

# Risks

TUC 

*e-bulletin*

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MAGAZINE

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**HSE Lives**  
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**Risks** is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 16,000 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](#)

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## **Unions slam 'complacent' government**

The government's response to a highly critical Commons select committee report on the work of the Health and Safety Executive has been described as "complacent" and "disappointing" by unions. The 21 April committee report warned that lack of funding was undermining HSE and called for more cash, more front line inspectors, more inspections and more prosecutions ([Risks 353](#)). The government response, however, said improvements would be achieved by HSE "prioritising and targeting its activities" and indicated it would persevere with the existing HSE policy, despite the select committee criticisms. Prospect negotiator Mike Macdonald, whose union represents inspectors, policy advisers, scientists and managers within HSE, commented: "The government's response is disappointing but unsurprising." He said the union "had hoped that ministers would heed the clear recommendations from the committee that further funding is needed to back frontline inspectors", adding: "The union has argued for many years that there is a clear correlation between inspection and improvements in health and safety performance, and it was refreshing to see that recognised by the work and pensions committee. For the government to again refuse point blank to investigate increasing funding for proactive investigation, a policy we know works, is at best complacent." Mr Macdonald said: "Safety in the workplace is so vital that it deserves a well-reasoned response from government, rather than just filing it in the too-difficult-to-do box." Alan Ritchie, general secretary of construction union UCATT, commented: "Self-regulation does not work in dangerous casualised industries such as construction. By talking about the importance of giving 'advice and guidance' ministers and HSE's chiefs give the impression that they think it is more important to stuff education material into envelopes than inspect sites." Commenting on the government refusal to inject significant new funds to HSE, Mr Ritchie said: "Someone, somewhere, sitting in their ivory tower should once and for all tell us exactly what price they place on a worker's life."

- [Prospect new release](#). [UCATT news release](#). [Work and pensions committee news release](#) and [full government response](#). [Personnel Today](#).

## **Government blasted on crane register refusal**

Safety campaigners have reacted angrily to a government refusal to introduce a central register of cranes. Construction union UCATT said the government's outright rejection of a register for tower cranes "is myopic. The reasoning that the register is not feasible because the cranes are mobile is spurious." UCATT general secretary Alan Ritchie said: "To suggest you cannot have a register for cranes because they move between sites is laughable. Cars move every day but some how the government administers a register. It is not exactly rocket science to provide a similar resource for cranes." The Battersea Crane Disaster Action Group (BCDAG), a campaign founded after a fatal crane collapse in south London, said it was "extremely concerned" by the government's failure to act. It added that the Commons work and pensions committee's April report had supported the call for a register.

BCDAG secretary Liliana Alexa, whose son Michael died in the Battersea crane collapse in 2006, said: "We're really angry. How can the government say that there's no need for a central register? When a crane collapsed in Forest Hill in December 2007, the HSE had to investigate to find out who owned the crane and how old it was! This is completely unacceptable. This information should be immediately available and the public should be able to access it." She added: "We'll be doing everything we can to protest about the government's response. We firmly believe that a register of plant is necessary and the select committee agrees. Why are the government refusing to take some positive action to save lives?"

- [UCATT news release](#). [BCDAG news release](#). [Work and pensions committee news release](#) and [full government response](#).

### **Why did rail firm ignore deadly hoist warning?**

Rail union RMT is demanded the withdrawal from use of 'Unimog' hydraulic hoists after an incident in Essex left three workers injured, one subsequently succumbing to his injuries. Delegates to the RMT conference last week adopted an emergency call for the hoists, used by Network Rail as platforms for work on overhead lines, to be withdrawn from use pending an "investigation and appropriate action to remedy an apparent serious design fault." In June, the half-ton metal basket of a Unimog hoist broke free from its hydraulic arm, throwing overhead line workers from the basket and landing on two of them. The unions said Network Rail had previously insisted that the equipment was safe, despite concerns expressed by RMT reps over the inadequacy of the single weld with which the basket is attached to the hoist arm. Subsequent checks confirmed cracked welds on other hoists. RMT said it has learned of at least two other incidents involving Unimog hoists. Commenting after the 1 July death of overhead lines supervisor Malcolm Slater, from injuries sustained in the 11 June incident in Essex, RMT general secretary Bow Crow said: "Malcolm was only a few months away from retirement and the tragedy is that this accident should clearly never have happened, not least because concerns about the inadequacy of the single weld attaching the basket to its arm had been raised with Network Rail." He added that "it is essential that these machines are not allowed back into service until appropriate remedial action is taken." Mr Crow said it was "deeply disturbing to hear that Network Rail plans to bring two similar machines in to the same site before the investigation is complete, and the law is quite clear that our members have the right to refuse to use equipment they believe to be unsafe."

