

# Risks

TUC 

*e-bulletin*

Number 411 – 20 June 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 17,000 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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### **Send girls to school not work**

The TUC is calling on consumers to demand that international supply chains making sportswear and goods for the London 2012 Olympics bring an end to girls' child labour, and provide primary education for all children around the world. The union body's report, 'Give girls a chance', was issued on 12 June, the World Day Against Child Labour. It warns that the global economic crisis could impede achievements made recently in reducing child labour, and getting more girls into school. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "Child labour is a scandal and a stain on our civilised values. Young girls should be in school, not at work." He added: "We all need to stand together to insist supply chains stop using child labour. Children shouldn't be making the clothes we wear, the footballs we kick or any of the brands we buy." The report shows that there are 218 million children at work in the world, of whom 126 million are in the worst forms of child labour, such as hazardous work, debt bondage or sexual exploitation. The TUC report also reveals that while less than half of all child workers are girls – totalling about 100 million – they are disproportionately represented in the worst forms of work.

- [TUC news release](#) and report [[pdf](#)]. [ITUC YouTube video report on child labour](#).
- [ILO news release](#) and [World Day Against Child Labour, 12 June](#).

### **Move to control site gangmasters**

Unions are calling for legislation to regulate gangmasters operating in the UK construction industry. The Gangmasters' Licensing Authority, created after the Morecambe Bay cockling disaster, only covers certain sectors such as agriculture and food, but excludes construction. Labour MP Jim Sheridan's 10 minute rule bill proposes extending the legislation to cover construction and is backed by unions in the sector. They say crooked gangmasters are avoiding regulation by moving into the construction industry from the agriculture and food sectors. Bob Blackman, Unite national officer for construction, said: "We are all fully aware of the dangerous environment that our members in the construction industry face. Migrant workers who come to this country for legitimate work are often lured into the twilight world of illegal gangmasters." He added: "Unite has found that those who have suffered under the once poor agricultural working conditions are now experiencing the same problems in the construction industry. Health and safety is essential to those in the building trade and our members have the fundamental right to return safe after a day's work." UCATT general secretary Alan Ritchie said: "If we are going to tackle exploitation and casualisation in the construction industry, it is essential that gangmasters are properly licensed and policed. It is important that the government recognises the ongoing injustices which construction workers face and back this Bill." The Bill will receive its second reading on 16 October.

- [Unite news release](#). [UCATT news release](#). [New Civil Engineer](#). [Construction News](#).

## **HSE wrong on bogus employment deaths**

Construction union UCATT has accused the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of failing to track accurately the deadly impact of bogus self-employment in the sector. It said the watchdog's failure became apparent during an evidence session of the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee last week. Committee member Tom Levitt MP said that despite the HSE having pledged in September 2007 to begin recording whether a fatally injured construction worker was working under the Construction Industry Scheme (CIS), that information was still not being properly processed. UCATT says workers on CIS have all the characteristics of an employee but none of the legal protections, and this amounts to "bogus" self-employment. HSE's chair Judith Hackitt and chief executive Geoffrey Podger gave evidence to the session. Mr Podger said: "In our perspective we have the data we need and we will act on it." However, MP Tom Levitt revealed that in recent answers to Freedom of Information requests submitted by UCATT, HSE said only four CIS construction workers were known to have been killed in 2008, with two other cases impossible to classify. The MP highlighted the case of 20-year-old Sonny Holland, killed in April 2008, whose CIS status was known but not recorded by HSE. UCATT general secretary Alan Ritchie said: "Every year many construction workers needlessly die because of the casualised nature of the industry. The HSE will never properly address the issue while they continue to take an ostrich like attitude to the problem and refuse to address the fact that the way the industry is organised leads to workers being killed and maimed." The union also expressed alarm at Mr Podger's "failure to rule out cuts" in HSE's construction coverage.

