

Risks

TUC 

e-bulletin

Number 405 – 9 May 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](#)

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

Contents

Union News

TUC turns up the heat on temperature
Metro workers in safety protest
Lock keepers stand up for safe staffing
Worker gets vibration payout
Ankle break costs worker his leg

Other news

Review condemns 'woeful' enforcement
Why was no-one held responsible?
HSE warning on deadly balers
HSE issues fragile roof warning
Factory fined over two finger loss
'Green' lightbulbs poison workers
NHS staff to get personal security alarms
Sixth cancer death linked to university
Muscle soreness is linked to workload
Vehicle checks reveal loads problems

International News

Australia: Night nurses warn of health fears
Global: Unions crucial to swine flu control
Global: Support for embattled journalists
South Africa: Mine deaths continue to rise

Resources

Disability
New Safety Law Poster
Global trade and safety newsletter

Events and Courses

National Hazards conference, 10-12 July 2009
TUC courses for safety reps

TUC turns up the heat on temperature

The TUC has called for the introduction of a new upper limit on workplace temperature. It says with our summers predicted to get gradually hotter and drier over the coming years, UK factories and offices will become increasingly uncomfortable and potentially hazardous places to work. A new TUC report says that although employees are not expected to work when the temperature drops below 16 degrees Celsius (or 13 degrees Celsius if they are doing physically demanding work), there are no similar restrictions for when the workplace becomes too hot. TUC would like to see the law changed so that employers are forced to act when the temperature inside hits 24 degrees Celsius, and that staff could be sent home and their employers prosecuted if it soared to 30 degrees, or 27 degrees for those engaged in physically demanding work. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "No-one is expected to work in sub-zero temperatures but overheated employees are meant to carry on regardless of how high the office temperature soars. We need to see action now, before the impact of climate change is felt and our summers become hotter than ever." A recent TUC survey found 94 per cent of respondents said their workplaces had been too hot to work in last summer, and four in ten (42 per cent) said they regularly worked in unbearably hot conditions. Examples include a lab where last summer staff were working in temperatures of 32 degrees Celsius, a chicken factory where the soaring temperature was making staff feel dizzy and a school where the temperature in a classroom with two glass walls regularly rises to 32 degrees.

- [TUC news release](#). The case for a legally enforceable maximum temperature [[pdf](#)]

Metro workers in safety protest

Rail workers from the North East have shunted to parliament their campaign for a properly staffed and resourced 'People's Railway'. Workers from Tyne and Wear Metro were joined by RMT colleagues from around the country in the lobby of parliament on 5 May. Tyne and Wear Metro, Britain's best-performing railway, is facing the threat of being broken up and privatised in a move the union says has been exposed as a threat to both safety and value for money. Newcastle Central MP Jim Cousins, backed by other MPs from the region, has tabled Early Day Motion 792 opposing the sell-off. In response to the cuts programme, RMT has twice written to the safety chief at Network Rail asking for a full risk assessment of the safety implications of the deferral of nearly a third of the track renewal work. Six weeks after the first letter, RMT is still awaiting a reply. "We've got a message for the government and the private companies in the rail industry, including those that are looking to make a fat profit out of Tyne and Wear Metro. Our members are not cannon fodder who can be hired and fired at will while the bankers and the City spivs are being bailed out to the tune of billions," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said. Warning that the maintenance cuts and the proposed sell-off risked a repeat of earlier rail

tragedies, he said: "Network Rail is cutting back on the frequency of track inspections and has postponed a third of its planned track renewals. We have asked them twice for their report on the safety implications and they have refused. I have warned Geoff Hoon that conditions are being created for a serious derailment. There is a real danger of another Hatfield, Potters Bar or Grayrigg."

- [RMT news release.](#)

Lock keepers stand up for safe staffing

GMB members employed as lock and weir keepers by the Environment Agency (EA) on the River Thames are being balloted for industrial action in a dispute about the standby and call out system to deal with flooding on the river. GMB senior organiser Ted Purcell said the ballot was intended to keep the waterways disaster free. "EA management at first put forward a stand by and call out system that was so incompetent it would have undoubtedly led to flooding and a threat to life and limb," he said. "GMB members corrected the errors and agreed to trial the new system as long as their long standing request for an accurate job profile was forthcoming based on what the lock and weir keepers actually do." The crucial job undertaken by lock and weir keepers was under-appreciated, the union said, with one possible reason being the refusal of management to "give them an accurate profile of the job that they do." The union maintains these workers perform a critical flood prevention role, but managers claim the credit and the pay. "Senior officers claim they supervise water level management and therefore get paid for it and have done for over ten years," said Mr Purcell. "River users saw how well these senior managers managed it over the Easter weekend, when parts of the river ran dry."