- [RMT news release](#) and release on the death of Malcolm Slater.
- [RMT news release](#)

### **Injured bus driver gets payout**

A Newcastle bus driver who was medically retired following a vehicle smash while working has secured significant damages with the support of the GMB union's Friends and Family scheme. At the time of the incident, Kenneth Lansley was employed as a bus driver

for Arriva. He suffered debilitating injuries when a BMW drove into the side of his vehicle. Mr Lansley, who is now 62-years-old, said it was a "horrifying experience", adding: "I suffered whiplash and since then a great deal of stress." A settlement of £30,000 was reached with the insurers of the driver who caused the smash. GMB regional organiser Julie Elliott commented: "Road traffic accidents are an increasingly common occurrence and often result in fairly insignificant claims of compensation. We're delighted that our Friends and Family scheme has provided the support which Mr Lansley so badly needed, and we hope it will help to ease his retirement." Representing Mr Lansley, Andrew Venn from Thompsons Solicitors in Newcastle said: "£30,000 is a significant settlement for a road traffic accident, and in this case, it reflects the impact that the accident has had on Mr Lansley's life, forcing him to retire earlier than he had planned."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#). [Northern Echo](#).

### **BP neglect caused asbestos cancer**

BP Oil UK has been told it must pay compensation to the family of a former worker who died from the asbestos cancer mesothelioma. Unite member Wilf Human worked at the firm's refinery on the Isle of Grain from 1957 until 1979. He died at the age of 82 in January 2005. His widow, Edna Human, had promised him that she would fight for compensation. Legal proceedings were commenced in the High Court in London, where the court last month entered judgment against BP. It ordered the oil giant to make an initial compensation payment of £47,000. Final compensation will be determined at a trial in October 2008. Representing the Human family, Paul Meehan, an industrial disease specialist with Pattison and Brewer solicitors, said: "The refinery at the Isle of Grain contained mile after mile of asbestos lagging. Mr Human was exposed to asbestos while working in the vicinity of asbestos ladders. Although I am pleased that compensation will be awarded to Mrs Human, it is important to remember that compensation is only a consolation. Mrs Human has lost her husband, partner and companion." Wilf Human's son, Robert said: "Prior to the diagnosis, Dad was so full of life. Afterwards, his health deteriorated quickly. He was in severe and constant pain and had terrible difficulty breathing. It was awful for my Mum to watch her husband in such pain."

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

### **Payout from Boots for thigh injuries**

A Boots the Chemist warehouse worker who was forced to do a job despite raising safety concerns has received £8,000 compensation after it resulted in him being injured. Unite member Fred Stedham, 53, was employed by Boots at its Erith depot. When a supervisor asked him to unload a vehicle, he protested because he had reported the vehicle as unsafe three weeks before. Warned by the supervisor to unload the trailer or else go home, he proceeded with the job. However, as Mr Stedham stood on the tailgate it collapsed, he fell and he was trapped between the vehicle and the tailgate. He

sustained internal bruising and injuries to his thighs, requiring three nights in hospital. "I was in excruciating pain for four months, and made a gradual recovery over eight months," Mr Stedham said. "I was absent from work for three months, and did not return to full duties for a further five months. When I returned to work the manager told me not to worry going to see a solicitor as Boots solicitors would look after me." Representing Mr Stedham for Unite, Deborah Smith from Pattinson and Brewer Solicitors said: "Mr Stedham was initially offered £3,000 and later £5,000 by Boots solicitors. Fortunately he contacted his union." She said when the firm refused to improve the offer, court proceedings were instituted, leading to an £8,000 settlement earlier this year. "This case illustrates how the union's legal scheme can help members to win fairer settlements," said Deborah Smith.

