

Risks

TUC 

e-bulletin

Number 397 – 14 March 2009

**HAZARDS
MAGAZINE**



**Asbestos -
The hidden killer**

Hazards at Work

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Risks is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 16,000 subscribers and 1,500 on the TUC website. To receive this bulletin every week, click [here](#). Past issues are [available](#). This edition contains [Useful links](#) [TUC courses for safety reps](#) [Disclaimer and Privacy](#)

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Safety campaigners call for radical reforms

There must be a radical revamp of employment, enforcement and safety approaches in the construction industry if its appalling fatality record is to be improved, safety campaigners have said. Construction union UCATT said the casualised and fragmented way the industry operates must be "radically altered." The call comes in a dossier of evidence submitted to an independent inquiry into construction site fatalities. The inquiry, which is due to report in April, was commissioned by the government and is headed by Rita Donaghy. The UCATT submission highlights the problem of "bogus" self-employment in the industry where workers have no employment rights, can be sacked at a moment's notice and often have little training. The UCATT submission also says statutory safety duties on company directors should be introduced, with the possibility of a guilty director receiving a custodial sentence. UCATT general secretary Alan Ritchie said: "The government made a commitment to re-examine the introduction of directors' duties as part of this inquiry. That might make some people uncomfortable but UCATT will hold the inquiry to account to fulfil that commitment." Earlier this month, inquiry chair Rita Donaghy met with members of campaigning group Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK), some of whom have lost family members on construction sites. Linda Whelan, a founder member of FACK, commented: "We sincerely hope that she accepts our pleas for major changes in law and enforcement," adding: "We want directors to be directly legally responsible for the health and safety on their sites and if it goes wrong to be held accountable in court and penalised by prison sentences which reflect the highest level of societal disapproval."

- [UCATT news release](#), including a link to the full submission. [FACK statement](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Contract Journal](#). [Families Against Corporate Killers \(FACK\)](#).

Baggage handlers on the lifting case

Unite members from airports all over the UK are to lobby their MPs and will invite them to take part in a 'baggage challenge'. The parliamentarians will be given the opportunity to try shifting the heavy bags baggage handlers deal with routinely. At the 25 March lobby of parliament, Unite will call on the government to put pressure on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to introduce a weight-limits regulation. The union says two years ago HSE's aviation industry group agreed to reduce the weight of checked-in baggage from 32 to 23 kilograms per item. The change also has the backing of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). However, airlines have refused to implement the new weight limit, saying they will only comply if there is an industry-wide approach. Unite's 'Lighten up' campaign now aims to get airlines to introduce a global standard of a 23kg maximum for individual bags taken on planes. Its main aim is to reduce back and other injuries suffered by thousands of baggage handlers. Unite says baggage handlers are five times more likely to suffer musculoskeletal injury than any other UK workers. Baggage handlers lift around nine tonnes of luggage per shift, it says.

- [Unite news release](#) and [Lighten up campaign](#).

'Massive' deferral of rail maintenance

Essential rail engineering work has been deferred by Network Rail this year at hundreds of sites, the rail union RMT has revealed. The union says the nearly 200 sites where it has revealed work scheduled for 2009/10 has been postponed it located in just three of Network Rail's regions. RMT was passed the information by whistleblowers concerned at the safety and service implications of postponing the replacement of rails, sleepers and ballast in order to save money. The lists name locations in the Southern, Western and London-to-Crewe regions that have had agreed work deferred, despite it having been placed with contractors last year. RMT says these deferrals form only a part of the 28 per cent of all planned work postponed by Network Rail ([Risks 396](#)). The union estimates that nationwide over 1,000 railway engineering jobs are under threat as a result of the deferrals. RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "The simple fact is that Network Rail is under massive pressure to save money, but it is shocking that it is prepared to defer essential works on this scale and cut the frequency of track inspections and signals maintenance in order to do so." He added: "Gordon Brown has said that it is committed to using investment in public works to help our economy ride out the recession, but unless he intervenes to reverse these cuts he will be allowing infrastructure safety standards to be undermined and subsidising redundancies instead."

- [RMT news release](#). [Early Day Motion 794, Network Rail and the economic downturn](#).