- [GMB news release.](#)

Worker gets vibration payout

A GMB member has received a "substantial" out of court settlement after his hands were left permanently damaged by using vibrating tools at work. Alexander Simpson, 60, from Workington in Cumbria was left with debilitating Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) - also known as vibration white finger - after using vibrating tools in his job for an engineering company. His employer, West Cumberland Engineering, admitted liability. Alexander still works for the firm, but no longer uses vibrating tools. Until 2007 his work involved using a vibrating grinder five days a week. "My hands turn numb very quickly if they get cold and as a result I have to stop whatever task I am doing," he said. "It means it is hard for me to do the gardening or to continue my hobby of working with cars. When I was diagnosed with Hand Arm Vibration I decided to pursue compensation because I wanted to make sure I was moved on to a different job to prevent my condition from getting worse." GMB senior organiser Billy Coats said: "HAVS is a widespread hazard for many of our members working in a number of different industries and occupations where power tools are used. It can be a debilitating condition which can adversely affect our members both at work and

at home." He added: "Under the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 employers are required to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk to health and safety to their employees arising from exposure to vibration at work." These regulations were among those identified in March by the British Chambers of Commerce as a "burden" on business ([Risks 404](#)).

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#).

Ankle break costs worker his leg

A labourer who had to have a leg amputated after breaking his ankle in a fall at work has received a six-figure sum in compensation. Unite member William Edge, 64, needed eight 'agonising' operations after the fall. In the September 2005 incident, he lost his grip on a wet ladder while locking up a basement and fell on to concrete three metres below. He said he shouted for help for about 20 minutes before he was heard by a passer-by. His right ankle became infected and, after 16 months of treatment, the decision was taken to amputate his leg below the knee. He received the out-of-court settlement with his former employer, Plymouth-based building firm Ardmere Construction. Mr Edge said: "I have been deprived of my career and my role as the breadwinner in the family. I've worked all my life and it's been hard adjusting to this. I'd always intended to work until I was 65. I also suffer with post-traumatic stress disorder. I get flashbacks of the accident and the hospital." Laurence Faircloth from Unite said Mr Edge "should never have been put in a position where he was forced to use such a treacherous ladder. Strict health and safety regulations should be followed to make sure accidents like this are avoided." A statement from Ardmere Construction Limited said: "Although he was an older worker, Bill was fit, healthy and fully mobile, and considered more than able to climb a ladder. We are pleased that he has received a substantial sum from our insurers, but appreciate that no amount of money can compensate for the loss of a limb."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#)
- [Plymouth Herald](#)

Other news

Review condemns 'woeful' enforcement

A review of workplace health and safety enforcement has criticised a continuing pattern of "woeful" sentencing which is failing to discourage safety offenders. According to Howard Fidderman, author of 'Deterrent, what deterrent?', an extensive review of enforcement patterns spanning 20 years: "The average fine in 2007/08 - 'adjusted', so that penalties of £100,000 are stripped out to give a more accurate picture of everyday sentencing - is about double what it was in 1997/98: put another way, each offence successfully prosecuted by the HSE in 2007/08 cost an offender on average just under £8,000, compared with just under £4,000 a

decade earlier." Fidderman, a highly respected safety journalist and the editor of Health and Safety Bulletin (HSB), reports the prosecutions trend is more damning still. "Further perspective on just how bad a year 2007/08 was can be gained from looking at the high point for prosecutions - in 1989/1990, under a business-friendly Conservative government, upwards of 1,500 cases and 2,600 offences were prosecuted - two to three times more than under the Labour government over the past year." He questions recent reassurances from Health and Safety Executive (HSE) chair Judith Hackitt that HSE is not "going to go soft on enforcement". Fidderman comments: "The problem is that it has already gone soft - albeit not necessarily of its own volition. The statistics do not lie: it is inspecting fewer premises, investigating fewer accidents, serving fewer enforcement notices, taking fewer prosecutions and securing grossly inadequate penalties." He lambasts HSE for hiding behind increasingly inadequate data on its enforcement and penalties record which has made independent scrutiny of its performance more difficult. "Put cynically, without the data there is no problem," he concludes.

