

Risks

TUC 

e-bulletin

Number 372 – 06 September 2008

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MAGAZINE

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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](#)

Editor: [Rory O'Neill](#) of [Hazards](#) magazine. Comments to the TUC at healthandsafety@tuc.org.uk

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Overwork and stress are top work concerns

Overwork and stress are the top problems facing workers, according to new TUC research. Its 'What workers want' report is based on an extensive YouGov poll of more than 2,500 people at work in Britain, and identifies safety as both a top three concern and an action priority. The research looked at all aspects of work, and found the most pressing problems in the workplace is increased workload, identified by 46 per cent of respondents, equating to 11 million workers nationwide. Almost four out of every 10 workers (39 per cent) complained of increased stress levels and 23 per cent of longer working hours. One in seven workers (14 per cent) said they had been bullied in their current job, and 10 per cent (equating to just under two and a half million) said they work where it is unsafe. Over a fifth (21 per cent) said safety had been an issue in their workplace in the last three years. Nearly six million say they suffered from boring or repetitive work. The issues workers most want unions to raise with employers are pay (86 per cent), pensions (80 per cent) and safety (77 per cent). "While most employees are reasonably content with their lot, there is clearly a minority who are suffering from real problems such as bullying, dangerous workplaces and unfair discrimination," commented TUC general secretary Brendan Barber. "But there is good news for unions. We are campaigning for the issues that matter to people at work, with TUC priorities getting the thumbs-up from both trade unionists and non-members too. There are lessons here for politicians. They must speak to workplace issues and the TUC's agenda."

- [TUC news release](#). What workers want - an agenda from the workplace, for the workplace, full report [[pdf](#)] and poll figures [[pdf](#)]. [UNISON news report](#). [BBC News Online](#).

Safety must be built in to housing plan

The government must demand that house builders directly employ staff and train apprentices in return for new public money, a construction union has said. UCATT was commenting on the announcement this week that the government is to kick-start the housing market and assist house builders. The union says housebuilding is the most casualised and dangerous construction sector and comprises 15 per cent of the industry. But it warns that major firms are looking to expand casualisation in a bid to cut costs. UCATT says it "is in possession of letters from Persimmon and Taylor Wimpey, Britain's two largest house-building companies, stating that they do not intend to directly employ any construction workers in the future". Alan Ritchie, general secretary of UCATT, said it is now apparent employers in the sector "are using the credit crunch as an excuse to sack workers and then hire new staff on a false self-employed basis... The government, which is shoring up the industry, should use its influence to block this approach." In 2006/7, the most recent year for which figures are available, there were 15 fatalities in the housebuilding sector, a doubling in the number of deaths from 2005/6. UCATT said "the majority of the deaths are caused by casualisation and a willingness to cut corners with regard to health and safety," adding: "Highly fragmented sub-

contracting chains regularly seen on housing sites, also increase accidents and injuries as key safety messages are not passed on, or are lost." Mr Ritchie said: "House builders in general have a terrible record when it comes to injuries. Every death is an individual tragedy and most were easily preventable. Questions needed to be asked about why the industry is allowed to get away with killing such a large number of its workforce."

- [UCATT news release](#).

Asbestos condition 'is a good thing' outrage

The trade union Unite has accused the insurance industry of fighting a "virulent" campaign against recognition of the asbestos-related condition pleural plaques. Representatives of the industry gave evidence to the Scottish parliament's Justice Committee on 2 September, arguing against a Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) (Scotland) Bill that seeks to overturn a controversial House of Lords ruling ending compensation for the lung-scarring condition. Insurance lawyers and MSPs clashed at the evidence session over claims that pleural plaques could be a "good thing" because they proved the body's defences were working. Dr Pamela Abernethy, of the Forum of Insurance Lawyers, said: "The consensus is that pleural plaques are simply the body's physiological response to the presence of foreign fibres." She added: "My submission is that plaques are a good thing, they don't cause harm. These plaques are markers of exposure to asbestos." A Unite written submission to the justice committee attacked the insurance industry bid to derail the legislation. "It is clear that the UK insurance lobby has fought a virulent campaign to exempt and dilute their liability, and their clients' liability, for pleural plaques by blurring the lines between what is and what is not a genuine medical condition and illness," it noted. The submission continued: "Unite is unequivocal in our anger over the industry's abandonment over their responsibility for a serious disease. Pleural plaques are brought about by exposure to asbestos. It is the 'calling card' for the development of more serious and terminal asbestos-related illnesses. It is only right that negligent employers who exposed workers to asbestos should be liable for the anxiety, pain (mental and physical) and the detriment in the quality of life sufferers of pleural plaques experience that their condition could develop into the fatal cancer mesothelioma."