Two decades of rail safety inaction

Last week marked the 20th anniversary of the Purley train crash in which six people died and over 80 were injured, but safety improvements recommended after the crash are still to be introduced. Rail union ASLEF said train driver Bob Morgan was unjustly convicted of manslaughter after the crash and it took 18 years to clear his name at the Court of Appeal ([Risks 336](#)). But the union says progress on installing the Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system recommended after the tragedy has been slower still. ATP is installed all over the continent, but hardly exists in the UK, the union says. ASLEF general secretary Keith Norman said he knows why it has never been introduced. "In one word – money," he said. "It is scandalous that accidents have happened and lives have been lost that could have been prevented. It makes a mockery of the phrase, 'Safety is our number one priority' which is trotted out every time there is an incident." The rail union leader added: "The Hidden inquiry into the Clapham rail crash six months after Purley spelled out that ATP should be installed across the rail network. A couple of decades later there are small areas covered in Western and Chiltern. It would be a fitting tribute to those who died at Purley, and to Bob whose life was unfairly devastated, if Network Rail was to announce today that ATP will be installed across the UK."

But I suspect that attraction to profit will once again outweigh commitment to safety.”

- [ASLEF news release.](#)

Unite demands 'Flying Phantom' inquiry

There should be a public inquiry into the loss of the Flying Phantom tug and three of her crew in December 2007, the union Unite has said. The tug was sunk while assisting a bulk carrier in thick fog on the Clyde ([Risks 376](#)). Three of the tug's four-man crew perished; only the mate managed to escape from the stricken vessel's wheelhouse and was later rescued. Last September, the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) released a report into the sinking of the tug and identified a number of preventable factors which contributed to the deaths of the crew members. The union says recommendations of the MAIB report have so far not been heeded by the Scottish and Westminster governments. The union adds that it has "also pursued the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on the findings of the report but to no avail." Unite has now written to the secretary of state for Scotland, Jim Murphy MP, to press the case for a public inquiry. Unite's Scottish secretary, John Quigley, said the issue was a victim of "inter-departmental ping-pong", adding "no action has been taken on the recommendations of the MAIB report which leads us to believe that the River Clyde remains unsafe and only serves to highlight the need for a public inquiry." He added: "Our members go to work to provide for themselves and their families, not to suffer injury or death. This is about people not politics."

- [Unite news release.](#)

Action needed on cash van crime

A sharp rise in cash van crime late last year highlights the need for urgent action to prevent assaults on security staff, the union GMB has said. Latest statistics from the British Security Industry Association (BSIA) show there were 1,000 attacks against cash-in-transit (CIT) couriers in 2008, a reduction of 6 per cent compared to 2007. However the second half of the year saw attacks rise significantly. Jude Brimble, GMB's national officer for the sector, said: "GMB is determined to play its role to secure the safety of our members, who do a valuable and essential job – every worker has the right to do that job without fear of violence and assault – and those committing these offences should expect to be dealt with severely." Both the union and industry body BSIA said their cooperative work with the Home Office the police had led to marked improvements, but the recent upturn in attacks demonstrated the need for a renewed effort. BSIA chief executive John Bates commented: "Our partnership work saw a real reduction in CIT crime in the first half of 2008 and this was testament to the commitment of all involved who are determined to combat this serious crime. The rise in attacks in the second half of the year is a worrying trend. We recognise that with such a violent and prolific crime, all stakeholders will need to remain one step ahead of the

criminal in order to achieve a permanent reduction and our work to prevent the crime will need to evolve as the criminal's tactics change." He added: "Reducing CIT attacks was never going to be an easy task. However two things are certain – more resources than ever before are being invested into preventing CIT attacks; and because of advances in technology and increased intelligence on the crime, the criminals involved stand a significant chance of getting caught and prosecuted."

- [GMB news release](#).

Union safety warnings not heeded

A union rep who had pressed for workplace safety improvements suffered an injury at work – using equipment the union had warned repeatedly was dangerous and should be made safe. GMB shop steward John Kitching, 48, jarred his shoulder as he disposed of clinical waste while working as an operating theatre orderly at Barnsley Hospital. GMB had warned the hospital several times in the last five years that the clinical waste bins were a problem. Despite the warnings nothing was done to make the bins safe. The bins do not have brakes and as a result move when waste is deposited. When they move the lids can slam shut without warning. The union rep damaged his shoulder after the bin lid started to fall down and he put out his arm to stop it striking him. He was forced to take seven weeks off work and undergo physiotherapy on his shoulder. He still suffers pain and can no longer lift heavy objects above a certain height. Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust admitted liability and settled the claim out of court. John Kitching, who received a £4,000 payout, said: "The Barnsley health service branch of the GMB had warned the hospital about the clinical waste bins but no action was ever taken. I decided to pursue compensation because I wanted the hospital to finally resolve this health and safety hazard otherwise more people would be injured in the future." GMB senior organiser Tim Roache commented: "This accident could have been avoided quite simply by the employer listening to the GMB's concerns and carrying out a suitable risk assessment to identify what was an obvious hazard and then putting safe procedures in place. It is disappointing that Mr Kitching had to take legal action to make them listen."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#). [Wakefield Express](#).