- [UCATT news release.](#)

## **RMT warning on Tube maintenance cuts**

Tube union RMT has warned of "potentially disastrous" safety risks over a new £60 million cut in maintenance on the London Underground. The cuts package on the former Metronet lines were presented to tube unions by senior managers this week. The new package of cuts comes on the back of a recent National Audit Office report which identified a £410 million loss to the taxpayer, and the paying down of £1.7 billion in debt, from the collapse of privatised maintenance operator Metronet. The latest package of £60 million in cuts will slash £26.1 million from track and signals, £18.9 million from fleet and trains and £18.5 million from stations on the former Metronet lines. "These are real cuts that will hit track, signals, trains and stations maintenance as well as putting yet more tube staff jobs on the line," RMT general secretary Bob Crow said. "The consequences of these kind of cuts on the underground could be potentially disastrous. Londoners need to wake up to what's going on with the financial crisis on the Underground. These cuts are just the start and if we don't stand up and fight together there will be much more to come as the scale of the funding gap from the collapse of Metronet blows a massive hole in budgets across the tube network."

- [BBC News Online](#). [London Evening Standard](#).

### **Train drivers forced to pee in a bottle**

Staff toilet facilities are so poor on some parts of the rail network, train drivers are forced to urinate in plastic bottles. The revelation, which follows transport minister Lord Adonis' criticism of "the servicing and cleaning of toilets on the trains", comes from Keith Norman, general secretary of the train drivers' union ASLEF. In a new article on the union's website, he writes: "I know freight depots where the toilet facilities consist of a portaloos at the entrance, which can be four miles away. One conference delegate, a passenger train driver, explained that it was normal for drivers in his branch to arm themselves with a plastic bottle when they set out on a turn, and this wasn't for something to drink." He adds: "Perhaps the only hint of light in this mess is that it proves to our less progressive colleagues that fighting for equal opportunities often benefits us all. We argue for toilet facilities for women and the knock-on is an improvement in the facilities for men." Mr Norman outlined one recent success. "One of our women drivers told me last week about complaints she'd made over a decade ago about a women's loo that was unsanitary, unventilated and disgusting. When she'd raised it in the mess room, a few of the men said they didn't know what she was complaining about: it was no different for men- their toilets were disgusting as well! In the end the facilities were improved for both men and women at this depot - which is exactly what I like. You do something for someone else and get a benefit for yourself - so you can feel good about doing yourself a favour." Inability to go to the loo for long periods is linked to a range of chronic health problems.

- [ASLEF online article](#).

### **Paying the price of a vibration injury**

A GMB member has received a £10,000 compensation payout after his hands were left permanently damaged by using vibrating tools at work. Keith Rowley, 55, a fitter from Stourbridge, has the debilitating condition Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS), also known as vibration white finger. His employer General Kinematics Ltd did not admit liability but settled the claim out of court. Keith said: "I first noticed a problem with my hands six years ago. Now they turn white and become painful in cold weather and I have to wear heated gloves. I've worked for General Kinematics for 12 years and during that time I've used vibrating tools on a daily basis." GMB legal administrator Andrea Austin commented: "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." She 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."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#). [Stourbridge News](#).

### **Union safety rep in honours list**

A trade union safety rep has received an MBE for services to health and safety. Unite safety rep Terri Miller, a print finisher who works at De La Rue Security Print in Dunstable, received the honour for services to health and safety in the printing industry. Terri, who is also active in the union at regional and national levels, has been a safety rep for 14 years. She also represents Unite on the national Printing Industry Advisory Committee (PIAC), the joint employer-union body advising the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) board on issues facing the sector. Unite assistant general secretary Tony Burke said Terri is "one of the unsung heroes who works tirelessly on the behalf of her work colleagues and her community." Unite health and safety officer Bud Hudspith added: "Terri has made a major contribution to health and safety in her workplace, and within her company, throughout the union and at a national level within the printing industry. There is no doubt that her work has made a considerable difference to safety in her workplace, and across the industry." TUC general secretary Brendan Barber commented. "Over the years Terri has worked hard to make sure that her colleagues work in the safest possible environment, and has made a major contribution towards improving safety standards in printing that will have had an impact on print firms across the country." He added: "Workplaces where there are safety reps, working with employers to make sure that the risks to staff are minimised and that all potential hazards have been eliminated wherever possible, are undoubtedly the safest places to work in the UK." Terri Miller said: "The award is also for the printing industry and my union Unite who have supported me in many things. I would encourage anyone to become interested in health and safety and become a safety rep." The 46-year-old added: "My dad is over the moon as he is a former union rep."

- [Unite news release](#). [TUC news release](#). [Print Week](#). [Dunstable Today](#).