- Howard Fidderman. Deterrent, what deterrent?, [Health and Safety Bulletin](#), number 377, pages 5-18, 2009.

Why was no-one held responsible?

A sister has criticised enforcement authorities for failing to bring anyone to justice after the death of her brother on a construction site. Anthony Lockey died on 20 June 2007 when a reversing dumper truck filled with cement fell into the trench where he was working. An inquest found the death of Kay's brother was caused by misadventure due to a faulty clutch. Kay told the Guardian she believes the lorry was too big for the job and is angry that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) did not prosecute Needham, the Swindon-based building firm her brother was working for at the time of his death. "The family hasn't recovered," said Kay. "How can you recover when there is no closure. Closure needs somebody to be held liable. Somebody to say: 'Yes, maybe it was my fault.'" She added: "I just wonder how the HSE said there was insufficient evidence to prosecute. That made me angry. That's when we spoke to a solicitor and we talked about a civil action. We are not legal people." A statement from HSE said: "HSE carefully examined the evidence gathered during the investigation into this incident, and the evidence given during the inquest into Anthony Lockey's death. HSE and the Crown Prosecution Service agreed there was insufficient evidence to prosecute. HSE has met with Anthony's family and explained why the decision not to prosecute was taken."

- [Guardian. HSE statement](#)

HSE warning on deadly balers

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has warned farmers of the dangers of working with baling machinery following inquests on two Staffordshire farmers who died while carrying out contract work. The inquests into the deaths of Anthony Mardling, aged 61, and

Malcolm Bennett, aged 50, recorded verdicts of accidental death at Stafford Coroner's Court last week. Mr Mardling died after being pulled feet first into baling machinery on 29 August 2008 at a farm near his home, while Mr Bennett was fatally injured when he was struck by a part of a baling machine on 21 September 2008 at a farm near Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire. HSE agriculture inspector Clive Brookes said: "Almost every week, someone dies in a needless farm accident. These accidents don't just destroy lives; they destroy whole families, and often their farms too. In these difficult financial times, farmers might be tempted to take risks to save money by cutting back on help or taking short cuts." He added: "We want farmers, their families and their helpers to be aware of the dangers around them and to work safely." HSE says farming is one of the most dangerous ways to make a living in Britain. Less than 1.5 per cent of the working population is employed in agriculture, yet the sector is responsible for between 15 per cent and 20 per cent of worker fatalities each year.

- [HSE news release. The Sentinel](#)

HSE issues fragile roof warning

A construction company has been fined £6,600 after a self-employed worker was lucky to survive a fall through a fragile roof during replacement of leaking roof lights. Keen Construction Ltd, based in Downton near Salisbury, which had earlier pleaded guilty to contravening regulation 9(2) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005, was also ordered at Reading Crown Court this week to pay costs of £3,625. A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation followed the incident in Lambourn, Berkshire in September 2007 in which a worker fell five and a half metres through a fragile single skin asbestos cement roof. There were no crawling boards in use and no safety net or crash desk below the working area of the roof. The victim suffered broken ribs and injuries to his pelvis, vertebrae and lung. He was unable to return to work for over a year. HSE inspector Meurig Rees Williams said: "By any standards, this was a very serious incident. The injured worker suffered long-term injuries after falling five and a half metres and is lucky to be alive."

- [HSE news release](#) and [falls webpages](#)

Factory fined over two finger loss

Oldham firm Ribble Packaging Ltd has been fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,769.50 after an employee of the corrugated cardboard factory lost the tips of two fingers. The worker lost the tips of his index and middle fingers on his left hand while he was working at a cutting wheel in the factory. He had been trying to remove waste cardboard. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that an automatic safety switch, which should have stopped the machine when the access gate was opened, had not been working. This meant the wheel continued to rotate when staff were close to it. HSE inspector Richard Clarke said: "Safety switches are there for a reason. If they're not functioning properly then employers are putting their staff at risk of serious injuries. In

this case the switch, which would have prevented the incident from happening, was not working and had not been repaired. As a result, an employee got too close to the cutting wheel when it was moving and lost the tops of two fingers." The inspector added: "The factory's owners should have made sure that the machine was turned off and that the wheel had stopped turning, before any attempt was made to remove waste materials. I hope this incident will help to remind people that factories can be dangerous places, and that it's therefore vital that health and safety procedures are followed."