Other news

Official warning on nanotubes

The UK government's workplace health and safety watchdog has called for "a precautionary approach" to the use of carbon nanotubes (CNTs). The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) says its new information sheet, 'Risk management of carbon nanotubes,' was "prepared in response to emerging evidence about the toxicology of these materials." The guide refers to a Nature Nanotechnology paper showing certain CNTs may mimic asbestos fibres ([Risks 357](#)), with HSE noting: "While this research does not prove that CNTs will cause the same diseases as asbestos, it does

raise the level of concern". A Friends of the Earth Australia report last year issued a similar warning on the similarities between nanotubes and asbestos ([Risks 372](#)). HSE's information sheet notes: "HSE views CNTs as being substances of very high concern. Although the recent findings only apply to some CNTs, we think a precautionary approach should be taken to the risk management of all CNTs, unless sound documented evidence is available on the hazards from breathing in CNTs. If their use cannot be avoided, HSE expects a high-level of control to be used." The HSE guide also says: "It is good practice to label the material 'Caution: substance not yet fully tested."

- Risk management of carbon nanotubes, HSE information sheet, March 2009 [[pdf](#)].

Employers 'ignoring' cancer risks

A manufacturing body has urged employers to better assess health risks in the workplace and has conceded firms are ignoring occupational cancer risks. Steve Pointer, head of health and safety policy at manufacturers' body the EEF, admitted to Personnel Today magazine that some firms were too complacent and failed to protect their employees. "Some are just ignoring the risks entirely and this could result in civil claims or prosecutions by either the Health and Safety Executive or local authorities," he said. "Employers need to do more than just provide information; every employer has a duty to assess risk. Getting the information out to employees is important, but eliminating exposure should be the focus. They need to ask the question, is there a necessity that we work with this substance, and what is the most effective way of dealing with it?" A TUC report last year said employers who risk the future health of their employees by exposing them to cancer-causing substances at work should be prosecuted under UK safety laws ([Risks 383](#)). TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The TUC wants to ensure that no worker comes into contact with a cancer-causing chemical and any employer who does expose their workforce to the risk of cancer should be prosecuted."

- [Personnel Today](#). TUC occupational cancer guide [[pdf](#)].
- [Global Unions cancer prevention campaign](#) and [prevention kit](#).

Scots asbestos payout law passed

Legislation to allow people in Scotland to claim for past exposure to asbestos has been passed by MSPs. The new law overturns a House of Lords ruling that said damages could not be claimed for pleural plaques, a benign scarring of the lungs. The Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) (Scotland) Bill was passed by 98 votes to 16. The Lords judgment - which stated sufferers could no longer use pleural plaques as a basis for a damages claim against a negligent employer - will still apply in England and Wales - although campaigners are awaiting a government response to calls that Westminster should follow the Scottish lead. Scotland's community safety minister Fergus Ewing commented: "We have a moral duty to ensure that those who suffer the effects of asbestos due to our

industrial past should be able to claim for damages." The new law was passed despite Tory opposition. Mr Ewing added: "People with pleural plaques have been injured and have a significantly higher risk than the general population of developing mesothelioma, which is a particularly vicious cancer. We cannot underestimate the anxiety that this brings to people affected by it or those living with them." Supporters of the new law, including Clydeside Action on Asbestos, argued that the benign scarring on lungs proved past exposure to asbestos and increased the risk of fatal disease. Spokesperson Harry McCluskey said: "It is my firm belief that it is the fundamental right of people with an asbestos-related disease to call to account negligent employers through the pursuit of compensation. I have nothing but praise for all of the MSPs who supported the need for legislation and who participated in the resulting debates." Insurance firms AXA, Norwich Union, RSA and Zurich indicated ahead of the vote that they would look at mounting a legal challenge against any new law.

- Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) (Scotland) Bill [[pdf](#)]. [ABI news release](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Daily Record](#). [The Scotsman](#). [Sunday Herald](#).
- Sign on! A Daily Mirror [petition to prime minister Gordon Brown](#), backed by asbestos campaign groups, is seeking similar pleural plaques legislation, as well as measures including an asbestos disease research centre and other compensation reforms.