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

### **Journalists throw the book at bullying**

Journalists' union NUJ is telling its union reps how to tackle workplace bullying. NUJ equality officer, Lena Calvert, said: "Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect at work, but too often this is not the case." She added: "For someone who is bullied at work it can be one of the worst experiences of their life and greatly affects their ability to do their job. Bullying doesn't just affect the individuals concerned, people who witness bullying and the organisations in which it takes place are also affected." An online NUJ survey is aiming to gauge the extent of bullying in the media industry. And a new NUJ handbook "should help those who are being bullied to find ways of tackling it and to reassure them that they are not alone," NUJ's Lena Calvert said: "It can also be an invaluable tool for reps, to help them avoid a culture of bullying or to turn around a workplace where bullying is prevalent." An NUJ 'Dignity at Work' model agreement has been produced for reps to include in workplace agreements. It sets out a policy to deal with reports of bullying or harassment and focuses on prevention.

- [NUJ news release](#). Stop bullying: Challenging bullies and achieving dignity at work [[pdf](#)]. NUJ dignity at work model agreement [[word](#)].

### **Not-for-profits are not for bullying**

The union Unite is challenging the "unacceptably high" levels of bullying in the not-for-profit sector. It says recent research showed 43 per cent of Unite members in the sector had experienced bullying in the last two years. The union says major reasons for the sector's poor performance are poor management training and the lack of proper human resources (HR) structures. It adds that the sector faces additional pressures, including funding concerns and the exceptionally high commitment expected of staff. Rachael Maskell, Unite's national officer for the sector, said: "Unite promotes a zero tolerance approach to bullying and believes the only way for organisations to tackle the issue is by working with employee representatives to find joint ways to challenge workplace bullies and

all forms of unacceptable behaviour and the underlying cultures that allows them to thrive." The union this week launched a new guide aimed at reps in the not-for-profit sector, offering practical advice on how to support members who are being bullied.

- [Unite news release](#).

### **Golden toilet bid to flush out breaks pay**

An MP is backing a union campaign for paid toilet breaks at a Scottish meat firm supplying the supermarket chain Tesco. Workers at Brown Brothers in Kirkcubrecht are forced to take unpaid lavatory breaks ([Risks 262](#)) - a policy that has been condemned by Labour MP Russell Brown and the union Unite as unacceptable. In a bid to embarrass the company and urge it to abandon this "draconian" policy, Unite tried last week to present the firm with a golden toilet. Union members held a demonstration and paraded the lavatory outside the factory. MP Russell Brown said: "Workers at Brown Brothers are effectively having their pay stopped for going to the toilet, which is a completely undignified and unacceptable way of treating staff in 2008." Unite also gave supermarket giant Tesco a gold toilet and urged the supermarket giant to pressure the firm into ending "one of Britain's worst toilet policies". Staff are also expected to provide medical evidence in order to be excused from the system. Unite says the policy means women in the early stages of pregnancy or having their period would have to get a doctor's note to justify extra visits to the loo. Unite, joint general secretary, Tony Woodley said: "The workers at Brown Brothers are essentially having their pay stopped for going to the toilet. Tesco must do everything in its power to investigate these practices and put an end to them. Tesco need to get out there, see what's going on and then act quickly together with the union to ensure decent treatment of workers in its supply chain."

- [Unite news release](#). [IUF news release](#). [Dumfries Standard](#). [Guidance on toilet breaks](#).

### *Other news*

#### **Oil firms accused of putting production first**

Offshore oil operators have been accused of deliberately delaying maintenance operations to produce as much oil as possible to exploit sky-high world prices. The claim by Liberal Democrat MP Malcolm Bruce came in a Commons debate on the 20th anniversary of the 1988 Piper Alpha disaster, in which 167 workers perished. Mr Bruce made the allegation minutes before work and pensions minister Anne McGuire told MPs the government had asked the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to review the industry's progress tackling the problems raised in the damning 'KP3' offshore safety report ([Risks 333](#)). HSE was told to report back next April. Mr Bruce said he had been told of concerns "that at the current high price of oil some routine maintenance programmes and shutdowns are being delayed or postponed in order to maximise production at the top price." Aberdeen North Labour MP Frank Doran said in the debate that Mr Bruce was "absolutely right". Unite organiser

Graham Tran said this practice was "the norm in the oil and gas industry". Oil and Gas UK director of health and safety Chris Allen denied the allegations. "We cannot agree with the comments made by Malcolm Bruce that routine maintenance on our offshore platforms is being delayed and safety is being overlooked. In fact, the opposite is the case. Safety and asset integrity remain at the top of the industry's agenda," he said.

- [DWP news release](#). [Press and Journal](#). [BBC News Online](#). KP3 report [[pdf](#)].