- Scottish Parliament [Justice Committee Official Report](#), 2 September 2008. The Herald on the [union criticism](#) and [lawyer attack](#). [The Scotsman](#). [BBC News Online](#). [The Times](#).

RMT action call on assaults 'tidal wave'

Urgent action to stem a 'tidal wave' of violence against transport workers has been demanded by the union RMT. The call came as the union launched a campaign to establish an industry-wide code of protection for workers in the rail, bus and ferry sectors. Cross-company zero-tolerance campaigns, an end to unnecessary lone-working, more uniformed staff and better legal protection for

transport workers are at the heart of the campaign. After surveying its own frontline members, RMT found "official assault figures represent only the tip of the iceberg, that police fail to attend as many as 40 per cent of reported incidents, and that more than a third of incidents go unreported." The union said there were 4,865 reported assaults against rail workers in 2007 - that's 13 a day, and a 50 per cent increase on the 2002 figure of 3,179 - and that is also aside from the 2,064 assaults against staff reported on London Underground in 2006/07. Its research suggests that most frontline transport workers can expect to be threatened, abused or physically assaulted at work. RMT's charter calls for a unified zero-tolerance approach covering all transport employers, with all incidents investigated and appropriate action taken, along with proper risk-assessment, effective training and encouragement to report all incidents. "The level of violence our members face at work is already unacceptable, yet year on year the problem gets worse, and it is time to put staff safety ahead of profits," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said. "No-one should have to regard the fear of assault as part of the job, no-one should have to worry about reporting assaults for fear that they might be seen as the problem, and no-one assaulted at work should have to wonder when, let alone if, the police might arrive."

- [RMT news release](#). RMT Charter for Protection of Transport Workers [pdf]. [London Daily News](#).

More enforcement needed on opencast sites

A union leader who represents opencast mining workers in Scotland has called for a significant rise in the number of health and safety inspectors to patrol what he describes as "the most dangerous jobs in the country." Jim Walls, a regional convener was the union Unite, was speaking after Scottish Coal was fined £400,000 for safety breaches in connection with the deaths of two men killed in an accident at the Pennyvenie opencast mine in Ayrshire ([Risks 371](#)). Walls, who is supporting the families of the dead men, also said that it was time for the public to understand the dangers faced by those working in the industry. Speaking to Scotland's Sunday Herald newspaper, he said: "Per head of population, opencast mining is the most dangerous job in the country. There is one three-day accident meaning the worker is absent from work for three days because of their injuries almost every day. Since 2000 more than 2,700 workers have been injured in the UK, and those are just the ones that have reported. And there have been 21 fatalities." He called for a full public inquiry to look at the industry as a whole. He added that families must be allowed to ask specific questions - something they would not be able to do in a fatal accident inquiry. The union official said in the four years to April this year, only four prohibition notices had been issued to the opencast mining industry in Scotland. These included two to Castlebridge Plant, the sister company of Scottish Coal. Castlebridge employed the two men killed in the Pennyvenie tragedy, which led to the two notices. In the two months from April to June a new inspector, Norrie Buchanan, had been hired - and he has already issued 12 such prohibition notices, Jim Walls said. "We want to see more like him making unannounced inspections on these sites to make sure workers' safety is of the highest priority."

- [Sunday Herald](#).

Unions back voluntary sector action

Scotland's trade unions have joined up with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to press for improved health and safety in the country's voluntary sector. The sector has 13,000 paid staff and up to 1.2 million volunteers in 45,000 voluntary organisations. A series of recent seminars held in Glasgow and Edinburgh have emphasised the role of worker involvement and consultation in improving conditions for the sector's employees and volunteers. "As an organisation the STUC understands the constraints that many voluntary sector organisations are under and we recognise the commitment from the sector, its workers and volunteers in delivering services to users," STUC assistant secretary Ian Tasker said. "Our experience has shown that, on the whole most voluntary sector organisations recognise their responsibilities to protect their workers but hesitate on how to develop their health and safety systems and cannot afford to access professional assistance to do so." HSE principal inspector John Blackburn commented: "HSE believes it is crucial for volunteers and employees alike to be involved in the safety process. Safety committees have an important role to play in promoting cooperation on health safety and welfare matters, providing a forum for discussion, ideas and recommendations to the employer and to promote and support normal employer/employee systems for reporting and control of workplace solutions." He added: "Workers and volunteers can be involved in the safety process through a union, safety rep, discussions with staff and other volunteers or use of a staff suggestion scheme."

