

Risks

TUC 

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**HAZARDS
MAGAZINE**



**Asbestos -
The hidden killer**

Hazards at Work

updated second edition
now available

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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New HSE strategy needs new resources

Construction union UCATT has welcomed the Health and Safety Executive's new strategy consultation, but has warned the safety watchdog will need more resources to do its job effectively. HSE's plan, 'The health and safety of Great Britain - Be part of the solution', was launched on 3 December, at the start of a three month consultation on its future direction and role. Alan Ritchie, UCATT's general secretary, said: "The HSE has finally recognised that the policies that they have been following have been inadequate in protecting workers from deaths and injuries in the workplace. It is imperative that any new strategy resolves these failures." UCATT said the new strategy "has come after increasing criticism of the HSE's performance and ethos," and welcomed the plan's greater emphasis on worker involvement. Mr Ritchie said enforcement activity had dropped off badly in recent years, adding: "If a construction worker is killed there is only a 30 per cent chance of the company concerned being convicted. Even then fines can be just a few thousand pounds." He concluded: "Frontline HSE inspectors perform an excellent job and have UCATT's full support but there are simply not enough of them to cover dangerous industries such as construction. The new strategy should identify that more resources are needed for the HSE to achieve greater safety at work. UCATT are committed to lobbying government to ensure that funding is forthcoming."

- [UCATT news release](#). [HSE news release](#) and full draft strategy document, The health and safety of Great Britain - Be part of the solution [[pdf](#)].

Scots launch 'stop violence' campaign

Two Scottish unions have launched a campaign to combat violence against transport workers. Train drivers' union ASLEF and transport union Unite kicked off the campaign with a 1 December leafleting blitz at Glasgow's Central Station, attended by local MP Jim Devine and MSP Hugh Henry. ASLEF's Kevin Lindsay said the public launch was "only the start - now we need to put pressure on the Scottish executive to introduce meaningful laws that will ensure transport workers are not attacked or assaulted. No worker should have to tolerate spitting, or verbal or physical abuse. Transport workers deserve protection in the same way as those who work in the emergency services." He added that the unions wanted other groups of workers to help drive the campaign, including postal and shopworkers, taxi drivers and other transport workers. Jim Devine, MP for Livingston, said: "We must be aware of the complacent view that 'it comes with the territory'. It doesn't. It is not acceptable for any worker at any time. We all have the right to go to work free from fear." MSP Hugh Henry said: "I have had it said to me that despite changes in Scottish law to defend emergency services workers, they still continue - so it is not worth pursuing. This is nonsense. If we accepted this logic, we would have no sanctions against murderers!" The campaign's seasonal rallying cry is "Spread some joy this Christmas - respect Scotland's transport workers".

- [ASLEF news release](#).

Further education causes further stress

A survey of 3,000 further education staff has found their stress levels exceed the averages for British workers on all seven key indicators. The study, carried out by education union UCU, used a methodology devised by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to analyse stress among the general working population. Workers in further education reported lower levels of well-being in all seven areas identified by HSE, compared to all workers. UCU said this equated to more stress, with the most marked differences for further education workers seen in how change was handled at work, the demands made upon staff, and their understanding of their role at work. Almost nine out of 10 (87 per cent) of respondents reported 'sometimes', 'often' or 'always' experiencing levels of stress at work that they found unacceptable. Respondents working in prison education showed even higher levels of stress. UCU general secretary Sally Hunt said: "Our members in further education have worked in an environment of continual change where there is barely time to consolidate one new policy before the next comes along. This survey clearly shows this is the root cause of a great deal of stress." She added: "Our members working in prisons are right at the bottom of the pile yet they do a vital job to keep society safe by reducing reoffending. It is no surprise that they cite the management of change as a major source of stress: constant retendering of prison education contracts has meant as many as five changes of management in the past 15 years for some of our members. Prison educators desperately need stability."

- [UCU news release](#). UCU reports: Tackling stress in further education [[pdf](#)] and Tackling stress in prison education [[pdf](#)].

