

# Risks

TUC 

*e-bulletin*

Number 429 – 24 October 2009

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MAGAZINE**



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**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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## Judge rejects SSE's 'paranoid' terror claims

A power company has failed in a High Court bid to use the Prevention of Terrorism Act against a dismissed worker in an attempt to stop anti-blacklisting protests outside its power station construction site. An injunction was sought this week by Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) to end the twice-weekly action in support of sacked Unite member Steve Acheson outside the Fiddlers Ferry power station, Warrington. Rejecting the firm's call for an injunction, Justice Mann described the SSE legal case as "lacking any evidence at all" and as "fanciful bordering on paranoid". Lawyers for SSE had claimed the protesters were committing trespass and said Steve Acheson's actions could affect the nation's power supply. The dispute at the power station started in December 2008, when the electrician was dismissed from the project. Steve complained that he was deliberately targeted because he was an active trade union member and began the protest action to support his case for reinstatement. After the Unite-backed legal victory on 21 October at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, Steve commented: "If this injunction had gone through it would have had a devastating impact upon trade unions' ability to organise. I have been boosted by the support I have received from so many people. This is a defeat for corporate bullies." He added: "Tomorrow I will be back at Fiddlers Ferry, fighting the blacklist and fighting to get my job back". Full costs were awarded against SSE. Acheson was one of more than 3,000 workers whose name appeared on an illegal blacklist used by over 40 major construction firms and that was uncovered by the Information Commissioner's Office earlier this year. Unite assistant general secretary, Les Bayliss, said: "Scottish and Southern tried to cook up a fictional story to try to prevent a Unite member from holding a peaceful protest against blacklisting in construction outside Fiddler's Ferry power station. This was a blatant attack on the rights we hold dear in a democratic society and we are pleased that the judge saw right through Scottish and Southern's bogus arguments."

- [BBC News Online](#). [Blacklist blog](#). [Manchester Evening News](#).
- [Unite news release](#).

## Push to strengthen blacklist law

Construction union UCATT has enlisted the help of a group of Labour MPs in a move to pressure the government to beef up the draft regulations designed to outlaw blacklisting for trade union activities. The MPs agreed to take this action at the 20 October parliamentary launch of 'Ruined Lives', a UCATT-commissioned academic report that argues the proposed anti-blacklisting regulations need major improvements ([Risks 424](#)). Report author Professor Keith said the draft regulations were "hopeless and inadequate". UCATT general secretary Alan Ritchie told the launch how union health and safety reps were especially targeted by companies. He said it was common for them to be laid off soon after taking on the role of union safety rep, with alternative work subsequently being hard to obtain. He said: "The regulations don't just have to be watertight, they have to be airtight so the employers can't wriggle out of them." UCATT says the government

is due to publish the anti-blacklisting regulations before Christmas – trade paper Contract Journal reported on 14 October “the new regulations are due to be published as a Statutory Instrument within the next few days”. The Labour MPs backing the campaign to strengthen the law have agreed to ask parliamentary questions, lobby the Department for Business (BIS) and to use parliamentary scrutiny to ensure the regulations are strengthened. An early day motion tabled by Mick Clapham MP seeks MPs backing for the UCATT demands to improve the law.

- [UCATT news release](#). [Blacklist blog](#). [Blacklisting ruins lives, EDM 2093](#). [Contract Journal](#).

### **Driven to exhaustion in vans and buses**

The rules governing the working hours of bus, coach and van drivers are so out of date that many drivers have fewer breaks than office workers, the TUC has warned. In an October submission to a Department for Transport review, the TUC said long hours working is a direct cause of driver fatigue, which contributed to one in five road accidents last year. Excessive working time can also cause stress, back pain and increase the risk of heart disease and mental illness, it said. Despite the clear road safety and health risks associated with drivers working long hours, one in four bus drivers work more than 49.5 hours a week, while one in four van drivers work more than 48 hours a week. The TUC submission argues that the 1968 Transport Act rules are so out of date that some drivers get less protection against long hours working than staff in shops, offices and factories, who are protected by the 1998 Working Time Regulations. Van drivers have no minimum entitlements to breaks, for example. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: “Long hours working can damage the health of any workers but the risks for drivers are particularly serious. Drivers forced to work extra long shifts are more likely to get tired at the wheel and are at risk of being involved in road accidents.” He added: “The rules governing drivers’ hours are 30 years old and need updating. By protecting drivers from excessive hours and allowing them more breaks, the government can improve the health of drivers and help to prevent road accidents.”

- [TUC news release](#).

### **Bully hell for young working women**

Public sector union UNISON has teamed up with Company Magazine, the leading young women’s monthly, to launch a ‘Bully busters’ campaign. A poll to mark the start of the campaign found 1-in-3 young working women had been bullied at work, with 66 per cent of those respondents who had been bullied in the last six months saying the problem was ongoing. The most common bully is an older woman in a more senior professional position, the survey found. The majority of bullied women reported suffering from anger, mental stress, depression, lowered confidence and insomnia. Dave Prentis, UNISON’s general secretary, said: “This shocking survey shows that the bullying and harassment of young women in

the workplace is spiralling out of control. More women are working now than ever before, yet one in three young women are victimised and suffer in silence. Many people do not realise that a drip feed of bullying behaviour can be as devastating as a major incident." The union leader added: "UNISON is committed to banning the bully, as it is important for young women to know that joining a union is crucial." Company editor, Victoria White, said: "Company is proud to have teamed with UNISON to raise awareness of workplace bullying and to encourage young women to stand up for themselves and stop this kind of harassment going at work." Backing the campaign, Sarah Lewis, a 27-year-old management accountant at a hospital, said: "My boss enjoyed having control and power over me. This included having to tell her when I was leaving the department on every occasion, including using the toilet." She said as the result of this experience "I decided to become a UNISON branch secretary to help others. The hospital has since changed its bullying and harassment policy to include better ways of dealing with bullying, like mediation."

