

# Risks

TUC 

*e-bulletin*

Number 395 – 28 February 2009

**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](#)

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## **Recession brings unpaid work pressures**

Around five million workers are doing an average of seven hours and six minutes unpaid overtime a week, according to the TUC. The number of people working unpaid overtime across the workforce has been stable since last year, the union body said. Workers in research and development, finance and public administration (central and local government and defence) have experienced the biggest increases in the proportion of people doing unpaid overtime since the recession started, according to the TUC analysis of official statistics. TUC found significant fluctuations in unpaid overtime that it says reflect the different ways the recession is impacting on working hours in different industries. The proportion of workers doing unpaid hours has increased in research and development (up 2.4 per cent) and finance (up by 1.5 per cent). In contrast, the proportion of people doing unpaid hours has decreased sharply in insurance and pensions (down by 7.5 per cent) and agriculture (down by 5.6 per cent). TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The recession is bringing new pressure for people to work unpaid overtime. Workers in some industries are racking up the hours to complete the job quicker. But elsewhere work is drying up and workers do not have enough work to fill normal hours, let alone overtime. But not all unpaid overtime is useful work helping to overcome the recession. When people understandably fear for their jobs employers still have a responsibility to organise work properly and ensure their workplaces don't get gripped by a long hours culture." The TUC has engaged workplace stress guru Professor Cary Cooper to offer online advice to those who fear they are doing too much unpaid overtime.

- [TUC news release](#) and [Work Your Proper Hours Day \(27 February\) advice](#).

## **'No progress' on RSI at work**

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) is calling on the government to encourage employers to do more to prevent repetitive strain injury (RSI). The physios' union says latest figures from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) show there has been little progress in tackling RSI in the last six years. It says of the 213,000 people suffering a work-related RSI in 2007/8, over a third (81,000) were new cases. The figure for 2001/02 was similar, the union says, with 87,000 new cases in the total of 222,000 people in work with RSI. CSP says employers are giving too low a priority to prevention. It cites studies showing only 12.5 per cent of employers provide rehabilitation services and as few as 6.5 per cent of small businesses provide any access to occupational health services for their employees. TUC's latest safety reps' survey found that 40 per cent of workers felt RSI was a top concern. CSP is calling on government to make the provision of occupational health services a legal requirement. CSP spokesperson Pauline Cole said: "There is a clear opportunity for employers to do more to provide occupational health services both with regard to prevention of RSI and rehabilitation. The CSP is calling on the government to both encourage and enforce measures to address this with legislation, combined with incentives and best practice guidance. We may then, after the frustration of many years of no progress, begin to see some reduction in the rates of this almost completely preventable

condition." John Cridland, deputy director-general of the CBI, said the business body was opposed to a new duty to provide occupational health cover, saying "placing a statutory requirement on all employers would place a huge burden on businesses, especially small and medium-sized firms, which are already struggling during the recession. Instead, the focus should be on improving information and support on appropriate prevention strategies."

- [CSP news release](#) and RSI prevention factsheet [[pdf](#)]. [The Guardian](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Personnel Today](#).
- International RSI Awareness Day, 28 February. [TUC RSI webpages and resources](#). [Hazards International RSI Day resources](#). [CAW International RSI Day briefing](#). [ILO/CIS RSI Day webpage](#).

### **Unions speak out on helicopter rescue**

The successful rescue last week of sixteen oil workers and two pilots after a helicopter ditched into the North Sea shows why safety must remain a central concern offshore, unions have said. Seafarers' union Nautilus praised the role of emergency response and rescue vessels in recovering all 18 people onboard the Super Puma helicopter that ditched while trying to land on an oil platform 125 miles east of Aberdeen. Senior national secretary Allan Graveson said the case highlights the importance of the union's campaign to secure a balanced mix of air and marine rescue resources – both were necessary to save the helicopter's passengers and crew. Jim McAuslan, general secretary of the pilots' union BALPA, said: "The industry works together to make the inhospitable North Sea as safe as possible." Commenting on the 18 February incident, he said: "Last night's avoidance of fatalities shows that investing in safety pays off. This is something we in aviation have to constantly work at so the public can travel safely." However, another union suggested the calm weather in the North Sea that night helped prevent fatalities. RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "It is good fortune that the helicopter remained floating and upright, which might not have been the case had it ditched in the far heavier seas of recent weeks." RMT offshore organiser Jake Molloy added: "Helicopter incidents are thankfully comparatively rare now compared with the dark days of the 80s and early 90s, when a spate of accidents killed more than 70 people. That said there is no room for complacency, and anything we can learn that will help eliminate accidents must be heeded and acted upon." An inquest started this week into the deaths of four Navy helicopter crew who died when their aircraft crashed into the sea off Cornwall on a night search-and-rescue mission. The crash of the Lynx helicopter, based at Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton, on 8 December 2004 led to changes in Navy training and the installation of cockpit voice recorders in all Lynx helicopters.