High price for ligament damage

A Unite member has received compensation after he tore his ankle ligaments in an unsafe workplace – but has seen his earnings limited and has had to ditch his hobby. Joe Large, 47, received a £17,000 out-of-court settlement for injuries sustained when he fell into a gap between two machines at Ferrotech Limited in Tipton. The platform on the machines, used in the manufacture of complex cast iron components, should have been lined up square but a gap of four inches had been allowed to develop. Joe was later made redundant by Ferrotech, which subsequently went into liquidation. His ankle is now strong enough to allow him to work as a self employed plasterer, but the number of hours he can work is restricted by the injury. He has also been forced to quit as coach for his local junior football team. He said: "This accident has had a profound effect on my life. If I had not been injured I could be working many more hours than I am now. The pain in my ankle means I have to turn down jobs that involve ladders or scaffolding. I've also had to give up coaching the junior football team, something which gave me a lot of satisfaction." Unite's Gerard Coyne commented: "This accident was caused as a result of Ferrotech's negligence and as a result Mr Large has a reduced earning capability. This kind of accident proves how important it is

for businesses to do risk assessments and to have good health and safety procedures in place." Warinder Juss from Thompsons Solicitors, who represented Mr Large for the union, added: "All employers owe a duty of care to their workforce to protect them from reasonably foreseeable injuries, under the law of negligence. If Ferrotech had stricter health and safety procedures this accident would never have happened."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

Union protection for injured rep

A mechanical fitter and union branch secretary from Cumbria has received a £10,000 payout after suffered a slipped disc whilst attempting to lift a half tonne metal cover. GMB rep Gerard Mayne, 55, is still employed by Eastman Chemicals of Workington where the injury occurred. He was manually moving the cover from lifting gear when he injured his back. "I was working with a colleague to remove a machine as it had broken down," he recalled. He said space was limited and there were no purpose built running beams or electric lift. The following day he felt twinges in his back and by the weekend it was so painful he couldn't get out of bed. "I was so preoccupied that I never put this accident in the accident book even though I am a shop steward for GMB. I was extremely concerned about the need for an operation and whether or not I would ever be able to get back to work." GMB regional secretary Tom Brennan said: "Gerard Mayne's case proves that even union people can get it wrong. We would urge all employees to join their trade union so they can get the support they require at their time of need." Hazel Webb from Thompsons Solicitors, who represented Mr Mayne for the union, said: "If Eastman Chemicals had carried out a risk assessment and provided permanent lifting gear, Mr Mayne's injuries could have been avoided. To begin with the defendants denied liability. We then issued court proceedings and put forward a compromise offer which they accepted."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#) [Times and Star.](#)

National Grid pays out for hearing loss

A retired GMB member who was exposed to dangerous levels of noise in the workplace for over three decades has been compensated, with support from his union. Stanley Owston from Hull now requires a hearing aid. The 67-year-old received £4,000 in damages after suffering occupational deafness caused by his job as an assistant distribution fitter for National Grid. He worked for the firm from 1963 until the early 1990s using tools including jackhammers and compressors, but wasn't provided with hearing protection until the mid 1980s. Even then, no instruction or advice was given on the dangers of excessive noise. Mr Owston was advised to pursue compensation by his doctor following an audiogram in December 2006, which confirmed he had noise induced hearing loss in both ears. National Grid admitted liability and a settlement was agreed out-of-court. Mr Owston commented: "I should not have been put in a situation where my health could

suffer. By claiming compensation I wanted to warn others to demand adequate protection for their ears when working in a noisy environment." GMB regional secretary Andy Worth said: "Many of our members have been negligently exposed to excessive levels of noise in the workplace by their employers, particularly those working on the highways or in manufacturing. Sadly even with the knowledge and the safety equipment available it continues today. It is only right that those deafened through their employer's negligence should be compensated for the long term damage to their hearing."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

Rolls Royce to blame for vibration injury

A Unite member has received compensation after his hands were left permanently damaged by the vibrating tools he used while working for Rolls Royce. John Smith, 62, from Derby was diagnosed with Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) following years of using hand held air powered tools while working for the famous jet engine manufacturer. Rolls Royce admitted liability and agreed to pay £6,250 in damages to Mr Smith. HAVS – also known as vibration white finger or VWF - is an industrial disease which affects many people who operate hand-held vibrating power tools. Mr Smith worked as a fitter balancer for Rolls Royce since 1989 and was exposed to vibration on a daily basis. He started noticing his fingers turning white during the winter in 2004 but did not realise the significance. He was diagnosed with HAVS in 2006. Mr Smith is now retired but said the condition still has an adverse effect on his life. He said he feels pain and discomfort when gardening or fishing and he has to make sure his hands are kept warm at all times. Unite regional secretary Adrian Axtell commented: "HAVS can be a debilitating condition which is caused by using vibrating tools. By law employers should protect their staff from this condition by ensuring staff are not exposed to high levels of vibration. Rolls Royce failed to do that for Mr Smith." The case is the latest in a series of union settlements for vibration related disease ([Risks 382](#) and [Risks 376](#)).