### *Other news*

#### **Council loses £1m sickness case**

A council has lost its High Court case against a former managing director after claiming she withheld a history of depressive illness. Cheltenham Borough Council was suing Christine Laird, 52, for £1m. Mrs Laird was appointed in 2002, but left in 2005 on an ill-health pension after taking sick leave on full pay. Andrew North, chief executive of Cheltenham Borough Council, said the council was disappointed with the judgment. He said: "While the outcome is not what we had hoped for, we felt we had a duty to take action to recover losses for what we felt was a disastrous time for the council. Had the council known Mrs Laird's medical history it would most probably not have employed her and incurred the costs it has." Mrs Laird told the High Court in March that she believed the appointment was "unconditional" and there had been no

requirement for a medical report. She said she had given accurate information about her past. Mr Justice Hamblen dismissed the council's action, but also rejected a counterclaim by Mrs Laird for damages. Mental health charity Mind said the ruling serves as an important reminder to employers about the importance of providing adequate support to people with mental health problems in the workplace. Mind's chief executive Paul Farmer said: "This ruling provides reassurance to the one in four people in this country who will at some point have a mental health problem that they will not be penalised by their employer for being unwell. Mental illness is an illness like any other and employers need to do more to understand the issues people face and provide reasonable adjustments that help people to stay in their job."

- [Mind news release](#). [BBC News Online](#).

### **New concern at lax lead standards**

The UK's occupational exposure limits for lead are leaving workers at risk of serious chronic diseases. Citing evidence that even a very low level of blood lead is a significant health risk at any age, the US-based Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) is recommending a change in the case definition of elevated blood lead levels in adults. In a vote at the CSTE's June 2009 conference in Buffalo, the organisation approved a proposal to consider blood levels of 10 micrograms per 100 millilitres ( $\mu\text{g}/100\text{ml}$ ) or more in adults as "elevated." The current UK action level for blood lead in male workers is 50  $\mu\text{g}/100\text{ml}$ , with workers not suspended until the level hits 60  $\mu\text{g}/100\text{ml}$ . UK safety watchdog the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) maintains health effects are not normally seen below 80  $\mu\text{g}/100\text{ml}$ , adding that serious effects "rarely occur" below 100  $\mu\text{g}/100\text{ml}$ . But CSTE says studies show that blood lead levels as low as 10  $\mu\text{g}/100\text{ml}$  contribute to an elevation in blood pressure and attendant health risks, including stroke. It adds that low blood lead levels also are associated with an increase in mortality from heart disease, decreased kidney function and changes in cognition (mental performance). Official tests in the UK show each year over 5,000 workers are found to have over the 10  $\mu\text{g}/100\text{ml}$  level of lead in their blood. Many other workers exposed to lead are likely to go untested – a European study in the early 1990s estimated 250,000 workers in Britain were exposed to lead at work, however fewer than 9,000 are tested each year. CSTE president Mel Kohn said: "While we often think of lead poisoning as a health concern in children and pregnant women, we need to address how lead poisoning is affecting adults, from exposure in the workplace and from hobbies such as target shooting." CSTE says the risk of lead poisoning is especially pronounced among workers in certain industries including lead refining and smelting, construction work involving paint removal, demolition and maintenance of outdoor metal structures such as bridges and water towers, and battery manufacturing and recycling.

- [Earth Times](#). [Sun Herald](#)

### **Nanotubes can attack the immune system**

Inhaling carbon nanotubes can suppress the immune system, according to new research. The findings raise possible health concerns for those working in the manufacture of the materials. The alert follows earlier animal studies suggesting carbon nanotubes (CNTs) may be capable of causing mesothelioma – a cancer normally associated with asbestos exposure. Nanotubes and asbestos fibres share a similar structure. “In the new study on mice, researchers found that inhaling nanotubes affected the function of T cells, a type of white blood cell that organises the immune system to fight infections. One of the take-home messages is you have to consider not just effects in the lung if it's something you inhale but also effects outside of the lung,” said Jacob McDonald of the Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who led the work. “These nanotubes appear to have an interesting, subtle yet significant response, systemically, on different organ systems that warrants careful consideration.” Writing in *Nature Nanotechnology*, the researchers said the main risk was to workers, not consumers, with anyone working in carbon nanotube production and processing more likely to be exposed to larger amounts over a longer period. “Immune dysfunction is a concern for those who work in this industry,” they wrote. In response to the earlier cancer alert, the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) said carbon nanotubes were “substances of very high concern” and recommended a precautionary approach. Its March 2009 information sheet noted: “Although there is uncertainty about the risks of exposure to CNTs, the regulatory response is to take a precautionary approach.” It added: “If their use cannot be avoided, HSE expects a high level of control to be used.”