- [HSE news release.](#)

Other news

Most workers won't blow the whistle

Fewer than one in every three workers would blow the whistle on their employer if they broke health and safety laws, according to the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH). A YouGov poll commissioned by IOSH found that only 28 per cent of people would report their company or organisation to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) if it was in breach of health and safety legislation. The survey of 1,332 employed people from across Britain found that 35 per cent would report their line manager or supervisor to their boss if they felt there was a risk they or a colleague could get hurt at work. Almost threequarters (74 per cent) said they would tell their line manager or supervisor if they felt there was a risk they or a colleague could get hurt at work. And just 50 per cent said they would tell their colleagues if they felt there was a risk they or a colleague could get hurt at work. Five per cent said they wouldn't do any one of these. The poll found workers massively under-estimate the numbers killed and injured at work each year. "The fact that more than two-thirds of people said they wouldn't blow the whistle on their employer for doing something

illegal suggests a few things," said IOSH president Ray Hurst. "It could be that people are very loyal to their employers or, more likely, that they're scared of the consequences if they get found out having told. It's also quite possible that people don't know how to report to the HSE."

- [IOSH news release](#).

Call to tackle attacks on Scots transport staff

A Labour member of the Scottish parliament has called for greater legal protection for rail and bus staff. MSP Cathy Jamieson, a former justice minister, called this week for an extension of the current Emergency Workers legislation and more British Transport Police (BTP) in Scotland. She said: "I would like to see the Emergency Workers legislation extended to rail and bus staff and more support given to the BTP to increase their detection of criminals who attack transport workers and members of the public." She added: "As well as brutal assaults we have seen spitting and verbal abuse. Often the assault can be followed by months of worry about health. If Scotland wants decent public transport services then we have give our transport workers greater protection. That's why I'm proposing that the Emergency Workers legislation should be extended to rail and bus staff." Kevin Lindsay, regional organiser with train drivers' union ASLEF, called on all political parties to support the legislative amendment. He said: "This move is vital to stop transport workers suffering verbal or physical assaults. This move would also ensure that the transport network was safer for the people of Scotland."

- [ASLEF news release](#). [The Scotsman](#).

BAE fined after worker badly burned

A major munitions company has been fined £50,000 after a 21-year-old agency worker was severely burned when pyrotechnic substances ignited. BAE Systems Land Systems (Munitions and Ordnance) Ltd was also ordered to pay costs of £15,000 at Cardiff Crown Court. The company was also ordered to pay £5,000 in compensation to Ryan White, who was involved in the destruction of pyrotechnic materials at the BAE site in Glascoed, Monmouthshire in August 2004 when they ignited, resulting in severe burns to his face, neck and both arms. A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that the disposal procedures followed did not comply with BAE's own approved control procedures, and that management and supervision of the procedure was inadequate. It also found that the accreditation process of ensuring operatives followed disposal procedures whilst destroying this material failed to follow company policy, and the composition did not comply with the company approved specification. Investigating HSE inspector, David Norman, said: "This was a clear case of a company having written policies and procedures in place but clearly failing to ensure that they were implemented correctly by failing to manage and supervise the system of pyrotechnic composition disposal." He added: "Overall, the preventive measures taken by the company to ensure the safe disposal of pyrotechnic

composition were ineffective; this led to poor communication and misunderstanding within the disposal area even though the risk assessment appeared to be robust on paper."

- [HSE news release.](#)

Demolition director done for fall

A director of a Surrey demolition firm has been fined £5,000 after an electrician was seriously injured in a fall. Nicholas Anderson was also ordered to pay £1,657 costs after pleading guilty to a safety offence. Wooldridge Ecotec Ltd was fined £15,000 and £4,971 costs. Barry Murrell was seriously injured at the former Pirelli Cables factory in Erith after falling more than five metres. His injuries included a broken pelvis, fracture to his right hip, a shattered hip socket and a broken rib. Mr Murrell had entered the Pirelli tower, which was being prepared for explosive demolition, to reclaim some electrical cable for reuse elsewhere on the site. He and a colleague were on the first floor when he stepped on some steel sheet material, which was covering a hole, and it fell away beneath him. HSE inspector, Loraine Charles, said: "The risks of falls from height on this demolition project and the measures needed to control those risks had been identified on more than one occasion; Wooldridge simply failed to implement the necessary measures. The director, Mr Anderson, had personal knowledge of the circumstances surrounding or leading to this accident and he failed to take obvious steps to prevent it."