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

TUC unions in the community survey

The TUC is asking trade union reps to complete a quick and easy online survey. It says this is part of its 'Active Unions, Active Communities' project. It is hoping to find out what sorts of community and campaigning activity union reps undertake outside the workplace. TUC says the results of the survey will be used to help develop support for reps. Findings will be published at the end of January. So if you are a member of a Hazards group, or safety campaign or get up to anything else useful in your spare time, it would be good to know. The survey is completely anonymous and all responses will be treated confidentially. To take the survey - and be entered into a prize draw - you'll need to be a registered member of the unionreps website.

- [TUC survey briefing](#). [Registered unionreps members](#). [Sign up to union reps](#).

Other news

Construction fatalities inquiry moves forward

The government has announced more details of an inquiry into the underlying causes of construction fatalities, promised in the summer after unions raised concerns about stubbornly high death rates in the sector ([Risks 373](#)). Work and pensions secretary James Purnell said he had appointed Rita Donaghy as independent chair to the inquiry. "The construction industry is one of the most dangerous sectors in the country - over 2,800 people have died from injuries they received as a result of construction work in the past 25 years," he said. "The high number of fatalities in construction sector continues to be of particular concern to us which is why I have asked Rita Donaghy to chair an inquiry looking at the underlying causes of construction fatal incidents to see what more can be done to reduce this terrible toll." Rita Donaghy said: "I am keen to get started and work with the trade unions, the industry and the Health and Safety Executive to see what lessons we learn from the root causes of construction accidents so that we can improve the health and safety of construction workers." The inquiry will be in three phases; firstly a review of existing work "to consolidate the understanding of fatal injuries in the construction industry with specific reference to vulnerability." Secondly, a deeper analysis of underlying causes including factors outside the health and safety system, and thirdly reporting to ministers and HSE's board.

- [DWP news release](#).

Site workers must have their say

Construction union UCATT has pledged to play a full and active role in the government's inquiry into construction fatalities, but says the investigation must listen to the construction workers facing the risks, not the "faceless bureaucrats defending their own little fiefdoms." The union said it has "reservations" about the government's choice of Rita Donaghy, the former chair of Acas, as chair of the inquiry because "she lacks a background in health and safety, construction or a similar dangerous industry". The union's general secretary, Alan Ritchie, said: "It is our members, ordinary construction workers, who are needlessly being killed and maimed on building sites. It is our duty to ensure that Rita Donaghy is fully up to speed with all the different factors which reduce safety in the construction industry." Mr Ritchie added: "There are some very powerful vested interests who do not wish this inquiry to succeed or simply to produce weak recommendations. We will ensure that the inquiry does not descend to that level. Rita Donaghy must be given sufficient support in order to be able to show genuine independence and strength of purpose." The union says the role of casualisation, gangmasters and agency workers must be fully investigated. It also says it intends to highlight the impact of a dramatic decline in Health and Safety Executive enforcement activity and will put the case for explicit safety duties on company directors. Mr Ritchie

concluded: "It is essential that ordinary construction workers who know and understand the risks they face are able to play a part in this inquiry. If the inquiry just becomes about faceless bureaucrats defending their own little fiefdoms then it will not be a success."

- [UCATT news release](#).

Major injuries soar offshore

Major injuries offshore have increased dramatically, latest figures show. Newly published Health and Safety Executive (HSE) statistics show major injuries were up by nearly 13 per cent (12.8 per cent) in 2007/08, from 39 to 44. The major injury rate was up by 13 per cent, from 138.4 major injuries per 100,000 workers to 156.41. In a related news release, HSE did not include details of the sharp hike in major injuries, concentrating instead in a much smaller decrease in less serious injuries. The news release noted: "The number of injury accidents has reduced by 6.3 per cent compared with 2006/07, and the overall injury rate per 100,000 employees has decreased by 6.2 per cent, reflecting the maintained levels of activity offshore last year and the reduced numbers of over-3-day injuries." *Hazards* magazine revealed last month that there has been a sharp decline in the number of HSE operational frontline inspectors covering the offshore sector. Numbers fell year-on-year from 2004, dropping from 146 to just 116 in April 2008.

