the government to act on the recommendations of the House of Commons select committee on work and pensions. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber welcomed the report and said “the committee endorsed all the key points raised by the TUC in its evidence, including increasing penalties for rogue employers who ignore legislation, and the importance of consultation and involvement of safety representatives.” He also said the committee

report’s call for measures to address the safety of migrant workers was welcome. “However, the theme that runs through the report is that the HSE is being asked to do too much with too little,” he said. “The government needs to address the very serious resource issues that this report raises.” Michael Macdonald of HSE inspectors’ and specialists’ union Prospect said: “The committee highlights the vital role of inspectors and the need to coordinate other HSE activity around effective inspection. It successfully identified the correlation between inspection and improvements in health and safety performance.” HSE inspector and Prospect branch chair Neil Hope-Collins added: “If our members are to reduce the current unacceptable level of death and injury at work then they need to be out and about in enough numbers to make an impact.” Negotiations officer Michael McDonald added: “Workers’ safety is so vital that it deserves a well-reasoned response from government, rather than just filing it in the too-difficult-to-do box.” PCS, the union representing support staff at HSE, said front line work would suffer if inspectors did not have adequate backroom support. PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka backed the committee’s call for additional funds and warned the planned move of HSE’s HQ from London to Bootle could be a major mistake. “We are saying to the government that if you take health and safety in the workplace seriously you need to think again about these proposals to move jobs out of London which will inevitably mean a massive loss of skills and knowledge,” he said.

- [TUC news release](#). [Prospect news release](#). [PCS news release](#).

Action call on ‘toothless’ HSE

Unions have said the government must respond positively to the House of Commons work and pensions committee’s call for an increase in Health and Safety Executive (HSE) funding and enforcement activity. A July 2004 report from the committee had made similar criticisms and proposals, but had been followed by a fall in

enforcement and in HSE's budget. Bud Hudspith, Unite's national health and safety officer, said: "This report should be seen as a state of the nation report into the health and safety regime in the UK. We welcome its conclusions and urge the government to accept the report in full, and act as a matter of urgency to deliver the health and safety protections that UK workers deserve." He added: "A toothless Health and Safety Executive has been starved of resources and the power to penalise those who disregard the safety of workers and the public." UCATT and UNISON welcomed the report's acceptance of the case for explicit directors' duties. The committee report said "we are convinced by evidence that the introduction of statutory duties, as recommended by our predecessor Committee, would have a significant impact on board-level prioritisation of health and safety." Alan Ritchie, general secretary of UCATT, said: "The dogmatic decision by the HSE to press ahead with the failed voluntary code for directors was wrong. I am delighted that the select committee has vindicated our position on directors' duties. Sadly until statutory directors' duties are introduced workers will needlessly lose their lives." He said the voluntary approach pursued by HSE "is wrong in principle and wrong in practice. Workplaces are made safer through a high profile approach to inspections. It is time the HSE bosses stopped doing an impression of an ostrich and recognised the facts."

- [Unite news release](#), [UCATT news release](#), UNISON on [the report](#) and [directors' duties](#).

Not much naming, less shaming

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) commitment to name and shame dangerous firms is failing because of the watchdog's "simply extraordinary" failure to publicise most convictions. A Centre for Corporate Accountability (CCA) analysis found in 2007 HSE issued news releases after only 33 per cent of safety convictions, just 167 cases out of 502. Of the 84 convictions that involved a death, HSE

only issued a news release following 45 cases, or 54 per cent of the total. David Bergman, CCA executive director, said: "The failure of the HSE to publicise its convictions is simply extraordinary. HSE's level of convictions has declined 54 per cent since 1999 – convictions are increasingly rare. Yet the HSE fails to take the trouble to publicise even the convictions it has obtained." He added: "HSE repeatedly tries to justify its low level of prosecution by pointing to the time and money prosecution takes – yet the HSE seems to be wasting its money if it fails to ensure that each conviction is widely known in trade, regional and national media." CCA has written to HSE chief executive Geoffrey Podger asking him to take immediate steps to ensure that "every conviction results in a press release unless there are very particular reasons why this should not happen."

- [CCA news release](#).