- [HSE news release.](#)

'Green' lightbulbs poison workers

Workers in China could pay a high price for the production of "green" lightbulbs in cost-cutting factories. Large numbers of Chinese workers have been poisoned by mercury, which forms part of the compact fluorescent lightbulbs. A surge in foreign demand, set off by a European Union directive making these bulbs compulsory within three years, is already leading to the serious health problems predicted at the outset by occupational health campaigners. A report in the Sunday Times says doctors, regulators, lawyers and courts in China - which supplies two-thirds of the compact fluorescent bulbs sold in Britain - are increasingly alert to the potential impacts on public health of an industry that promotes itself as a friend of the earth but depends on highly toxic mercury. The risks are illustrated by guidance from the British government, which says that if a compact fluorescent lightbulb is broken in the home, the room should be cleared for 15 minutes because of the danger of inhaling mercury vapour. A specialist medical journal, published by China's health ministry, describes a compact fluorescent lightbulb factory in Jinzhou, in central China, where 121 out of 123 employees had excessive mercury levels. One man's level was 150 times the accepted standard. The same journal identified a compact fluorescent lightbulb factory in Anyang, eastern China, where 35 per cent of workers suffered mercury poisoning. It also reported a survey of 18 lightbulb factories near Shanghai, which found that exposure levels to mercury were higher for workers making the new compact fluorescent lightbulbs than for other lights containing the metal. A new award, aimed at businesses making false green claims, was launched this week, ahead of the World Business Summit on Climate Change taking place in Copenhagen, Denmark, later this month. Members of the public are invited to vote for the company making the most outrageous claims to be green when nominations for the Climate Greenwash Awards are revealed on Monday 11 May.

- [Sunday Times.](#)
- [Climate Greenwash Awards 2009.](#)

NHS staff to get personal security alarms

Thousands of lone NHS workers are being issued personal security alarms, health secretary Alan Johnson has announced. The lone

worker alarm system is designed for nurses and other healthcare staff who work in isolation from colleagues and may need to call for assistance when their personal security is threatened. A total of 30,000 of the i750 identicom devices are to be issued and will help locate the user and link to a trained individual who can summon help if needed. The Department of Health says if a lone worker indicates they need help, the call centre will be able listen to and record events in a way that is legally admissible, making it easier to bring prosecutions. Health secretary Alan Johnson said: "No NHS staff should have to put up with violence in the workplace, but sadly it happens. Lone workers are particularly vulnerable and I am determined to provide them with as much protection as we can to enable them to carry out their valuable work knowing that they have the support they need should their personal safety be threatened." The alarms are being rolled out from 5 May 2009 and will initially be targeted at community workers who work with patients and their families or associates who have a history of violence, alcohol or drug abuse or clinical conditions which might heighten risks to the lone worker, and those who work in areas of high crime rates and social deprivation. The latest NHS staff survey found that violence against NHS employees had not improved for four consecutive years, with 12 per cent of workers reporting physical abuse from patients and their relatives.

- [DH news release.](#)
- [Personnel Today](#)

Sixth cancer death linked to university

A sixth person who worked in a Manchester University building used by Lord Rutherford, and contaminated by radiation and mercury, has died. Professor Tom Whiston, 70, a psychology lecturer, died from pancreatic cancer. He occupied the building where the Nobel Prize winning scientist carried out his experiments on atomic structure using radioactive radon. An independent inquiry into any health risks at the building is under way ([Risks 376](#)). Professor Whiston is the third occupant of the Rutherford Building to have died of pancreatic cancer in the last two years. All three worked in rooms used by the scientist for his experiments. A fourth colleague, who also worked in the building, died of a brain tumour in 1992. A computer assistant, who also suffered from a brain tumour, died in February 2008 and in 1984 a laboratory assistant died of cancer. An independent inquiry into possible health risks at the Rutherford Building is being carried by an outside scientist, Professor David Coggon, at the request of officials at Manchester University, and is expected to report later this year. The university says the levels of exposure have not been large enough to damage the health of occupants. But Professor Coggon says he wants to check whether "this conclusion is valid". The radioactivity was first uncovered in 1999, 80 years after Rutherford had left, and de-contamination work was subsequently carried out. The mercury was found more recently.