- [HSE news release](#). Offshore injury, ill health and incident statistics 2007/2008 [pdf]. [Where is the justice?](#), *Hazards* magazine, October-December 2008.

Browned off at cancer rebuff

Campaigners who petitioned 10 Downing Street urging the prime minister to take action to prevent breast cancer have said they are "sorely disappointed with the response." The petition raised concerns about the failure of leading cancer charities to recognise the environmental and occupational causes of breast cancer. The cancer prevention coalition – which included the Hazards Campaign, Breast Cancer UK and the Cancer Prevention and Education Society – received what they described as "a paltry response", not from the prime minister but from the Department of Health. It ducked most of the key issues, instead saying new chemicals are fully tested for safety before they enter the market, and a number of initiatives, such as REACH, are in progress to update the database on existing chemicals. Petition author Helen Lynn commented: "We are not debating the science but debating the policy. It's a very simple question, why do the cancer charities not acknowledge environmental and occupational risk factors? And why are they afraid to address this?" She added: "What's needed is a paradigm shift from their traditional narrow, lifestyle focused thinking around breast cancer, towards primary prevention." Hilda Palmer from the Hazards Campaign said campaigners were "utterly sick of the government's worker blaming messages" concentrating on lifestyle factors only. "There is some individual responsibility but it is an untenable health policy while one fifth of workers are still exposed

to carcinogens at work," she said. "There is a great deal more action needed in enforcing employers' legal duties to prevent exposure to chemicals which can cause harm to workers' health. But we need to stop blaming workers and start looking at the much neglected occupational risk factors."

- [Cancer campaign news release](#). [Petition and response](#).

Wife killed by asbestos-covered laundry

A pensioner has been awarded £250,000 compensation after his wife died following years of washing his asbestos-contaminated clothes. Retired pipefitter Alfred Eccles received the money from former employer Universal Grinding Wheel Company, in Stafford, in an out-of-court settlement. Mr Eccles, aged 67, was exposed to asbestos in pipe lagging as part of his job from the 1960s to 1992. For around 10 years wife Patricia laundered his work clothes, exposing her to asbestos fibres. Mr Eccles, who has fought for compensation since his wife's death in February 2004, said: "I'm angry with the company and myself, and feel guilty because Patricia caught the disease from my clothes." Mr Eccles contracted lung cancer in 1988 and had chemotherapy. However it was not proved that the cause was asbestos – lung cancer caused by asbestos is at least and probably more than twice as common as asbestos-related mesothelioma. However, as lung cancer is also common in the general population and can be caused by other exposures, notably smoking, making the link to work is notoriously hard. Isobel Lovett, of legal firm Ashton Morton Slack, which represented Mr Eccles, said: "I am delighted the family's battle for justice has finally been won. They have borne the brunt of the terrible legacy of asbestos use, when little or no thought was given to protecting workers like Mr Eccles or his family."

- [Ashton Morton Slack news release](#). [The Sentinel](#).

Fines for staff asbestos exposures

A Kilkcaldy leisure firm and its director have been fined after at least 15 trades people were exposed to airborne asbestos fibres over almost two months. The exposures occurred during a major refurbishment of the former Ballroom nightclub in Dunfermline in 2005. Dean Entertainments Ltd was fined £28,000 and Edward Dean Melville, a director of the company, was fined £7,000 at Dunfermline Sheriff Court. They pleaded guilty to charges under section 3(1) and section 37(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act respectively. Work had continued on the project despite concerns being raised by workers about the possible presence of asbestos within the building. Work was finally stopped by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after they were contacted directly by one of the site workers. HSE principal inspector Jim Skilling, commented after the case, said: "This was a very serious incident which allowed a significant number of tradesmen to be exposed to airborne asbestos fibres over an extended period." He added that company director Edward Dean Melville "failed to deal correctly with concerns, voiced on a number of occasions, from those working

within the building about the possible presence of asbestos. He used a contractor, who did not have an asbestos removal licence, to remove almost a quarter of a tonne of material from the Ballroom site. Even then the material was identified on a waste disposal site document as asbestos.”