- JD McDonald and others. Mechanisms for how inhaled multiwalled carbon nanotubes suppress systemic immune function in mice, *Nature Nanotechnology*. Published online: 14 June 2009. doi:10.1038/nnano.2009.151 [[abstract](#)]. [The Guardian](#).
- Risk management of carbon nanotubes, HSE information sheet, March 2009 [[pdf](#)].

### **You may never know its nano**

You may never know a product contains nanomaterials, because any mention is fast disappearing from product labels. Top experts addressing a meeting last week of consumer groups from the EU and US said some products containing nanoparticles do not mention this on their labels, while other firms are falsely claiming to have enhanced their products by using nanotechnology. Dr Andrew Maynard, chief science adviser to the US Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies at the Woodrow Wilson Center, has collated an inventory of products currently on the market that manufacturers claim contain nanotechnology. “We have seen some companies drop the 'nano' claim while continuing to use nanotechnology. This suggests nanotechnology is going underground,” he told the Brussels conference. Sue Davis, chief policy officer at UK consumer advocacy group Which?, said data are limited and expressed concern that companies are reluctant to engage with consumers on the issue. Davis called for mandatory reporting to combat the lack of information, as voluntary codes do not work. Jennifer Sass of the US-based Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) said workplace procedures should be set to prevent exposure to staff and patients, and to prevent environmental releases. She added

that regulators should evaluate the potential hazards of nanomaterials as distinct from normal scale materials.

- [TACD conference presentations](#). [Euractiv.com](#)

### **No HSE prosecution after nuke near disaster**

Questions have been raised about a decision by the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear arm not to prosecute a nuclear power firm that narrowly and seemingly by chance averted a nuclear disaster. On Sunday 7 January 2007, one of the contractors working on decommissioning the Sizewell A nuclear power station on the Suffolk coast was in the laundry room when he noticed cooling water leaking on to the floor from the pond that holds the reactor's highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel. As much as 40,000 gallons of radioactive water spilled out of a 15ft long split in a pipe, some leaking into the North Sea. By the time of the next scheduled safety patrol, the pond level would have dipped far enough to expose the nuclear fuel rods – potentially causing them to overheat and catch fire sending a plume of radioactive contamination along the coastline. After exhaustive investigations, neither the HSE's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII), the UK nuclear safety watchdog, nor the Environment Agency, the country's pollution watchdog, decided to prosecute Magnox South, the plant's operator, partly because of the firm's response to the incident. However, an interim report into the incident by the NII, put into the public domain this week following a request under the Freedom of Information Act, said the contaminated water had found its own way into storm drains and from there into the sea. The interim report also suggested that lack of staff resources at the NII was a factor in the decision not to prosecute. An independent report for the Shut Down Sizewell Campaign concluded that NII's own criteria required the serving of an improvement notice and "most likely" the launching of a prosecution. Dr John Large, the author of the independent report and who made the request for the NII interim report, said if it had not been for the "fortuitous" presence in an adjacent laundry area of a contractor, who had reported flooding, then the leakage could have completely drained the cooling pond, uncovered the spent fuel and, in all probability, resulted in a fuel fire with an off-site airborne release of highly radioactive fission products. Last year, Hazards magazine revealed that in 2004, HSE had 148 frontline nuclear inspectors. By 2007, the number had fallen to 134, dropping further still in 2008.

- [Lowestoft Journal](#). [The Guardian](#). [Where is the justice?](#), Hazards magazine, number 104, October-December 2008.

### **Firm fined after engineer is electrocuted**

A Hatfield firm has been fined £35,000 after a young father was electrocuted. SF (UK) Ltd, the engineering arm of British Gas, was also ordered to pay £65,000 costs at St Albans Crown Court. On 7 June 2005, SF (UK) Ltd engineer Ricky Cronin was attending a residential call-out. While repairing a washing machine motor fault, 30-year-old Mr Cronin made contact with live parts after removing

the back panel and was electrocuted as the power was left on. Mr Cronin was only in his fifth week of employment with the company, although he did have previous experience. As part of the induction programme he was accompanied on the job by a more experienced colleague. A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that the induction training provided by SF (UK) Ltd was insufficient, and there was a lack of adequate risk assessments for the task. HSE inspector Rauf Ahmed said: "I hope this tragic incident makes it clear to employers, large and small, that they need to take positive action to manage risks and ensure staff receive adequate training when starting in a new job. A significant number of incidents involving electricity at work are reported each year and sadly some of those hurt lose their lives as a result of their injuries."