- [HSE news release.](#) [Building.](#) [Contract Journal.](#)

Leigh, 28, succumbs to asbestos cancer

The asbestos cancer mesothelioma has claimed the life of Leigh Carlisle, 28. Leigh, who was featured in a global Zero Occupational Cancer Campaign poster, died in hospital on 27 August, two years after being diagnosed with the incurable condition. Lawyers representing Leigh and her family are examining the possibility she was exposed to asbestos either at school, from old school buildings, or when she walked to school through the yard of a factory where asbestos was cut. A family statement from mum Sheila, dad Mark, sister Sarah and niece Bella said: "Leigh is still very much a part of our family – always a treasured daughter, sister and auntie. Everyone is so proud of her." Leigh's partner, Michael Price, said: "Leigh had so much courage and strength – she was an inspiration to me and to others." Solicitor Geraldine Coombs of law firm Irwin Mitchell is representing Leigh's family. She said: "Everyone who worked with Leigh during her illness grew fond of her and we won't forget her. We are all thinking of her now. She was an exceptional young woman, spending time raising money for charity and raising awareness among younger people about cancer." Ms Coombs has submitted a Freedom of Information request to Oldham Council to determine whether there was asbestos in three Oldham schools. She said: "We know that asbestos in schools is a real problem... We hope the government will act to protect teachers and school children."

- [Derby Evening Telegraph](#). [Oldham Chronicle](#). [Northern Echo](#). [Zero Occupational Cancer Campaign](#) website and [poster](#).

No-one is safe from asbestos

The recent mesothelioma deaths of a plumber's wife, a TV producer, an office worker and a railway worker demonstrates how no-one can be considered entirely safe from asbestos. An inquest last week heard that although she had never worked in an environment containing asbestos, Mary Anne Patricia Macken died of the asbestos cancer, aged 71. She may have picked up asbestos dust from washing her plumber husband's overalls years before, Pembrokeshire coroner Michael Howells, who recorded that her death was the result of exposure to asbestos. Another inquest last week heard that TV producer Brian Kelly died aged 75 from mesothelioma after working on the set of hit crime series *Dempsey and Makepeace* in the 1980s. He was exposed while clearing up a disused factory in Bermondsey, which he thought would make a great backdrop for the 1980s show. "When I returned to the set there was an asbestos removal company working there and people walking round dressed like spacemen," he revealed in a statement prepared before his death. Hastings coroner Alan Craze recorded a verdict of death by industrial disease. Brian Coleman died from mesothelioma aged 70 in March last year. Lawyers are investigating whether the cancer was caused by asbestos exposures in the 1950s, when he worked as a clerk in the accounts office of the former Doncaster Plant Works. The firm dismantled and repaired locomotives, which contained asbestos. Former British Rail worker John Garbett died aged 62 of mesothelioma. He became an apprentice with the firm in 1961, working at the Carriage and Wagon Works in Derby. In later years, he said British Rail paid triple time to other workers who stripped blue asbestos from carriages, operating in sealed areas and using breathing apparatus. Derby and South Derbyshire Coroner Dr Robert Hunter recorded a verdict of death by industrial disease.

- [Western Telegraph](#). [Metro](#). [Sheffield Star](#). [Derby Evening Telegraph](#).
- Brian Coleman case: Anyone who can provide evidence regarding the conditions at the Doncaster Plant Works in the 1950s could assist the family's compensation claim and should call Irwin Mitchell in confidence on 08701 500 100.

End 'insensitive' treatment of meso families

Campaigners are calling for more considerate treatment for families bereaved by the asbestos cancer mesothelioma. The British Lung Foundation (BLF) says it has been approached by a number of families who have been treated "insensitively". When a death from mesothelioma occurs outside of a coroner's working hours the bereaved can be visited by uniformed police in a marked police car, sometimes in the middle of the night. They are questioned about the cause of death so the coroner can write a report. However, some people who have experienced this say that they found it extremely distressing and that they felt as if they were under