- [HSE news release. HSE hidden killer campaign.](#)

Firms pay for lost limbs

Workers who lose fingers or even limbs as a result of their employer’s negligence might be surprised at the size of fines this month for related criminal safety breaches. Supermarket giant Tesco was ordered to pay a £20,000 fines and £20,000 costs after an employee had parts of two of his fingers sliced off in a dough dividing machine at a Gloucester store. The worker was injured when he put his hand into the faulty machine to clear away remaining dough. At Cheltenham Magistrates Court, Tesco pleaded guilty to two charges under the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations. The store admitted it had failed to maintain a system of work and had not provided effective measures to prevent access to a dangerous part of the dough divider and to stop movement of the dangerous part. PAS (Grantham) Ltd was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £3,587 costs by Grantham magistrates for safety offences after Edward Drayton, 31, who was investigating a fault on a tray-making machine, got his hand trapped in the drive pulley when the motor started up again. One finger had to be amputated and he requires further operations on the others. MJ Curle Ltd was fined £5,000 and ordered to pay costs of £7,500 at Shrewsbury Crown Court after part of labourer Matthew Watton’s leg was amputated when a tipper truck fell onto him, trapping him against a pile of brick rubble. Principal site contractor Anthony Wilson Homes Ltd had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to safety offences, and was fined £25,000 with costs of £10,000. Nigel Fryer, for MJ Curle, said the firm had paid Mr Watton £970,000 in compensation.

- [HSE news release \(PAS Grantham Ltd case\)](#) and [HSE news release \(MJ Curle case\)](#). [The Citizen](#). [Building](#). [Shropshire Star](#).

Firm fined after foot is flattened

A Midlands firm has been fined £10,000 after a young worker was seriously injured when a commercial oven fell on him. The 22-year-old employee of Caltherm (UK) Ltd, whose name has not been released, was helping to move an industrial steam-heated 'DMT' liquid oven weighing 800kg - over three quarters of a ton - when the oven fell from the two pallet trucks. He received three breaks to his left foot and five dislocated toes in the incident in January this year. In addition to the fine, Caltherm (UK) Ltd was ordered to pay costs of £3,377 by Newcastle-under-Lyme Magistrates' Court after pleading guilty to a safety offence. HSE inspector Wayne Owen said no risk assessment had been conducted, adding: “Lack of information, instruction, training and planning for the movement of such heavy equipment, coupled with an unsuitable means

transport, all contributed to an unsafe system of work which led to the accident." The inspector said: "The worker's injuries were sufficiently serious to cause some long-term discomfort and adversely affect his work capabilities."

- [HSE news release](#) and [risk management webpages](#).

£100k fine over worker death

A Nuneaton company has been fined £100,000 and ordered to pay costs of more than £44,000 after a worker was killed in a warehouse incident. Engineer Peter Hudson, 51, was carrying out maintenance work at RS Components when the tragedy happened in January 2005. Mr Hudson had worked for RS Components for two-and-a-half-years at the time of the accident, which happened as he was undertaking work on an automated crane system in the warehouse. The firm pleaded guilty at Warwick Crown Court to a breach of safety rules. The prosecution of the electronics giant was brought by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. Following the court case, Jeff Clarke, the council member responsible for health and environment, said: "This was a tragic accident which resulted in the death of Peter Hudson. He was highly thought of by his family, friends and colleagues. It has affected very badly all those who knew him." A statement issued by RS Components said: "We are a company committed to minimising accidents in the workplace with a strong health and safety culture. We sincerely regret the accident and fully accept our responsibilities in this matter. Peter Hudson was a popular member of our engineering team and our thoughts remain with his family who have suffered such a tragic loss."

- [Coventry Telegraph](#).

Diver's widow loses compensation battle

A Scottish widow whose husband was killed in a horrific North Sea oil rig incident 25 years ago has failed in a bid to win compensation from the Norwegian government. The decision is the latest blow to Ruth Crammond, who for many years wrongly believed her husband Bill, a diver, was responsible for the Byford Dolphin explosion in Norwegian waters in 1983. Mrs Crammond and six other British families had hoped the Norwegian government were finally going to conclude the matter by making payments ([Risks 349](#)). However, their applications were turned down because of a legal technicality – the divers were not full members of the Norway national insurance health scheme. Mrs Crammond said: "The men were members of this scheme but were not full members so that is the red tape they are hiding behind. How ridiculous is that? I'm very angry about it and am not going to accept it." It was only through investigations by the North Sea Divers Alliance (NSDA) that it emerged that the real cause of the tragedy was faulty equipment, not a mistake by Mr Crammond – Mrs Crammond had been led to believe her husband was to blame. NSDA spokesperson Tom Wingen said, "It's disgusting. The Norway government have taken vast sums from the North Sea industry but the way they treat those who worked in it is to cast them away like an old shoe." The failure to compensate the