### **Small dip in work deaths**

There has been a small dip in the number of people killed at work this year, but the workplace death rate has remained significantly higher than record low recorded in 2005/06. The figures show the general fatality rate for employees, the self-employed and all workers has remained broadly the same over the last five years. The provisional figures of work-related fatal injuries in Great Britain issued this week by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) reveal that 228 workers lost their lives as a result of incidents at work in 2007/08, compared to 247 workers in 2006/07. However, the earlier figure includes six deaths more than the provisional 241 deaths figure announced this time last year. It is possible this year's figure could increase in a similar fashion. The report shows a slight increase in the number of workers killed in agriculture (from 36 in 2006/07 to 39 in 2007/08) and a slight decrease in the construction sector (from 79 in 2006/07 to 72 in 2007/08). HSE chair Judith Hackitt said: "Whilst we welcome the headline decrease in overall numbers of fatalities, there is absolutely no room for complacency as the report suggests a plateau in the overall five year trend." Construction union UCATT said the figures "make grim reading and "should serve as a wake up call to the construction industry and the Health and Safety Executive." Alan Ritchie, general secretary of UCATT, said: "It is quite clear that the HSE should be taking a far more rigorous approach to inspections, enforcement and prosecutions. The HSE's laissez faire attitude and belief in self-regulation has been an abject failure." Mick Antoniw, from Thompsons Solicitors, said: "If you were to include the road traffic accidents related to work which resulted in deaths and the increasing number of deaths from industrial diseases such as mesothelioma, the HSE results would reveal a far darker picture. Of course we welcome any decrease in deaths at work, but we must not allow any employer – however large or small - to get complacent and neglect the duty of care that they have to all of their employees."

- [HSE news release](#) and [HSE statistics webpages](#). [UCATT news release](#). [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#). [Financial Times](#). [Contract Journal](#).

### **The price of teen's life at work - £7k**

An Altrincham firm has been fined £7,000 for safety offences that led to the death of a teenage apprentice. S Cartwright & Sons (Coachbuilders) was prosecuted after 16-year-old Ashley Saunders sustained fatal injuries when he fell through a fragile roof whilst retrieving a football during a lunchtime kick-about on 7 February

2006. The firm was also ordered to pay £17,376 costs after pleading guilty at Manchester Crown Court to a breach of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. After the incident the company was served with an improvement notice requiring it to fix prominent warning notices that the roof was fragile. HSE principal inspector, Vincent Joyce said it was "an entirely avoidable incident." He added: "We don't want to stop healthy break-time activities such as football, but employers need to be fully aware of what their employees get up to on their premises, and take action to protect them, particularly vulnerable employees, who may not fully appreciate the hazards and risks present in the workplace." Employers have more extensive legal responsibilities to protect young workers.

- [HSE news release.](#)

### **'Shocking' failures led to fatal petrol burns**

A Twickenham garage has been fined £20,000 after pleading guilty to safety breaches that led to the death of employee Biagio Malacaria. Alexanders of Twickenham Ltd, a car MOT, service and repair business, was also ordered at City of London Magistrates Court last week to pay costs of £16,905. On 12 December 2005 Biagio Malacaria, a mechanic employed by Alexanders, was working on a car's fuel system, which involved draining fuel from the vehicle. During this process, his overalls were set alight and he was engulfed in flames. The flames were extinguished by two colleagues, one of whom was also injured in the process. Mr Malacaria died from pneumonia as a result of his injuries on 6 January 2006. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector Andrew Withers, who was prosecuting, said: "This is a case where a man died as a result of serious injuries he suffered after working with woefully inadequate equipment, and it is shocking that the employer had not realised the danger created by petrol being moved and stored in open containers near obvious sources of ignition." He added: "The company failed in its duties in a number of ways including having no risk assessment for fire and explosions, a lack of safety measures for this type of work and failing to ensure that all staff were suitably trained."