Insurer fails to evade asbestos payout

An insurance giant has failed in a courtroom bid to deny responsibility for an asbestos cancer payout. Colin Gardner, 66, was awarded £145,000 damages at London's High Court. Mr Gardner's disease is the legacy of exposure to asbestos dust during his work as a young plumbing apprentice for Huddersfield-based C Watson and Sons Ltd between 1957 and 1961, Judge Sir Robert Nelson heard. He had to bring his case to court because Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance plc disputed claims that they were the now defunct company's insurers in the late 1950s and early '60s. But the judge accepted "compelling" evidence from C Watson and Sons Ltd's executive director Craig Watson who said the firm had been insured "for yonks" by Royal and Sun Alliance, or its predecessors. Mr Watson's evidence was backed up by an insurance broker. Sir Robert ordered the insurance company to pay Mr Gardner £145,000 damages, plus his legal costs, estimated at more than £40,000. Ian Bailey of law firm Irwin Mitchell represented Mr Gardner. He said the case illustrated flaws in the government's recent relaxation of laws that previously forced companies to keep employers' liability insurance details for 40 years. He said: "These kinds of asbestos-related illnesses can take up to 60 years to develop and this case shows how backward a step it was to scrap the requirement for the insurance information to be retained for at least 40 years. Alongside a database of insurance details, we want to see the creation of a central fund established by the insurance industry to come to the aid of workers like Mr Gardner, where insurance details no longer exist. Without these in place we'll see more and more cases where men and women whose lives are devastated by this disease are denied the compensation which they need and deserve."

- [Irwin Mitchell Solicitors news release](#). [Yorkshire Evening Post](#). [Huddersfield Daily Examiner](#).

Action threat over employee blacklist

The glittering list of contractors accused of using a 'construction blacklist' to vet potential employees are bracing themselves for the legal and political fallout. Unions UCATT and Unite are both seeking legal advice on suing some of the 45 contractors named in the list, while Labour MP Michael Clapham has tabled an Early Day Motion deploring the existence of the list and noting that many of the accused contractors are engaged on public works. The major contractors are being investigated by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) over the blacklist, seized in a raid on Droitwich firm the Consulting Association. The firm, ran by private detective Ian Kerr, was immediately shutdown. Unions have argued for years that a blacklist was in operation, targeting union activists for their safety and organising activities. The Information Commissioner looks set to issue enforcement notices to a number of contractors if they are found to have used the list to vet employees. There could be further fallout. MP Michael Clapham's Early Day Motion notes that "many of the companies who donated to the Consulting Association are currently engaged on publicly-procured work projects worth billions of pounds [and] considers that there may be legal implications where, for example, an employee or worker believes they were dismissed because they were on the list". One firm that is a major contractor on the Olympic stadium, Sir Robert McAlpine, is said to have spent nearly £30,000 last year alone for information to vet potential employees. The firm is among more than 40 of the country's biggest construction companies – including Balfour Beatty, Costain, NG Bailey, Laing O'Rourke, Morgan Est, Miller Construction, and Vinci – named last week as subscribers to the confidential personal database. The Consulting Association list contained personal information on 3,213 individuals, including personal relationships and union activity. Company boss Ian Kerr now faces prosecution under the Data Protection Act.

- ICO news release [[pdf](#)], [briefing on the Consulting Association](#) and related ICO enforcement notice [[pdf](#)]. [Construction News](#). [The Guardian](#) and [related story](#) and [audio report](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Contract Journal](#) and [related story](#). [Financial Times](#). [The Times](#). [The Telegraph](#).

Law needed to outlaw blacklisting

Unions have called for the urgent introduction of new laws to protect workers from blacklisting. Commenting on the investigation by the Information Commissioner that revealed major construction firms broke data protection laws by paying for information on potential employees, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said the practice was "deplorable", adding: "The government must act now and bring in the 1999 blacklisting regulations, to give workers proper protection and access to redress." The regulations were due to be introduced a decade ago, but were shelved when the government said there was insufficient evidence the practice took place. Construction union UCATT said widespread blacklisting "has huge implications for construction safety. Many UCATT members