Family critical after man's death

The family of a man who died after a sugar factory explosion has said he would still be alive if more "care and attention" had been paid to equipment. Robert Howe, 52, was showered with hot coals when a boiler exploded at British Sugar's Allscott factory on 2 March 2003. He died the following day from severe burns and multiple organ failure. An inquest jury recorded a verdict of accidental death and highlighted several failings over the boiler's maintenance. Mr Howe's family said the past five years had been "long and distressing." The jury's narrative verdict said corrosion of boiler pipes had gone unreported and criticised the training and supervision given to a man who fitted a misaligned soot blower. This had caused corrosion to a pipe which led to the explosion, the jury concluded. The corrosion on the pipe had been spotted when it was inspected in 2002, but this had not been reported. In a statement released through solicitors, his family said: "The family feel that had there been more care and attention to prevent the failings leading up to this tragic incident, Mr Robert Howe, a British Sugar

worker, would not have lost his life. The whole family have been devastated by the events surrounding Robert's death and would like to emphasise that it is impossible for them to put their feelings into words." Mr Howe's daughter, Kristy Howe, 29, wept as the verdict was announced and cried "yes" as the failure to shut down the boiler was included as an exacerbating factor. Martin Oversall, an inspector for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), said after the inquest that inquiries into a possible prosecution were ongoing. "The HSE liaised earlier with the family about this," he said. "This process will be completed as quickly as possible." British Sugar has had other deaths and serious injuries at its facilities in recent years ([Risks 214](#)). Six months after Mr Howe's death, 40-year-old David Reed died in a fall at the same Allscott plant.

- [Shropshire Star](#). [BBC News Online](#).

Depression hidden because of work stigma

A third of people with clinical depression say they have been turned down for jobs because of their mental health problems, a study has found. More than two-thirds (71 per cent) feared that disclosing their depression to colleagues would have a detrimental impact on their careers, according to the research. The charity Depression Alliance (DA) spoke to 288 members for the study and found almost half (46 per cent) said having a job helped them to recover. However, members felt there was still a stigma attached to the illness. Many also felt they had been discouraged from taking on exciting projects (51 per cent), had been avoided by colleagues (48 per cent), had received snide comments (47 per cent), and had been passed over for promotion (50 per cent). This was given as a reason why only a quarter of people with depression informed their personnel department of their condition. Emer O'Neill, the DA chief executive, said people with depression needed greater support at work. "Having a job is very important to people with depression so employers and colleagues need to have a much greater understanding of the challenges faced by

people with depression, in order to provide the support they need to contribute fully," she said. The report found many workplaces do not have structures in place to support their employees. More than nine out of ten (91 per cent) of those questioned said they did not have access to support when required, and more than one in seven (13.6 per cent) said they did not have access to any support at all.

- Depression Alliance news release [[pdf](#)] and report, *The Inside story: The impact of depression on daily life* [[pdf](#)]. [The Guardian](#). [Personnel Today](#). [Depression Alliance](#).

Formaldehyde linked to Lou Gehrig's disease

New preliminary research suggests that exposure to the chemical formaldehyde, present in workplaces from laboratories to hospitals to MDF factories, could greatly increase a person's chances of developing Lou Gehrig's disease. Study author Marc Weisskopf, assistant professor of epidemiology and environmental health at Harvard School of Public Health, said formaldehyde exposure hadn't previously been considered a risk factor for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS - the alternative medical name for Lou Gehrig's). The findings were released this week at the American Academy of Neurology annual meeting in Chicago. ALS causes loss of the ability to control muscles, usually causing paralysis and is rapidly fatal. Weisskopf and his colleagues examined statistics from an American Cancer Society study of more than 1 million people who were followed for 15 years. The researchers first examined the participants' responses in 1982 to questions about exposure to 12 different chemicals, including formaldehyde. Then they followed up between 1989 and 2004 to see what happened to those people. The researchers found that 617 men and 539 women died of ALS during the study period. Only those who reported exposure to formaldehyde had a higher risk - 34 per cent higher - of developing ALS. Those who reported more than 10 years of exposure to formaldehyde were almost four times more likely to develop

ALS. Formaldehyde is also a group 1 carcinogen, the highest category for cancer risk.