- [HSE news release](#) and [electricity at work](#) and [risk assessment](#) webpages. [Welwyn and Hatfield Times](#).

### **Stockline blast victim gets £250k payout**

A survivor of the Stockline disaster has been awarded £250,000 damages. An explosion at the Glasgow plastics factory five years ago - which caused the building to collapse - killed nine people and left 30 injured. Spray painter Gordon Bell, 48, was trapped under the rubble for 15 minutes before managing to claw his way free. He suffered a significant hand injury and still has nightmares about the "traumatic" tragedy, a court heard. He suffered flashbacks and nightmares in the wake of the explosion. Advocate Louise Milligan told the Court of Session: "Clearly, it was an explosion that has caused huge repercussions." She said the tip of Gordon's right thumb was left hanging off after the blast. Part of the thumb was later amputated and he had injuries to other fingers and facial cuts. Miss Milligan said Gordon has been assessed as being 25 per cent disabled and is unable to return to his employment. ICL Plastics and ICL Techs were fined £400,000 at the High Court in Glasgow after admitting health and safety failures. It is understood the report of an independent inquiry into the blast will be presented to ministers in Scotland and Westminster sometime in July.

- [Scotsman](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Daily Record](#). [ICL/Stockline campaign website](#).

## *International News*

### **Global: Paid sick leave benefits business**

Paid sick leave is not the burden claimed by business and does not lead to higher unemployment, a major international review has found. The study by US-based think tank the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) examined the connection between government-mandated paid sick days and the national rate of unemployment in 22 highly developed countries. John Schmitt, a senior economist at CEPR and co-author of 'Paid sick days don't cause unemployment', said: "Despite frequent claims to the contrary from some in the business community, we found no correlation between paid sick days and unemployment."

Guaranteeing paid sick days does not put countries at a competitive disadvantage." The report instead found sick leave policies could pay off economically by restricting the costly spread of contagious diseases. Dr Jody Heymann, director of the Institute for Health and Social Policy at Canada's McGill University and a co-author of the report, said: "The economic costs of a serious flu outbreak are potentially enormous," she said. "The lack of paid sick days in the United States puts Americans at substantially greater risk of contagious diseases—from the flu, which kills thousands annually to diarrheal disease, respiratory infections, and the threat of new diseases like the H1N1 flu virus." Supporters of paid sick leave point out that 19 of the 20 most competitive countries in the world guarantee paid sick days - and the United States is the odd one out. Numerous studies show "presenteeism", turning into work when sick, is counterproductive because it hinders recovery and puts healthy workers at risk.

- [CEPR news release](#). Paid sick days don't cause unemployment, CEPR [pdf]. [AFL-CIO Now](#).

### **Italy: Deaths reignite workplace safety anger**

The deaths of two Italian workers this week after entering a water purification system has reignited anger over the country's appalling workplace safety record. The two men, aged 36 and 40, were working in Riva Ligure and are thought to have died from inhaling toxic gases after entering the waste water tank without safety equipment. A third man was taken to hospital after trying to rescue his colleagues. They were part of a four-person team working for CIEM, a subcontractor employed by municipal authorities to clean water purification systems in the province of Imperia. The deaths sparked renewed controversy in a country that has seen recent national demonstrations over workplace fatalities. Some of the largest demonstrations have been about the deaths of seven workers in a 2007 fire at an Italian metal plant owned by the multinational ThyssenKrupp factory in 2007. The controversy prompted the previous centre-left government to introduce harsher penalties for safety crimes, however Silvio Berlusconi's centre-right government is now seeking to water down the measures. Following the latest workplace deaths, opposition MPs urged the government to rethink the proposed amendments. Cesare Damiano, work spokesperson for the opposition Democratic Party, called for a "culture of safety involving prevention, rules and restrictions." He added: "We cannot let our guard down on the issue of workplace security, which is why the Democratic Party is fighting to prevent the proposals introduced by the government, which would weaken workers' protection." According to ANMIL, an association representing injured workers, this problem is compounded by the fact there are not nearly enough official health and safety inspectors to check regulations are implemented. The association said at current staffing levels each Italian business would receive a visit once every 23 years. Italy has an annual work deaths toll several times that of the UK, where inspection frequency is about once every 14.5 years.