and safety representatives have been victimised and dismissed after complaining and whistleblowing about dangerous sites.” General Secretary Alan Ritchie said: “UCATT members have been working to reduce deaths and injuries on sites and trying to working with companies to achieve these aims. We now know that those same companies have connived to dismiss them and block their future employment.” He added: “We will be writing to the government immediately demanding that they bring forward the existing regulations and introduce them into law immediately.” Unite joint general secretary, Derek Simpson, also called for a new law and said: “Unite demanded legislation more than five years ago, but the government resisted following lobbying by the CBI and EEF.” Both unions are alerting their activists to possibility they could make victimisation claims. The Information Commissioner says that from 16 March individual workers will be able to request details from any Consulting Association files relating to them. RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: “I have little doubt that there are more shabby little agencies peddling the same sort of information, and they all need to be weeded out and closed down.” STUC assistant secretary Ian Tasker said the victims of blacklisting “are those who sought to protect their fellow workers in high risk occupations and raise health and safety issues.” He added: “The STUC believes that legislation must be brought forward as a matter of urgency, to stamp out an abhorrent practice that these high profile companies have spent decades denying even existed.”

- [TUC news release](#). [UCATT news release](#) and [related release](#). [Unite news release](#). [RMT news release](#). [STUC news release](#).

HSE strategy needs ‘beefing up’

Mainstream safety organisations have said a new Health and Safety Executive (HSE) draft strategy falls well short on detail and on intent. Safety professionals’ organisation IOSH has called on HSE to ‘beef up’ some of the strategic goals contained in its new strategy. Richard Jones, IOSH’s policy and technical director, said: “The strategy simply doesn’t go far enough, just taking a ‘status quo’ approach in some areas. We’ve urged the HSE to adopt more radical thinking as a way of moving health and safety forward in the UK.” IOSH comments to an HSE consultation on the strategy say HSE’s goal on investigation and enforcement must be strengthened, adding instead of just “encouraging” strong leadership, the regulator should introduce enforceable directors’ duties. According to Jones, HSE also needs more resources to do the job right. “Resourcing is clearly still an issue with this new strategy. We believe there should be a phased and eventual doubling of front line inspectors,” he said. A response to the consultation from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) also said HSE needed additional funds and should not ignore “the fact that millions of workers, together with their line managers, safety reps and directors, especially in better performing businesses, are already well and truly ‘on the case’ when it comes to tackling health and safety.”

- [IOSH news release](#) and full response to the HSE strategy [[pdf](#)]. [RoSPA news release](#). [Contract Journal](#).

Job insecurity causes lasting stress

Job insecurity is causing lasting anxiety and stress, with men worse affected than women, researchers have found. A Cambridge University study showed men who think they may be fired or made redundant are likely to become more stressed and depressed than women. Dr Brendan Burchell from the University of Cambridge's sociology department, who compiled the study, said: "Men, unlike women, have few positive ways of defining themselves outside of the workplace between when they leave school and when they retire." The Cambridge study found that while men may put on a braver face, job insecurity causes more symptoms of anxiety and depression in men than in women. The researchers combined data from 300 current British employees with a survey of thousands of people by the Economic and Social Research Council charting the effects of social and economic change since 1991. They found that when unemployed men move into insecure jobs, they show no improvement in psychological health. For unemployed women, even finding an insecure job helped to restore psychological health. Burchell said the long-term decline in mental well-being can also be worse for people who are under threat of losing their jobs than for those who are actually made redundant. The stress and anxiety of people who had become unemployed "bottomed out" after about six months as they adapted to their new circumstances. By contrast, people who had not lost their jobs but were worried about doing so displayed steadily worsening mental health for one to two years.

- [The Scotsman. Personnel Today.](#)

Fine for pupil's fireball injury

A Sleaford motor business has been fined after a youth on work experience was hit in the chest by a fireball. Hockmeyer Motors pleaded guilty at Grantham Magistrates Court to a safety offence following the incident on 7 January last year. The company was fined £15,000 and ordered to pay £9,000 costs in a series of instalments over the next 12 months. Year 11 student Jamie Fenn-Smith was on a work experience placement at the garage. He had been holding cables in place while experienced mechanic changed brake cables on a car. The fireball, which melted the plastic print of his t-shirt onto his skin, was caused by brake fluid which ignited after being sprayed onto a running engine by a colleague. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector Judith McNulty-Green said: "This incident left a young man hospitalised, and could have been avoided if the company had assessed the risk associated with such habitual use of the solvent and implemented appropriate risk control measures to reduce identified risks." The inspector added: "Work experience pupils are viewed as employees for the purposes of health and safety legislation, yet they are often more vulnerable than a company's trained and qualified employees. It is therefore imperative that if companies contract to have work experience pupils from local schools they update any risk assessments to take into consideration this particularly vulnerable group of employee."