- Marc Weisskopf and others. Prospective study of chemical exposures and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis mortality, AAN Meeting 2008; Abstract # S25.005. AAN news release [[pdf](#)] and [video report](#). [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#). [MedPage Today](#).

Dangers of mind-numbing jobs

Boring jobs turn our mind on to autopilot, say scientists - and this means we can seriously mess up some simple tasks. Monotonous duties switch our brain to “rest mode,” whether we like it or not, the researchers report in Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences. They found mistakes can be predicted up to 30 seconds before we make them, by patterns in our brain activity. In the study, Dr Tom Eichele and his colleagues asked participants to repeatedly perform a “flanker task” - an experiment in which individuals must quickly respond to visual clues. As they did so, brain scans were performed using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). They found the participants’ mistakes were “foreshadowed” by a telltale pattern of brain activity. “To our surprise, up to 30 seconds before the mistake we could detect a distinct shift in activity,” said Dr Stefan Debener of Southampton University. “The brain begins to economise, by investing less effort to complete the same task.” Since this state begins about 30 seconds prior to a mistake being made, it could be possible to design an early-warning system that alerts people to be more focused or more careful, said the researchers. A prototype could be ready for the market in “10 to 15 years,” said Dr Debener. “But first, we must establish what is causing these mistakes,” he said. Some observers may consider better designed jobs and more breaks a more immediate and better solution than EEG helmets, however.

- Tom Eichele and others. Prediction of human errors by maladaptive changes in event-related

brain networks, PNAS, volume 105, number 16, pages 6173-6178, 22 April 2008 [abstract]. New York Times. CBS News. The Telegraph. BBC News Online.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Bangladesh: Latest death leads to rights call

The death of yet another Bangladeshi garment worker as a result of employer negligence highlights the need for trade union rights to be reinstated in the country, a global union federation has said. Trade union rights were suspended under emergency rule over a year ago. Neil Kearney, general secretary of the global textile and garment union federation ITGLWF, made the call for restoration of trade union rights after the workplace death earlier this month. He said: “The latest tragic example of the impact on workers of the suppression of labour rights comes from the RM Sweater factory in Dhaka.” He added: “Workers at the plant suspected that something was wrong when the factory closed that day at 5.30pm instead of at the usual 10.00pm. When they found their co-worker had died, they took to the streets in protest.” Media reports say the 25-year-old victim was denied permission to leave after collapsing with severe chest pains. He died at the factory gate at 4.30pm. Neil Kearney said excessive hours were routine at the workplace. In a message to the government, he said: “Only when full trade union rights are restored will companies sourcing from your country be able to ensure the social compliance requirements of their codes of conduct are fulfilled.”

- [ITGLWF news release](#).

Global: Unions call for asbestos ban support

Global union federations representing tens of millions of workers in the construction and

metal sectors have renewed their call for a global asbestos ban. Anita Normark, general secretary of the Building and Woodworkers' International (BWI), wrote last month to the Canadian Labour Congress appealing for help from Canadian trade unions to end the export of Canadian chrysotile asbestos to the developing world. Normark pointed out that trade unions in Asia, Africa and Latin America are struggling to avoid an epidemic of asbestos diseases on a scale even more frightening than that seen already in industrialised countries. BWI said Canada mines about 250 thousand tons of chrysotile asbestos a year and exports it to developing countries, mainly in Asia, where information on the hazards and control measures to protect workers and communities from exposure are "non-existent." The Canadian government funds the Chrysotile Institute, described by BWI as "an industry propaganda machine that markets asbestos and funds corrupt scientists to lie to public health officials, workers and consumers, selling this deadly substance by deception." BWI urged Canada's unions to attack their government's "cynical policy." Mirroring action taken by BWI affiliates worldwide, the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) wrote to the Geneva embassies and consulates of China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam this month calling for a ban on the use of asbestos and compensation for workers harmed by asbestos.

- [BWI news release](#). [IMF news release](#).
- [Canadian asbestos: One killer export](#), Ban Asbestos Canada Network.