- [Nautilus news release](#). [RMT news release](#). [BALPA news release](#). [The Guardian](#). [The Scotsman](#). [Western Daily Press](#).

### **Faulty stair trip caused disability**

A woman who was left disabled after she tripped on a faulty step at work has received £20,000 in compensation. Alain Sargent, 50, received the compensation after she contacted her union the PCS following the fall. At the time of the injury, Alain was working as an administrative officer at a Department for Work and Pensions Jobcentre in Broadstairs. Personal injury lawyers retained by the union pursued a compensation case against Dalkia Plc, which maintained the building on behalf of the DWP. The firm admitted liability and settled the claim out of court. The DWP worker fell after her right heel got caught in a metal edging on the internal stairway of her office building. She somersaulted down the stairs, suffering deep bruising to her hands, feet, hip, lower back and left knee. The injuries meant she was off work for more than six weeks and now suffers from severe back pain. She claims Disability Living Allowance and has mobility difficulties. Emma Wiles, PCS director of legal services, commented: "Slips and trips are the single most common cause of injury in UK workplaces. Avoiding falls should be a major priority for those responsible for the maintenance of office buildings." Kam Singh from Thompsons Solicitors, who acted for the union, added: "This accident could have been avoided by having in place a simple inspection programme to ensure the steps were well maintained. Once defects were reported they should have been dealt with instantly. Because of the inability to keep these steps safe Ms Sargent's life has been dramatically affected."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

### **Foot injury leads to six digit payout**

A Unite member who was off work for more than two years after breaking his heel has received £120,000 compensation. The 60-year-old from Gateshead, who does not wish to be named, suffered the injury when he slipped on a ladder attached to his van while he was working in February 2007. He was using the ladder to access the van's roof rack, but the rainy conditions had made it slippery. His fall left him in a plaster cast for four months. He is unable to work due to arthritis caused by the injury but hopes he will be able to return to a different job with the firm in the future. The company admitted liability and agreed the payout out of court. Angela Collins from Thompsons Solicitors, who acted for the injured worker on behalf of Unite, said: "This workplace accident has had a profound effect on this client's life. He has been unable to return to work, all because his employer was negligent by failing to provide safe equipment. More care and attention should have been given to the safety of employees."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

### **Union sorts out van smash cash**

A GMB member who was advised to accept just £800 in damages after being injured when her company van was involved in a road smash has received more than four times this amount thanks to help from her trade union. The 38-year-old from Barrow in Furness, whose name has not been released, suffered whiplash injuries to

her neck and shoulders following the crash in the summer of 2008. She was driving a company van when the driver in the opposite lane lost control of his car and collided with the side of her vehicle. The accident meant she had to have more than four months' worth of physiotherapy. She was also off work for two months. Just four days after the accident she was contacted by the driver's insurance company, Quinn Direct, offering her £800 for her injuries. She said: "At this point I hadn't even instructed a solicitor or even thought about compensation. I was still in a lot of shock and pain. I couldn't believe they had the audacity to ask me to settle there and then." She contacted GMB, who provided legal support that led to the case being settled for £3,500, more than four times the original offer from Quinn Direct. GMB organiser Steve Gibbons commented: "We would encourage all of our members to contact our legal services department first if they are unfortunate enough to be involved in a road accident."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

### **Nurse gets wrist injury payout**

Health service union UNISON has helped a nurse claim damages after he seriously injured his wrist while attempting to open an old ward window. The union member from Sutton in Surrey was opening the window for a patient in the ladies toilets at St Helier Hospital, in Carshalton in 2002, when the injury occurred. The 43-year-old, identified as Mr Amankwa by his lawyers, was awarded £11,000 for the injury. He was off work for four months. The charge nurse required surgery to stitch a 75 per cent tear back together. His nerves were also affected and he now faces further physiotherapy and the likelihood of more surgery. After the union was brought in to pursue a compensation claim, Epsom & St Helier NHS Trust agreed to split the liability 50/50. The ward has since undergone a refurbishment, including new windows. Mr Amankwa said: "Since the accident there has been a refurbishment programme to update the building. But I am concerned that hospital staff across the country regularly have to work in extremely old buildings, which desperately need updating." Steve Brazier, UNISON's head of health in the south east, said: "The damages go some way towards Mr Amankwa's loss, but he has still suffered at the hands of the hospital."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#) [Sutton Guardian.](#)