- [Manchester Evening News.](#)
- [BBC News Online.](#)
- [Global Unions cancer prevention campaign.](#)

Muscle soreness is linked to workload

Back and neck soreness in office workers is more likely to be caused by high workloads and tight deadlines than by posture or other physical factors, a new study has found. Researchers from the University of Sydney studied over 1,300 Australian public employees to measure the general indicators for physical health and psychological well-being. Unmanageable workloads and unrealistic deadlines were amongst the stronger predictors of reported neck and back pain, said Karin Griffiths, a member of the research team. "When you have staff doing a job that is already computer based, then give them higher workloads, tighter time constraints and more deadlines, the evidence suggests that you substantially increase the risk of musculoskeletal symptoms," she said. Louise Persse, national president of the public service union CPSU, said: "Close to a third of women who responded to CPSU's What Women Want survey said that they had no control over their workloads. If that is placing them at risk of suffering neck and back problems, then we have a massive health and safety issue here," she said. The study also found a correlation between hours in front of a computer and reporting of musculoskeletal problems. Working six or more hours per day with a computer increased the risk of neck and back problems by up to 230 per cent, while working eight or more increased the risk by up to 500 per cent.

- [CPSU news release.](#)

Vehicle checks reveal loads problems

More than threequarters of vehicles stopped during safety checks in England and Wales were not loaded safely, putting motorists and loading staff at risk. Officials from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Vehicle Operator Services Agency (VOSA) stopped 40 vehicles during three days of checks in Wrexham, Birmingham and Humberside. Although the majority needed remedial action to make the load safe for onward travel and unloading, in most cases drivers were able to solve the problem safely within minutes. Further checks are now planned. Marcia Davies, head of injury reduction at HSE, said: "Although this was a relatively small number of checks the proportion of vehicles with a problem is alarming. The fatal and serious injuries suffered during loading and unloading are needless tragedies and lives are often shattered as a result. Taking simple safety measures can avoid this misery." She added: "Vehicles which are loaded safely for the road can usually be safely unloaded at the workplace – and vice versa. A significant number of manual handling injuries, falls from heights and accidents caused by falling objects result from poorly restrained loads shifting in transit. HSE will be launching a campaign offering guidance and advice on loading and unloading later this year." During the last three years, 14 people have been killed and more than 2,000 people have been injured by cargo falling from vehicles when they are being loaded or unloaded.

- [HSE news release.](#)

Australia: Night nurses warn of health fears

For the first time, the life-threatening physical and psychological effects of shift work are being used to push for bigger pay packets for nurses and midwives in New South Wales, Australia. The NSW Nurses Association launched its claim in the Industrial Relations Commission this week, calling in experts to cite studies linking shift work with higher rates of breast cancer, heart disease, miscarriage, clinical depression and divorce. The test case could improve remuneration for thousands of shift workers in other professions who have spent decades battling its effects. "The reality is after a lifetime of nursing there are effects. Somebody has to work the night duty because hospitals operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week," the union's general secretary, Brett Holmes, said. Professor Ron Grunstein, a sleep expert from the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, said the ill effects of working nights could not be ignored. During five hours in the witness box, he cited evidence from studies that included more than 100,000 nurses in the United States and showed those on night duty experienced increases in coronary artery disease, breast cancer, weight gain, eating disorders, miscarriage, premature birth and low birth weight. "In the 1970s, it was thought the effects of shift work were minor and transitory, but we know better now," he said. Last year the Australian Workers Union (AWU) called for a review of working hours after a United Nations report found people who worked night shifts had a higher risk of contracting cancer ([Risks 398](#)).

- [NSWNA news release. Sydney Morning Herald.](#)

Global: Unions crucial to swine flu control

The current swine flu scare has one largely ignored group of victims – those workers in the pig industry who face both health risks and job loss. However well-informed, unionised workers in the sector are crucial to swine flu control, a union body has said. Global farmworkers' union federation IUF said there was no evidence that the N1N1 strain could be transmitted from pigs to humans, and the mutant virus has not been found in any hog farm so far. "However, people in farming, slaughtering and post-slaughtering operations can get more common swine influenza from regular, close contact with infected pigs or colleagues," an IUF statement said. It cites the World Health Organisation (WHO) which says "most of the previously reported swine influenza cases in humans recovered fully from the disease without requiring medical attention and without antiviral medicines." A joint statement from WHO and other international agencies on 6 May confirmed pork and pork products "handled in accordance with good hygienic practices... will not be a source of infection." According to IUF: "As with avian flu, workers are at a strategic frontline of risk of infection and can play a key role in early warning systems and in containing outbreaks, as long as they are properly informed, receive proper training, are provided with adequate protective equipment and their voice is heard." IUF general secretary Ron Oswald commented: "Trade unions have direct lines of communication into workplaces and so must be part

of government action plans to deal with swine flu." He added: "Workplaces where active union health and safety committees are present and where trade unions, employers and public health authorities have a constructive, ongoing dialogue will be well equipped to assist workers and communities in preventing and containing epidemics."