suspicion. BLF says: "We believe that coroners' inquiries should be carried out in a sensitive manner and that the practice of sending uniformed police officers in marked cars to the home of recently bereaved families should be stopped. We also ask clinicians to prepare families for these procedures so that they do not come as a shock to them following the death of their loved one." BLF "is calling on the government to put the needs of bereaved families at the centre of the coroners' system and for a Chief Coroner to be appointed who will set national standards for the procedures that follow a death from mesothelioma." It adds: "As a result of our campaign the Prime Minister has announced that the Coroners and Death Certification Bill is likely to be passed in the coming year. To make sure the Prime Minister keeps to this pledge the BLF have set up a petition on the Number 10 Downing Street website. Our petition asks Gordon Brown to make sure the Bill is passed through Parliament and that it will result in coroner's inquiries being carried out in a way sensitive to the needs of the bereaved."

- [BLF news release](#). [Sign the BLF petition to the Prime Minister](#)

International News

Australia: Sleepy shift workers on crash course

Sleep-deprived shift workers are driving themselves to car crashes, trauma surgeons and early graves. While only 14 per cent of Australians are regular shift workers, they make up half the road trauma patients treated at one hospital. A study of 40 seriously injured drivers - which excluded those with blood-alcohol readings over 0.05 or with psychiatric conditions - found 48 per cent were regular shift workers, with a third finishing a shift immediately before their crash. Associate Professor Matthew Naughton, head of the sleep laboratory at the Alfred Hospital where the study was based, said the results showed that employers needed to look after shift workers better, with 10-hour breaks between shifts, taxis home from work and limited weekly rosters. "We estimate that sleepiness contributes to about a third of single-vehicle fatal motor vehicle collisions," he said. "About half the eligible sample were shift workers. They were profoundly sleepier than the non-shift workers at the time of the accident, based on detailed questions." Writing in the Internal Medical Journal, Associate Prof Naughton said the disturbance in the circadian rhythm of shift workers was compounded by them sleeping two to four hours less than the rest of the population. "If you are sleep-deprived for 24 hours that is the equivalent to a blood-alcohol level of about 0.1," he said. The Ambulance Employees of Australia union warned this week that paramedics were so overworked they were falling asleep at the wheel.

- [Herald Sun](#) and [related story on fatigued ambulance workers](#). [ABC News](#).

France: Missing cases could cost 1bn Euros

Official French statistics massively under-estimate the extent of occupational accidents and diseases in the country, with tens of thousands of cases missed each year. An expert report submitted to the government in July estimated the cost of these unacknowledged cases to the French health insurance system was between 565 million and 1.015 billion Euros a year. It found for cancers, "at least" half of all cases that should be recorded under the official reporting system are missed. Widespread under-reporting of work-related asthma and musculoskeletal disorders is also highlighted in the report. It adds that 38,000 occupational accidents resulting in an absence from work go declared each year. The report singles out four main causes of under-reporting: Victims' reluctance to report their illnesses; the failure of general practitioners to raise awareness of the link between work and health; the difficulty updating listings of occupational illnesses; and the attitude of employers who do not report certain accidents or put pressure on employees not to report the accident or illness.

- [ETUI-REHS news report.](#)

South Africa: Doctors fired for diagnosing work

When specialist doctors diagnosed at least 10 cases of manganese-specific chronic illnesses at a factory in Cato Ridge, the Assmang manganese company dumped them "like hot potatoes". Evidence to a government enquiry revealed the firm then replaced them with a new team of doctors that revised the diagnoses to suggest the sick workers might be alcoholics, drug abusers or victims of Aids. All 10 workers had also been certified previously by the Compensation Commissioner as being permanently disabled as a result of manganism, a Parkinson's disease-like condition caused by exposure to excessive levels of manganese. Another 27 workers, earmarked by doctors as possibly suffering from manganism, were also "cleared" by the new team of medical doctors and some were put back to work. In evidence to the Department of Manpower inquiry, Dr Susan Tager, a senior neurologist who heads the movement disorders clinic at Wits University, expressed surprise that Dr Murray Coombs, a new member of the Assmang expert panel, had rubbished her diagnoses - even though Coombs had not seen or physically examined any of the 10 workers and based his opinion on a review of their medical files. Coombs, from Elixir Corporate Health Solutions, is employed by Assmang as an occupational health consultant. Tager made it clear she stood by her diagnoses and said she did not think it was "advisable" for anyone - even a highly experienced clinician - to revise a diagnosis merely on the basis of reviewing a patient's medical file. The panel was set up because several medical experts felt there was an emerging problem with manganism in South Africa. In August 2007, however, Tager was excluded from conducting further medical examinations of Assmang patients, along with Cato Ridge practitioner Dr Johnny do Vale, Pietermaritzburg neurologist Dr Z Saccoor and Professor David Rees - some of whom are understood to have been part of the first medical assessment team.