### *Other news*

#### **Bereaved families want action**

The government responds promptly to business moans about the "burden" of health and safety legislation but is failing to consider adequately the burden on bereaved families, a top campaigner has said. Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK) member Louise Adamson, whose brother was electrocuted at work ([Risks 379](#)), says the government should be paying more attention to the hardship and heartache faced by families. She said: "FACK is not about retribution or revenge, but rather law and order, justice, equity,

accountability and deterrence. FACK gives a collective voice to those who pay the price for employer negligence, to help equal the voice of employers and business in shaping policy on health and safety." In an article in the latest issue of *Hazards* magazine, she writes: "FACK families can accept that true accidents do sometimes happen, but in most cases the catalogue of ignorance of health and safety laws, deliberate non-compliance, and complete lack of fear of the enforcement system and the enforcement authorities by employers, managers and directors is overwhelming." Ms Adamson believes the basic protection the public expects from the Health and Safety Executive is being undermined by funding and staffing cuts and the government's "light touch regulation." She explained: "FACK wants there to be a credible threat that if you are responsible for health and safety and you do not comply, that you will get caught. We want those responsible for the decisions that lead to death to be held properly to account in law and, if guilty, to face significant penalties which are proportionate to the crime and the harm done. We want all of this so that other lives are not lost." In an accompanying photofile, FACK co-ordinator Hilda Palmer argues: "FACK realised that the problem was not individual mistakes but injustice on a grand scale that requires major changes in health and safety law, in enforcement and in attitudes to workplace death including the fact that it is much more common than many realise."

- [Fighting families: Bereaved families want justice and safer workplaces](#) and [FACK at work photofile](#), *Hazards*, Number 105, 2008. [Families Against Corporate Killers](#) (FACK).
- Papers from the [Centre for Corporate Accountability's 'Future of enforcement' conference](#) are now available online.

### **Stockline probe refused to hear experts**

The inquiry into the Stockline disaster in Glasgow will fail to learn vital lessons because it has been restricted to the immediate cause of the gas explosion, experts are warning. The inquiry's chair, Lord Gill, barred academics who authored a report on the wider causes of the accident from appearing as witnesses because he regarded their evidence as outside the inquiry's remit. The experts, from Stirling, Strathclyde and Liverpool universities, had concerns about the entire regulatory regime governing the ICL Plastics factory, which was flattened by an explosion on 11 May 2004, killing nine workers and injuring 33 more. In a report published in September 2007, the experts argued that the root causes of the disaster lay in the factory's long record of breaching safety rules and cutting corners to save money. They also criticised the resource starved Health and Safety Executive for failing to crack down on the breaches. Several offers to provide evidence were declined. An eleventh-hour email offering to appear on the inquiry's final day was inexplicably mislaid until after the inquiry had finished. A former worker at the factory, Laurence Connelly, was also barred from appearing. One of the experts whose evidence was refused was professor Andrew Watterson, head of the occupational and environmental health research group at the University of Stirling. He accepted that no-one wanted a protracted and pointlessly costly inquiry, but said: "A superficial inquiry that fails to examine the root causes of explosions such as that at ICL/Stockline, however rapidly and cheaply it is done, could prove a waste of both public money and time, and valuable lessons could be lost." He added: "Immediate events that led up to the explosion and actions that

reveal systemic failures that were responsible for the disaster both need thorough examination.”

- [Sunday Herald](#). [Stockline campaign website](#). [Inquiry website](#) and [related correspondence from those excluded](#).

### **Asbestos cancer research cash call**

The government must invest millions in research to combat a devastating asbestos related disease, campaigners have said. Mesothelioma is currently incurable and is the least researched of the top twenty cancers, they say. The call on 27 February - Action Mesothelioma Day – was made by mesothelioma sufferers, bereaved relatives, MPs and victims’ advocacy groups, who marked the day with events throughout the UK. The campaigners want government funding for a National Centre for Asbestos Related Disease. They say the Australian government has provided Aus\$6.2 million (£2.76m) to fund a similar initiative. John Edwards, a consultant thoracic surgeon and chair of the British Mesothelioma Interest Group, is supporting the proposal. “Researchers are desperate for funds to develop life saving treatments – mesothelioma is far and away the least researched of the top twenty cancers in the UK,” he said. “Funding for a UK National Centre for Asbestos Related Diseases is a priority” He said the centre would encourage collaboration and “stimulate transnational research to generate future treatments to prolong and save lives.” Tony Whitston, the chair of the Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum, said both the US and Australia has released funds for research, whereas the topic was given little priority in the UK. “Society has a moral obligation to stand by those who have lost their health and their lives in creating this country’s wealth,” he said. The UK and Australia are the world’s top mesothelioma hot spots.