Global: Sportswear industry's Olympic shame

As the clock ticks down to the Beijing Olympics, workers producing for the international sportswear companies that spend millions on Olympic and athletic sponsorship deals are still working excessive hours in exchange for poverty wages. 'Clearing the hurdles,' a damning new report from the labour rights coalition Play Fair 2008 (PF08) and based on interviews with over

300 sportswear workers in China, India, Thailand and Indonesia, reveals violations of worker rights is still the sportswear industry norm. Last year Play Fair 2008 released a report on rights violations in the production of Olympic-branded goods and since then has been seeking a concrete commitment from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on an action plan. "Five years after we first approached the IOC on this issue, no concrete commitments have been made and it still remains unclear how they will take action on outstanding labour rights issues. We are ready to start working with them right away to get concrete results," said International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) general secretary Guy Ryder. TUC's Brendan Barber commented: "In spite of more than 15 years of codes of conduct adopted by most of the major sportswear brands, workers still face bullying and harassment, excessive, undocumented and unpaid overtime, threats to health and safety and a failure to receive legally required health insurance. We've raised our concerns with the organisers of the London Olympics and we are looking to them to ensure that London 2012 does not have its reputation sullied by such shocking abuses."

- [ITUC news release](#). TUC news release. [Play Fair 2008 webpage](#) and full report, Clearing the hurdles: Steps to improving working conditions in the global sportswear industry", Play Fair 2008 (PF08) [[pdf](#)].

USA: Doctors feel push to downplay injuries

A leading group of US occupational doctors has spoken out against pressure from companies to downplay workplace injuries. The physicians have sent a letter to federal workplace safety regulator OSHA and plan to testify before Congress. "Our members feel they are being methodically pressured... to under-treat and mistreat," said Dr Robert McLellan, president of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM). "This is a grave ethical concern for our members. It's a grave medical concern." His group represents

5,000 doctors. Employers are supposed to record all injuries requiring time off work or medical treatment beyond first aid. Low injury rates allow companies to avoid scrutiny from workplace safety regulators and may help managers earn four-figure bonuses. ACOEM members report this creates an incentive for employers to urge doctors not to treat injuries in a way that would make them reportable. A cut, for instance, must be recorded if the worker gets stitches. But if the doctor simply covers the cut with a bandage, it doesn't have to be reported. Dr McLellan, an associate professor at Dartmouth Medical School in New Hampshire, says he thinks employers are “vastly under-reporting” the extent of workplace injuries.

- [Charlotte Observer](#).

RESOURCES

TUC protect yourself at work guide

The third edition of the TUC's best-selling guide to employment rights at work is now available. ‘Your rights at work’ has been completely revised and updated. Highlights include fully rewritten chapters on health and safety, maternity rights, flexible working, holiday entitlement and disciplinary procedures. The text deals with all major employment rights, devoting a full chapter to each. Chapters cover starting a job, parental leave and maternity rights, discrimination and bullying, email privacy, dismissal and redundancy, pay and holiday rights, and enforcing your rights.

- [TUC briefing document](#). Your Rights at Work - a TUC Guide, 3rd edition, £9.99. Order online at [TUC Publications](#) or download an order form [[pdf](#)].

EVENTS AND COURSES

Monday is Workers’ Memorial Day

Workers’ Memorial Day is Monday 28 April. There will be thousands of activities worldwide – check out the global 28 April webpages to see what’s going on. This year’s global theme is ‘Good occupational health for all’. In the UK, Labour MP Mick Clapham’s Early Day Motion this week says: “This house notes that Monday 28 April is International Workers’ Memorial Day and joins in remembering those who have died as a result of work and calls on the government to do what it can to officially mark the day while at the same time reducing the death toll caused by work by increasing resources for prevention of ill-health and injury in the workplace as recommended by the recent Work and Pensions Select Committee report on the work of the HSE.”

- [TUC Workers' Memorial Day webpage](#) and [UK 2008 events listing](#).
- [Global 28 April webpage](#).
- Order your 28 April materials: No excuses posters (free); forget-me-knot ribbons (£25 per 100); and bumper stickers (£1 each) from the [Hazards Campaign](#), c/o GMHC, Windrush Millennium Centre, 70 Alexandra Road, Manchester M16 7WD. Tel: 0161 636 7557.
- [YouTube Workers' Memorial Day resources and video clips](#).
- [Email TUC details of your event](#).
- [International Workers’ Memorial Day, EDM 1376](#). Check to see if your MP has signed. [If not, tell them they should – to contact them all you need is your postcode](#).

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