- [Life in Italy](#).

## **Ireland: Road deaths linked to work vehicles**

More than one in every three road deaths in Ireland involves a work vehicle, a conference has heard. Up to 100 people who die in road crashes each year are drivers of vehicles being used for work – and the contribution could be up to 5 per cent higher if deaths in off-road vehicles such as those used on construction sites are included. The conference, jointly hosted by the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and the safety enforcer the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), heard that vehicles were the biggest cause of work-related deaths and a significant contributor to work-related injuries. Details of a new awareness campaign for employers and a range of measures to tackle the problem of commercial operators who fail to meet safety criteria were also given. According to HSA chief executive Martin O'Halloran worker deaths and injuries are not confined to buses and lorries. People who drive company cars in Ireland have 30-40 per cent more collisions than other drivers and the risk increases for those who have to travel more than 40,000km per year. RSA chief executive Noel Brett said the safety agencies had developed guidelines for employers, providing an overview of their obligations under law.

- [Irish Times](#).

## **Spain: Government to punish 'barbaric bakery'**

A Spanish bakery accused of barbaric behaviour towards an illegal worker will face "the full weight of the law," the government has vowed. The statement came amid shock over the case of a Bolivian worker whose arm was cut off in an accident at work. Bosses at the bakery in Valencia have been accused of dumping him 100 metres from the hospital entrance and throwing the severed limb in a rubbish bin. Spanish trade union Comisiones Obreras (CC.OO) has lodged a complaint against the bakery. The union claims that in the early hours of 28 May, the arm of Franns Rilles was severed in a kneading machine while he was working. It was allegedly dumped in a rubbish bin and only discovered by police the following day, by which time it was too late to reattach it. Mr Rilles was allegedly warned by the son of the bakery owner not to tell doctors where his injury had taken place, and was left a distance of some 100 metres from the hospital entrance, while bleeding heavily. He was assisted into the hospital by a passerby. Mr Rilles, 33, worked 12-hour days at the bakery, earning 23 euros a day (£20; \$32) under no contract, for about a year and a half, the CC.OO said. Work and immigration minister Celestino Corbacho vowed that "the weight of the law" would come down on the bakery if the allegations are substantiated. The bakery has reportedly been shut down and two bosses detained. Press reports say the government has now given Mr Rilles the legal right of residence in Spain because of "exceptional" circumstances, principally that he will be unable to work again.

- [BBC News Online](#). [Think Spain](#).

## *ACTION*

### **Help South Africa's Sappi workers!**

Sappi, the global pulp and paper giant, has suspended 19 shop stewards in South Africa who stood up for a worker who refused dangerous work. Their union CEPPWAWU and the global union federation ICEM are asking for your support in urging management at the Enstra mill to reinstate the workers and drop disciplinary proceedings. Other workers are also facing disciplinary charges after the union took industrial action on the safety issue, but no longer have a union rep on site to represent them. The union and ICEM are asking you to "write to Sappi and tell the company to drop this ugly dispute and correct the wrongs that have gotten out of hand at Enstra." ICEM adds that it "considers the Sappi/Enstra situation at present a serious violation of basic trade union rights."

- [ICEM briefing](#). Send an email letter of protest to Sappi CEO [Ralph J Boëttger](#) and copy it to [ICEM](#).

## *Events and Courses*

### **CCA safety enforcement conference, 3 July 2009, London**

A Centre for Corporate Accountability conference in London on Friday 3 July will examine directors' duties, corporate manslaughter and safety enforcement issues. Speakers include TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson, safety minister Lord McKenzie of Luton, Linzi Herbertson of Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK) and others from unions, HSE and safety and legal bodies.

- [CCA conference](#), Friday, 3 July 2009, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London. Cost: £50 (trade union representatives); £100 (public bodies); £150 (lawyers, private companies); £20 (unemployed). Registration programme [[pdf](#)].

### **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](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