- Asbestos Forum news release [[pdf](#)]. [Irwin Mitchell Solicitors news release](#). [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#).
- [Asbestos Forum Action Mesothelioma Day webpage](#) and 27 February [events listing](#). [British Lung Foundation events listing](#). [June Hancock Mesothelioma Research Fund](#). [Burton Mail](#). [North West Evening Mail](#).

### **Fit-for-work moves not enough**

Government-funding pilot schemes will aim to help people on sick leave back into work, ministers say. The TUC however has warned the limited measures are “nowhere near” enough. Care services minister Phil Hope and Work and Pensions Minister Lord McKenzie said the £13 million ‘Fit for work’ pilot will test out how sickness absentees can be helped to recover and supported to get back to work more quickly. Each pilot will test personalised, back to work support for people off sick. These will go beyond health care, to incorporate elements including skills and employment advice, health and wellbeing services focused on vocational rehabilitation and wider social support covering issues like debt or housing advice. The government said there will also be “conciliation to overcome escalated disputes between employees and employers.” The pilots

are expected to begin later this year. Lord McKenzie said: "Now more than ever it's important to help people who are sick to stay in work so that they can support themselves and their families. These Fit for Work pilots will help do just that. Everyone has the right to work and we want to design a fair system which supports people so they can work when they are able." The TUC, however, believes a lot more needs to be done. "These pilots go nowhere near what is needed," said TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson. "They are, at best, a substitute for good sickness absence procedures by employers. The solution is instead, access to comprehensive occupational health support, far more resources invested in prevention, and greater support for union safety and other representatives." Physios' union CSP this week called for occupational health service provision by employers to be legal requirement.

- [Department of Health news release](#). [Fit for Work webpage](#).

### **Nano differences start to surface**

Concerns about the approach to the regulation and control of nanomaterials are surfacing in Europe. A British manufacturer of carbon nanotubes (CNTs) has pre-registered the product with Europe's chemical watchdog as a substance distinct from other forms of carbon, which it says have dramatically different properties. The decision to undertake REACH registration for the nanomaterial - which like graphite is made entirely from carbon - separately with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) was made by Thomas Swan & Co, a family-owned speciality chemical company based in County Durham. Des McGrahan, who is responsible for regulatory affairs at Thomas Swan, said: "We believe that carbon nanotubes are completely different allotropes [structural configurations]. They may have a surface similar to that of graphite but their properties are so dissimilar that they are different substances. They should not be in the same category as bulk carbon or graphite." He added: "We want nanospecific testing to be done under REACH on carbon nanotubes. We could be in a position to increase our CNT capacity to a commercial level if necessary. But before we make a decision to scale up our production we need to know where we stand in terms of hazards and toxicity exposure. At the moment there is not enough data available on the safety risks of CNT, particularly in the area of chronic exposure." Concerns over the health and environmental risks of nanotechnology are generating renewed pressures for tougher regulation in the European Union. The European Parliament is drafting a report on regulatory aspects of nanomaterials, and its tone indicates strong suspicion. The draft report currently under discussion in the Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety notes that nanomaterials "potentially present significant new risks."

- [Chemical Watch](#). [Bioworld Today](#). [Safenano](#).
- New from the US: [Current Intelligence Bulletin 60: Interim Guidance for Medical Screening and Hazard Surveillance for Workers Potentially Exposed to Engineered Nanoparticles](#), CDC/NIOSH, February 2009.