- [The Star.](#)

USA: Toxic mine whistleblower wins appeal

A federal review panel has ruled that a US government agency illegally dismissed a manager overseeing the cleanup of a toxic mine site for raising serious worker safety, radiation, air and water pollution problems. The decision against the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) represents a rare pro-whistleblower verdict in a system where cases are judged by Bush administration appointees. Earle Dixon, the project manager for the Anaconda Mine at Yerington, Nevada, clashed with top BLM officials for raising issues that were being ignored because they would drive up clean-up costs and raise political hackles, commented Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, which provided legal support for Dixon. As a result of his speaking up, BLM removed Dixon from his position in October 2004, one day before his probationary period ended, despite the objections of his direct supervisors. Following a hearing before a federal administrative law judge, Dixon was awarded back pay, \$10,000 in moving expenses, attorney fees and costs. The Anaconda Mine is an abandoned copper mine covering more than 3,600 acres where acid run-off and waste rock containing low levels of uranium, thorium and other toxic metals have been deposited in unlined ponds. The mine has had a succession of owners including, most recently, the Atlantic Richfield Company owned by British Petroleum. "It has taken Earle Dixon nearly four years to win some small measure of justice in a system that is clearly broken," commented PEER executive director Jeff Ruch.

- [PEER news release](#).

RESOURCES

TUC response to health promotion

TUC has issued guidance for safety reps on health promotion initiatives at work. It says 'lifestyle' initiatives introduced by employers have their role, but says most of us spend most of our waking hours at work in conditions created by the employer, so employers should first make sure that work hazards are addressed. The guide says: "Healthy working has to start with how we work. Unions know that the most effective way of promoting health at work is prevention, which is why we try to ensure that workers are protected from being made ill through overwork, stress, exposure to dangerous chemicals and unsafe working practices." It adds: "The biggest lifestyle gains can be made through reducing stress, long hours and introducing policies that promote 'work-life balance', but there are also other steps that employers can take to help support workers who want to live a healthier lifestyle." The guide covers issues including exercise classes, access to a gym, cycling, healthy eating and health surveillance.

- [Promoting health at work: Guidance for safety representatives](#).
- Related information: Hazards magazine '[futile exercise' guide](#), [safety reps' checklist](#) and [work and health webpages](#).

Carbon nanotubes cancer review

Friends of the Earth Australia (FoEA) has released an overview of the key studies investigating the potential for carbon nanotubes to cause asbestos-like disease. FoEA says despite health concerns, commercial use of carbon nanotubes is growing rapidly – in sports goods, car and aeroplane parts, reinforced plastics and electronics. It says to avoid a repeat of the asbestos tragedy, it wants “an immediate moratorium on the commercial use of carbon nanotubes and the sale of products that incorporate nanotubes until: research can demonstrate whether or not there is any safe level of exposure to them; new nanotechnology-specific regulation is introduced to protect the health of workers, the public and the environment; all nanomaterials used in the workplace and in consumer products are subject to mandatory labelling; and the public is given a meaningful role in decision making about nanotechnology governance, policy development and research priorities.

- [FoEA publication note](#) and full report, Mounting evidence that carbon nanotubes may be the new asbestos [[pdf](#)].

Events and Courses

TUC organising conference, 14 October 2008, London

‘Building stronger unions: Organising the future’ is a 14 October conference “for all trade unionists to celebrate and debate the development of organising in the UK.” TUC says: “We want your involvement and ideas! What more can unions do to grow? How do we re-energise and expand our reps and stewards base? How can we turn around private sector union density decline?” Contributors include: Brendan Barber, TUC general secretary, Philip Jennings, general secretary of UNI, Frances O’Grady, TUC deputy general secretary, BBC Newsnight’s Paul Mason, Christine Blower, general secretary NUT, Stewart Acuff of US national union federation AFL-CIO and other national and international union speakers. There will also be workshops.

- [Building stronger unions: Organising the future](#), Tuesday, 14 October 2008, TUC, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. To register for attendance and to receive further details of this event, [email](#) or phone Joanne Adams on 0207 467 1361.

TUC Courses & Useful links – as previous issues

Useful Links

- Visit the TUC 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