- [HSE news release.](#)

### **Smoking ban is a major life saver**

A year after England's smoking ban took effect more people are trying to quit smoking, the air in pubs and bars is cleaner and rates of compliance with smokefree laws remain high, according to a report from Smokefree England. Its survey found 76 per cent of people and 55 per cent of smokers now support the law. Almost all premises and vehicles that were inspected – 98 per cent – comply with the law. The study also found exposure for bar workers to hazardous secondhand smoke has been reduced by 76 per cent. Prior to smokefree legislation, non-smoking bar workers were found to be inhaling up to six times as much cigarette smoke as the average non-smoker. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber

commented: "It was only when a legally enforceable ban was introduced across the whole of England that we saw exposure to second-hand smoke cut out at a stroke. Quite simply, the ban has made a world of difference to the health of millions of workers." He added: "Introducing smoke-free laws in the workplace was one of the biggest occupational health measures the UK had seen for decades." A new report from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), published online in July edition of The Lancet Oncology, has concluded smoking bans are good for health, protect bar and restaurant workers from passive smoking related disease and are not bad for business. A poll of 1,500 pub licensees for trade magazine The Publican showed 64 per cent are now in favour of the ban, compared with 57 per cent when the ban was introduced last summer.

- [Department of Health news release](#), and report, [Smokefree England - One year on](#). [TUC news release](#). [IARC news release](#). [BBC News Online](#). [ITN](#).
- Effectiveness of smoke-free policies. John P Pierce, María E León, on behalf of the IARC Handbook Volume 13 Working Group, IARC Secretariat, Lancet Oncology, volume 9, pages 614-615, 2008.

### **Top medical journal backs nano precaution**

The Lancet Oncology, one of the world's top cancer journals, has called for the precautionary principle to be used when dealing with nanotechnologies. Responding to research this year that suggested a possible mesothelioma risk from exposure to carbon nanotubes ([Risks 357](#)), an editorial in the July edition of the journal says until "knowledge has caught up with the technological advances, it would be wise to invoke the Precautionary Principle to ensure health and safety measures are sufficiently rigorous to decrease the possibility of health risks to industry workers." The editorial continues: "These actions would prevent a repetition of the pitiful response seen in the 20th century to evidence linking asbestos with various lung diseases. Mistakes that have left an appalling legacy: 5,000 deaths per year from asbestos-related mesothelioma in the UK by 2020; 1 million deaths worldwide by 2035; and economic consequences of epic proportions—at least £471 million in health-care expenditure in the UK in 2000, and estimated litigation costs of US\$200–300 billion in the USA. Such consequences must be avoided during the implementation of carbon nanotechnologies."

- [Leading Edge: Space elevators, tennis racquets, and mesothelioma](#), The Lancet Oncology, volume 9, number 7, page 601, July 2008. DOI:10.1016/S1470-2045(08)70157-8

## *International News*

### **Europe: Top union body calls for nano precaution**

Europe's trade union confederation ETUC has called for the precautionary principle to be applied to nanotechnologies. It says "significant uncertainties" revolve around potential benefits of nanotechnologies and their harmful effects on human health and the environment. "After the asbestos scandal, the ETUC finds it

unacceptable that products should now be manufactured without their potential effects on human health and the environment being known unless a precautionary approach has been applied and made transparent to the workers," said ETUC confederal secretary Joël Decaillon. The resolution says the REACH chemical registration and evaluation rules must apply, noting "nanometre forms of chemicals should not be allowed on the market unless sufficient data are supplied to show no harmful effect for human health and the environment." It adds that risk reduction measures must be used and employers must involve workers and their representatives in the assessment and reduction of nanomaterial-related risks. Other measures called for by ETUC include training and health surveillance for workers exposed to nanomaterials, at least 15 per cent of public research budgets on nanotech to be dedicated to health and environmental aspects and for workplace health and safety to be included in all research programmes. The move follows calls from the TUC for a precautionary approach and a call from global foodworkers' union federation IUF for a moratorium on commercial nanotechnology while the health impacts are uncertain.

- [ETUC news release](#). [ETUC resolution on nanotechnologies and nanomaterials](#).

### **Global: Olympic movement from sports goods firms**

A month before the start of the Beijing Olympics, key sporting goods brands including Nike, Adidas, New Balance, Umbro and Speedo have formed a groundbreaking joint working group with trade unions and campaign groups. The move follows criticism of labour rights and safety abuses in firms producing Olympic branded goods. The joint group is charged with determining how to prioritise and encourage union organisation, collective bargaining and social dialogue. A statement from global garment workers' union federation ITGLWF said the new group will seek to establish a better understanding of how business is done, covering aspects including manufacturing systems, costings, productivity, and information required for effective contract bargaining and dialogue. Approaches to contract labour, closure procedures and training for managers and workers are also under discussion. The sporting goods industry is responding to repeated pressure on supplier factory conditions from the Play Fair 2008 campaign (PF08), led by the global union confederation ITUC, ITGLWF and the Clean Clothes Campaign. A joint group report including detailed targets was the product of a three day conference in Hong Kong, which ending on 2 July.