## **Welcome for deadly refurb action**

Construction unions have welcomed a new Health and Safety Executive (HSE) campaign to improve safety in the refurbishment sector. The unions say refurb is both the most casualised and the most dangerous part of the industry. Last year there were 38 deaths of workers operating in the repair, refurbishment and maintenance sectors. Most of the deaths were either falls from heights or electrocutions. UCATT general secretary Alan Ritchie said: "The HSE's targeting of the repairs and maintenance sector is to be welcomed. Too often the bosses on these kinds of projects think that safety provisions do not apply to them. That kind of thinking all too often results in tragedy." The union leader added: "All construction sites are dangerous places no matter how large or small they are. It is imperative that all construction bosses are forced to take their responsibility for worker's safety seriously." The union warned that the huge number of refurbishment projects requires a regime of continuous inspection and enforcement. Unite national officer Bob Blackman said: "No matter how big or small your property development is, health and safety should be seen as something that helps a development run smoothly and successfully, not as a cost that can be cut." HSE launched the awareness raising campaign after it discovered many people developing property do not know about the legal responsibilities clients have under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM 2007).

- [UCATT news release](#). [HSE news release](#) and [developing property website](#). [Contract Journal](#).

## **Firm fined for mangling arm**

A West Yorkshire firm has been fined £20,000 after a factory worker suffered serious arm injuries. The 47-year-old worker suffered a compound fracture of his arm, lost tissue and suffered muscle and nerve damage when the sleeve of his overalls became entangled in a vertical jig borer he was using at the factory in Heckmondwike. He attempted to disengage the drive on the machine by using his left hand to operate a lever, but the spindle continued to rotate because of a fault on the brake and he had to be freed by workmates. The injuries resulted in permanent damage to the victim's arm. The factory operator, 600 UK Ltd, was fined the maximum penalty of £20,000 at Dewsbury Magistrates' Court after pleading guilty to failing to ensure the health and safety of its employees. The company was also ordered to pay £5,046.80p costs. After the hearing, Health and Safety Executive inspector Geoff Fletcher said: "Given that this is a heavy industrial machine operated by a company which makes machinery of this type, they should have known what standard of protection was required. Guards should have been in place which would have prevented these horrendous injuries."

- [HSE news release](#). [Huddersfield Daily Examiner](#).

## Assaults 'rife' in Jobcentres

More than one assault takes place in Jobcentres every day, official figures have revealed. Department of Work and Pensions records, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, show there were 440 confirmed assaults at Jobcentres last year. Overall, the figures could be much higher as attempted or verbal assaults were not included. In total there were 1,277 assaults at Jobcentres in the last three years. Jobcentres currently employ more than 1,600 security guards to protect staff and clients, at a cost of almost £40 million a year. The Tories, who obtained the figures, warned the risks and costs of violence against staff were set to increase as more people lose their jobs and need state help. Chris Grayling, the Tory shadow work and pensions spokesperson, said the situation was "nothing short of a disgrace." He said: "The government is talking tough on welfare at the moment in the hope that they can grab some headlines, but when you look at what they are actually doing, they aren't even willing to take tough decisions to protect their own staff. It's all totally unacceptable."

- [The Telegraph](#).

## *International News*

### **China: Inquiry ordered into coal mine blast**

Chinese authorities have ordered a probe into an explosion in a coal mine that killed 74 workers. The authorities have also fired three of the mine's top managers. The sackings were reported a day after the explosion ripped through the Tunlan mine in Shanxi province on Sunday 22 February, in the deadliest accident to hit the industry in more than a year. The official Xinhua news agency says the mine's boss, its top engineer and the official in charge of mine safety have all been dismissed. The Shanxi mine safety bureau said in addition to the 74 dead, some of whom succumbed after being rescued from the mine, a total of 114 were injured and taken to hospital, and five are in a critical condition. The gas explosion happened the day after senior provincial officials held a conference about mine safety, in which they pledged to try to put an end to deadly mining incidents. China's mining industry is the world's most dangerous, although according to Xinhua, the modern Tunlan mine had a good reputation because no accidents had occurred in the past decade. On 13 February, eight Chinese miners were killed in a gas explosion in the Zhijin mine in Zhijin County, Guizhou Province. The victims were identified as migrant workers from nearby Chongqing. Twenty-five miners managed to escape. A total of 3,786 coal miners died in gas blasts, floodings and other accidents in 2007 as companies, often flouting safety regulations, rushed to feed demand from a booming economy. The number of deaths fell to 2,690 in the first 10 months of 2008 after thousands of small unsafe mines across the country were closed.

- [China Daily](#). [Rednet.cn](#). [Radio Australia News](#). [ICEM news report](#). [BBC News Online](#).