- [IUF news release](#). [WHO/FAO/OIE/WTO statement](#) and [swine flu webpages](#).
- [TUC flu guide](#).

Global: Support for embattled journalists

Zimbabwe's embattled journalists are being provided life-saving safety advice. Journalists work under constant threat in the country. Last year several were arrested, detained or beaten up, and a photographer was found murdered. The International News Safety Institute (INSI) has in the last month provided free safety training to 80 Zimbabwean journalists. INSI, which has the backing of major media organisations and the global journalists unions' federation IFJ, carried out the training in neighbouring Zambia. INSI director Rodney Pinder commented: "There can be no press freedom where journalists are forced to work under constant threat of harm because of what they do." In a speech in Washington DC last week Pinder called on the United States and other governments to develop a long-term strategic process that puts safety and security at the heart of media development work. He said all media training projects should include a safety element. "Too often media development tax dollars are wiped out by the men with guns," Pinder said during a debate, 'Dangerous truth: Safeguarding journalism and media workers'. Without safety training, he said, "good journalists go out naked into danger." INSI figures show that more than 1,300 journalists and other news professionals in 105 countries have died trying to cover the news since 1996 - two a week for the past 12 years. Pinder said the time for more words of anger, sympathy and regret had long since passed. "What better way to make the sacrifice of a thousand journalists worthwhile than to help save the lives of a thousand who will go into danger in our name in the years to come," he said.

- [INSI news release](#)

South Africa: Mine deaths continue to rise

The number of miners killed in South African mines is rising again, a union has warned. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) says that the official death count is over 60 so far this year. The 2007 toll was over 160 deaths. The union says it is continuing to take day-long, stop-work actions as "Days of Mourning" for miners killed on the job. On 20 April, miners at the Harmony Gold mine stopped work to mourn the death of a worker. Further work stoppages occurred last week at other mines where fatalities occurred. The spate of deaths and accidents comes just over two months since a government safety audit revealed widespread problems in the sector. The audit report highlighted maintenance and infrastructure

shortcomings that needed to be addressed as a priority. "No condition should justify why a worker should lose a life," said NUM president Senzeni Zokwana at the time of the audit's release. NUM general secretary Frans Baleni said: "Safety should be a constitutional right of all workers."

- [ICEM news report](#)

Resources

Disability

The TUC has issued advice on dealing with discrimination cases following recent court cases which have limited the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act as it applies to employment cases. This has implications for the handling of long-term sickness absence cases, and the TUC advice seeks to help unions deal with these.

- [TUC Advice](#)

New Safety Law Poster

Employers can throw away that old yellowing health and safety law poster that has been pinned up on a notice board for the last twenty years. The HSE have produced a new, simpler, more eye-catching version which aims to give the information in a much clearer way, while at the same time ensuring that workers know their basic rights to both have a safe workplace and to be consulted. The new poster was developed with the involvement of trade unions who were eager to ensure that the important messages that the previous poster gave were not lost, but at the same time were presented in a clearer, more readable, form.

- [HSE release](#)

Global trade and safety newsletter

Increasing numbers of workers around the world are employed by international companies, exploiting tax and regulatory exemptions to produce goods for export. Health and safety is frequently a casualty. The Maquiladora Health and Safety Support Network (MHSSN) newsletter - Border/Line Health & Safety – is the single best source on the issue. Maquiladora are foreign-owned production plants. MHSSN's work started with Mexican workers in the proliferation of factories just over the US border, but has expanded to coverage of the health and safety problems arising out of deregulated global trade worldwide.

- Border/Line Health and Safety [[pdf](#)]. [Maquiladora Health and Safety Support Network \(MHSSN\)](#).

Events and Courses

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR APRIL TO JUNE 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