- [HSE news release. Sleaford Standard.](#)

Australia: Workplace gene testing fears

Genetic testing of employees could become more widespread and people need to be better informed of their rights to avoid genetic discrimination, experts have warned. The director of the Centre for Law and Genetics at the University of Tasmania, Margaret Otlowski, said most Australian employers were not using genetic testing or other genetic information to monitor present or future employees. But her research showed it was likely to become more of a concern. "At least some employers would be interested in using genetic testing in future if it were inexpensive and accessible," Professor Otlowski said. Australia's Human Rights Commissioner, Graeme Innes, said the practice was occurring on a small scale and people should be aware it was unlawful for employers to discriminate on the basis of a worker's genetic make-up, except in rare circumstances. Any complaints could be brought to the commission for investigation. "What we'll need to do is make employers and employees more aware of their obligations and rights," he said. The comments followed publication of a world-first study revealing that genetic discrimination has already occurred in Australia, with most cases related to life insurance policies. Australian researchers, including Professor Otlowski, surveyed more than 1,000 people who had undergone some form of genetic testing, about their experiences of discrimination. With the help of the insurance industry, they verified 11 cases of genetic discrimination against healthy people, including one of denial of insurance coverage to a woman genetically predisposed to breast cancer. The UK has an on-going moratorium on the use of genetic screening in the workplace.

- [Sydney Morning Herald](#)

Canada: Centre targets cancer prevention

A new research centre dedicated to identifying and eliminating exposure to cancer-causing substances in the workplace has opened in Toronto, Canada. Dr Aaron Blair, interim director of the new Occupational Cancer Research Centre said the new unit "is a major step in identifying carcinogens at workplaces and initiating preventive actions." The initiative is a joint venture between Cancer Care Ontario, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, the Canadian Cancer Society and a union, the United Steelworkers. "We already know a lot of carcinogens," said Loraine Marrett, a senior scientist with Cancer Care Ontario. "We want to take a broader approach." The centre is also seeking to get more people involved. "We can't do everything; we have to start building a body of (people) who will be interested," said Marrett. Blue-collar workers are more likely to develop workplace-related cancers because they generally have more carcinogen exposures at work, said Marrett ([Risks 396](#)). That exposure is mostly preventable, but "some workplace substances suspected of causing cancer have never been evaluated," said Blair, an expert in occupational and environmental epidemiology. "We don't know what workers are exposed and to what concentrations. Or what kind of carcinogens are found in which kind of workplaces," Blair said. "There are too many questions and few answers."

- [Canadian Cancer Society news release](#). [Toronto Star](#).

Europe: Full ahead for maritime safety rules

New measures aimed at protecting Europe's coasts from maritime disasters and improving passenger and crew safety have been adopted by the European Parliament. The eight regulations and directives will tighten safety requirements for ships flying an European Union (EU) Member State flag or navigating in European waters. The European Parliament says this legislation represents a major victory for parliament, which successfully pushed for tougher rules despite strong resistance from the Council – the EU's national governments - during negotiations on the package. The new rules provide for a range of measures including permanent blacklisting of dangerous ships and tougher and more frequent inspections and mandatory compliance with international safety standards for ships flying a Member State flag. The Commission put forward the "Erika III" package of maritime regulations in November 2005, but only recently secured the deal after three years of negotiations with national transport ministers.

- [European Parliament news release](#).

Turkey: Airline ignored union safety warning

Managers of Turkish Airlines had been warned they were "inviting disaster" a week before one of their planes crashed in the Netherlands, killing nine people. In a message to Atilay Aycin, president of the ITF-affiliated union Hava-Is, which represents workers on board the aircraft that crashed at Schiphol airport on 25 February, ITF civil aviation section secretary Gabriel Mocho expressed his condolences to the families and colleagues of those who died. In the letter he outlined how, just one week before the accident, the union had alleged that Turkish Airlines was "inviting disaster" by failing to take aircraft maintenance seriously, "ignoring the most basic function of flight safety, which is plane maintenance services." Mocho added: "It seems possible that if you had been listened to then lives might have been saved and this tragedy avoided." He concluded: "The one good thing to have emerged from this tragedy is the skill with which the crew members conducted a quick and professional evacuation which ensured that, in spite of the severe crash, many lives were saved."

- [ITF news report](#).

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 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