## **France: Manslaughter blast trial starts**

A subsidiary of the French energy giant Total has gone on trial over a 2001 explosion at a chemical plant which killed 30 people and injured thousands. Total subsidiary Grande Paroisse and the head of its AZF plant in the southern city of Toulouse are charged with manslaughter. An official inquiry blamed the blast on negligence. The defendants, however, reject wrongdoing. The trial is expected to last several months. Grande Paroisse and the AZF plant director, Serge Biechlin, are charged with manslaughter, involuntary injury and destruction of property. But they argue that the plant met all safety standards in 2001. Prosecutors are hoping that the trial in Toulouse - involving dozens of experts and hundreds of witnesses - will shed light on the exact circumstances of the blast. The massive explosion on 21 September 2001 occurred at a warehouse containing some 300 tonnes of ammonium nitrate. The blast left a big crater, killing 30 people. It also damaged surrounding houses, injuring more than 2,000 people. More than 1,000 jobs were lost as a result of the plant being destroyed. While denying blame, Total and its insurance companies have already paid out €2 billion (£1.77bn) in compensation.

- [BBC News Online](#). [Oil and Gas Journal](#). [Radio Netherlands](#). [News24](#).

## **Palestine: 'Premeditated' attacks on media condemned**

The targeting of media by the Israeli military during January's offensive in the Gaza Strip was "premeditated and precise" and in violation of international law, according to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). A new report from the global media unions' federation calls on the United Nations to investigate the attacks and to take action against the government of Israel. "There should be no double-talk about this," said IFJ general secretary Aidan White, who led a mission of journalists' leaders into Gaza on 22 January. "Here was reckless intimidation of media on a shocking scale that should not go unpunished. If it does, it leaves journalists and media exposed to the threat of attack in any conflict at any time in the future." The IFJ report, 'Justice in the news: A response to targeting of media in Gaza', concludes media were subject to intimidation, direct military assault and were deliberately prevented from working freely during the 22-day military offensive. It calls for an investigation into violations of Geneva conventions protecting journalists in armed conflicts and the disregard for United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738 which calls on member states to protect journalists in conflict zones. The report also condemned Hamas for its acts of intimidation of media during and after the conflict.

- [IFJ news release](#) and full report, Justice in the news: A response to targeting of media in Gaza [[pdf](#)].

## **USA: Hero pilot stresses union role**

The pilot of a plane that ditched into the Hudson River in New York with no loss of life has called on US airlines to invest more in

recruiting and training pilots and has stressed airline employers must bargain with unions "in good faith" in order to keep the skies safe. Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger told a Congress subcommittee pilots pay and conditions had been slashed in recent years. He added: "The single most important piece of safety equipment is an experienced, well-trained pilot." Capt Sullenberger told the House aviation subcommittee that he was "deeply troubled" about the future of the airline industry. He added: "In order to ensure economic security and an uncompromising approach to passenger safety, management must work with labour [unions] to bargain in good faith, we must find collective solutions that address the huge economic issues we face in recruiting and retaining the experienced and highly skilled professionals that the industry requires and that passenger safety demands." The pilot was hailed as a hero after January's landing, in which all 155 on board survived ([Risks 390](#)). The committee was sitting to examine what lessons could be learned from the 15 January incident.

- [Subcommittee hearing news release](#). [Hartford Courant](#). [The Guardian](#). [BBC News Online](#).

## Resources

### **There's only one safety rep magazine**

It's unique, it's for safety reps and it's out now. *Hazards* magazine is the only journal written specifically with union safety reps in mind. The new issue, out this week, warns that as the recession deepens workplace health and safety could be a casualty. 'Credit crunch', the cover story, brings together the different policy threads from the welfare bill, to the government's health at work drive to the Health and Safety Executive's new strategy consultation, and argues that as the purse strings tighten "workers could get less of the credit and feel more of the crunch." The risks are illustrated with artwork from top graphic artists and cartoonists, including a 'Collect your cards!' boardgame where a 'union card' protects you, a 'fit note' means you cannot pass work and a 'blame pass' allows negligent employers to get out of jail free. In the run up to Workers' Memorial Day on 28 April, there are features on corporate safety crimes and a special poster reminding readers that "When somebody dies at work, they are never the only victim" – families, workmates and communities are all affected. *Hazards* magazine requires union support to survive and give a voice to union health and safety issues and concerns – every trade union safety rep and branch should buy it.

- [Hazards magazine](#), number 105, 2009. [Subscription hotline](#), tel: 0114 201 4265 or email [Hazards](#). [Credit crunch feature](#), ['Collect your cards!' boardgame](#) and [Workers' Memorial Day poster](#).

## Events and Courses

### **TUC courses for safety reps**

COURSES FOR JANUARY TO MARCH 2009

- [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