- [ITGLWF news release](#). [ITUC news release](#). [Play Fair 2008](#).

### **USA: Beryllium firm caught in spin mode**

A major US firm that denied outright having used notorious industry spin doctors to block regulatory action on highly dangerous beryllium was lying, evidence suggests. Earlier this year, David Michaels and Celeste Monforton of the Project on Scientific Knowledge and Public Policy (SKAPP) published a paper, 'Beryllium's public relations problem: Protecting workers when there is no safe exposure level,' criticising beryllium giant Brush Wellman for its

efforts to prevent workplace safety agency OSHA and the US Department of Energy from lowering exposure limits for the highly toxic metal, linked to problems including cancer and debilitating lung and other diseases. The article in the journal Public Health Reports received a forthright response in its July-August issue, from Brush Wellman's Marc Kolanz. Michaels and Monforton had claimed the firm had retained Hill and Knowlton, the public relations firm that pioneered the tobacco industry's strategy of creating doubt to avoid regulation. Kolanz denied that Brush hired Hill and Knowlton, asserting: "The best example of the authors' skewed presentation of industry communications is their emphasis on the Hill and Knowlton professional media relations proposal submitted to Brush Wellman. Contrary to the authors' statements, we did not hire Hill and Knowlton nor implement its proposal." Michaels and Monforton responded: "The evidence we have for our reporting of Brush's relationship with H&K is an invoice sent by the public relations firm to Brush (with accompanying note), the H&K public relations program proposal, an internal Brush memo talking about materials needed for the H&K initiative, a letter from Brush to H&K providing 'supporting information for the PR program,' a series of letters developed by H&K for Brush to send to its customers reassuring them of the safety of beryllium, and copies of letters sent by Brush Wellman that include much of the text provided by H&K (with copies sent to H&K)." Michaels and Montforton have made the background documents available online, and are inviting readers to draw their own conclusions.

- [DefendingScience.org](http://DefendingScience.org) and [documents relating to Brush Wellman. SKAPP case study: Beryllium - Science or public relations?](#)

### **USA: Welding firms pay for manganese disease**

US firms facing thousands of compensation claims from manganese-exposed welders with serious nervous system disease, have been paying millions to scientists who have then produced papers denying any link between the metal and "manganism", a Parkinson's-type condition. For several years, US District Judge Kathleen O'Malley had watched lawyers squabble over disclosure of alleged payments to researchers studying the effects of manganese on welders ([Risks 220](#)). Finally, in December 2007, O'Malley ordered both sides to fess up and provide a "full and complete" account of any such payments. Court documents obtained by the magazine Mother Jones revealed the welding companies paid more than \$12.5 million (£6.3m) to 25 organisations and 33 researchers, virtually all of whom published papers dismissing connections between welding fumes and workers' ailments. Most of the money, \$11 million (£5.5m), was spent after the litigation achieved critical mass in 2003. The quality of the research came in for scathing criticism from the judge, who noted some was vetted by the companies prior to publication. Last December, a jury ordered the five companies to pay 47-year-old welder Jeff Tamraz \$17.5 million (£8.8m) compensation and \$3 million (£1.5m) to his wife, Terry, who has seen her relationship with her husband drastically affected by the condition. In March this year, welder Robert Jowers won a \$2.4 million (£1.2m) verdict against three manufacturers. Some 2,800 cases are still pending against the industry, with another 11,000 on a legal back burner. Two of the defendants in each case were British firms, Charter plc offshoot ESAB Group and BOC Group plc, although BOC last year was bought out by a German firm.

- [Mother Jones](#).

## *Resources*

### **ICL-Stockline Inquiry commences**

Part 1 of the ICL-Stockline Public Inquiry, which will investigate the circumstances that led to the deaths of nine people in a factory explosion on 11 May 2004, started in Glasgow on 2 July. Daily reports and transcripts can be viewed online on the official inquiry website. Links to the latest press coverage can be found on the ILC-Stockline disaster campaign website.

- [STUC news release](#). [ICL-Stockline Inquiry website](#). [ILC-Stockline disaster campaign website](#).

## *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 [www.tuc.org.uk/h\\_and\\_s](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