families of 'the forgotten divers' who died in the North Sea between 1967 and 1987 has received prominent coverage in the Norwegian press. The Norwegian government has admitted political and moral responsibility for the divers but has denied legal responsibility. Payments have been made to the families of Norwegian victims.

- [Dunfermline Press](#). [NSDA website](#).

International News

Australia: Union alarm at Qantas testing push

An airline union has warned that Qantas is using new regulations as a "smokescreen" to introduce a draconian drug and alcohol testing policy. The Australian Services Union (ASU) says "Qantas Group Management has written to each of your unions to inform us that they want to implement a new drug and alcohol testing regime." New regulations introduced by the civil aviation regulator CASA do require most airlines to have a Drug and Alcohol Management Plan (DAMP), but ASU says the company is attempting to introduce far more extensive testing on the back of the regulations. ASA says: "Qantas has a long history of attempting to institute a harsh and unfair drug and alcohol policy dating back to 2003 and union members working together across the Qantas Group have resisted these attempts over many years to ensure fairness, and privacy are at the forefront of any policy." It adds there are "a number matters in the proposed new policy which are not required by CASA but have been included - they look very much like the things that Qantas management tried to impose five years ago." These include random urine testing for all workers, a more extensive list of substances under test, and mandatory reporting to management of medical treatment and the associated prescription drugs taken for illnesses. ASU concludes "there is no real evidence of a culture of drug and alcohol abuse at Qantas and the unions believe that many of these changes represent an unwarranted intrusion into your private lives. As always we are serious about good occupational health and safety at Qantas and what Qantas is proposing does not fit the bill."

- [ASU news release](#).

Europe: Commission disappoints on electronics hazards

The European Commission has disappointed toxics campaigners by rejecting calls to strengthen a Europe-wide law that would have set targets for phasing out additional hazardous substances in electronic products. Jerker Ligthart, project coordinator at ChemSec, said NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and progressive companies had wanted to see bans on more substances built into the RoHS Directive. The Commission's decision to dismiss proposals for more extensive controls "has done a great disservice to those companies that are working hard to achieve green design," he said. "The current Directive has been the leading legislative policy for phasing out six of the most dangerous chemical groups used in electronics. The Commission has effectively set back the clock on further innovation in this important industry sector."

Instead of adding new chemicals for phase-out under RoHS, the Commission is recommending they fall under the general REACH regulations. Lisette van Vliet, toxics policy adviser at the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), commented: "The REACH process is still in its infancy. It is highly uncertain if and how REACH will address these hazardous chemicals in their electronics uses. RoHS has to a large degree helped set a global standard for the electronics industry, and is well understood by the relevant supply chains." Alexandra McPherson, project director at Clean Production Action said: "Companies have shown it is financially feasible to eliminate PVC, brominated flame retardants and other hazardous chemicals from global supply chains and these voluntary corporate commitments have proven that safer alternatives do exist. The regulator should level the playing field by setting phase-out dates for these hazardous materials, effectively increasing the supply of safer substitutes and reducing their cost."

- ChemSec news release [[pdf](#)] and statement calling for the extension of the list of substances identified for phase-out [[pdf](#)]. [ChemSec website](#). [HEAL website](#). [Clean Production Action](#).

Events and Courses

HSE draft strategy regional workshops

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is to run a series of regional workshops on its draft health and safety strategy in January where an "invitation only" audience "will be invited to give HSE their views on the strategy and pledge their support on its delivery". The workshops will begin in Liverpool on 8 January 2009, followed by Newcastle (13 January), Bristol (15 January), Birmingham (20 January), Cardiff (22 January), London (27 January) and Glasgow (29 January). Anyone wanted to be considered for attendance should register an interest as soon as possible.

- Register interest [online](#), by [email](#) or 01772 767717.
- [HSE news release](#) and [draft strategy document](#).

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 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 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