- [UNISON news release](#) and related Company Magazine article [[pdf](#)].

### **Firefighters feel 'alarming' discontent**

Firefighters' union FBU has criticised the government over funding for the service after a study showed an "alarming" picture of discontent in the service. An FBU poll of 2,000 members revealed that most fear insufficient or inadequate training is compromising their safety. In the last two years, 18 per cent - nearly one in five - said they had been injured. Firefighters working wholetime duty systems were the most likely to have been injured (23 per cent), compared to 17 per cent of retained firefighters. A majority of respondents said they did not feel the government valued them. They were also critical of plans to close all 46 emergency fire control rooms in England and replace them with eight outside London. The FBU said the survey showed its members believed the move would result in the service responding less well to incidents, and would make staff less safe. Asked what were the four best ways of spending money on improving the fire and rescue service, almost nine out of 10 said more training, almost three quarters said more front-line personnel, and six out of 10 said modern and safe personal radios. Just one in 33 suggested moving to regional control centres. FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "This is the authentic voice of the men and women who save lives every day, and it is telling the government, not just to change course, but to change its whole approach."

- [FBU news release](#). [Yorkshire Post](#).

### **Back injury costs driver his job**

A delivery driver who had to leave his job after injuring his spine at work fears he will never find alternative employment. Unite member John Atkin, 49, from Sunderland, received a £22,000 out of court payout after suffering the injury while working for Johnston Press. He was off work for eight months before being forced to leave the

company. He was delivering newspapers and leaflets in Northumberland when the incident happened in February 2007. When the load shifted in the back of the van, he had to rearrange around the papers in the confined, awkward space. This caused injuries to his cervical spine, affecting his upper back and right arm and shoulder. He has been warned to avoid lifting. John had pre-existing problems with his spine although this was not causing him to suffer any symptoms. The injury brought on his symptoms by five to ten years. He said: "The union had complained about the way the vans were packed for some time. When my accident happened I decided to claim compensation because I thought it might make my employer sit up and take notice of our complaints. I understand that the problem has now been solved. Unfortunately it's too late for me." Unite regional secretary Davey Hall commented: "Mr Atkin is now looking for alternative work in what is a difficult climate for job hunters, particularly for those who are limited in the type of work they can undertake. Hopefully this compensation will give him some breathing space until he is able to find appropriate work."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

### **Railway worker suffers vibration injury**

A member of the rail union RMT has received £10,000 in compensation after his hands were permanently damaged by prolonged use of vibrating tools. The 50-year-old track worker from Sheffield, whose name has not been released, was left with the debilitating condition Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) as a result of his work for Jarvis Rail and other companies since 1978. He used vibrating tools like rail disc cutters, impact wrenches and hammer guns while working on the railway lines. He first began to have symptoms in the mid-1990s but did not realise it was caused by his work. He was not diagnosed with the condition until 2005 and now no longer works with vibrating equipment. The condition still gives him pain and working with his hands outdoors causes him some difficulty. Jarvis Rail admitted liability and settled the claim following court proceedings. The RMT member said: "If my bosses had spotted I was in danger of developing this condition earlier, maybe something could have been done to stop it from worsening. Now that I have been diagnosed, I no longer work with vibrating tools but the damage has already been done." RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "HAVS is a widespread hazard for our members working on the tracks where power tools are often used to make repairs. We are pleased that in this case our member has been compensated for his injury and that his employer has been held to account."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

### **Train drivers go slow for safety**

Train drivers have been instructed by their union to slow down on some automated crossings until Network Rail puts new safety technology in place. ASLEF last week instructed its members to

reduce train speed over 'Automatic Open Crossings Locally monitored' (AOCL) to 20 miles per hour until Network Rail introduces obstacle detection technology and barriers. The union says it is acting in the interests of both train drivers and members of the travelling public. The move followed "numerous incidents on such crossings over time, most recently last month in Halkirk which resulted in the loss of three lives and caused significant shock and trauma to the train driver," the union said. Keith Norman, ASLEF general secretary, commented: "Network Rail's unwillingness to invest in vital obstacle detection measures at level crossings has led to this decision... By calling on our members to reduce speeds to 20mph over crossings, ASLEF members can safeguard the health and safety of both train drivers and the travelling public."

- [ASLEF news release](#).

### *Other news*

#### **Tories promise to 'tame' HSE**

A Conservative government would allow firms to opt-out from Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspections, with qualifying firms allowed to bar the watchdog from their premises. Instead the Conservative Party is recommending an audit system modelled on the financial sector controls that gave us Enron, Madoff and that nearly brought the entire banking system to its knees. A Tory policy document, 'Regulation in the post-bureaucratic age', trailed by shadow business secretary Ken Clarke at the party's conference, says "the powers of government inspectors will be drastically curbed" with firms allowed to arrange "their own, externally audited inspections instead." Its aim of "taming regulators" would include "replacing regulator-run public teams of inspectors with a model closer to financial controls and audits." The policy paper adds: "Well run companies would employ professionally qualified experts in, for example health and safety or food safety, in the same way as they use accountants for a financial function to ensure that the correct internal processes are in place, and that reported results are reliable." The Conservative policy document adds: "And organisation which has undertaken a co-regulation review and has published an independently audited statement that it satisfies the required regulatory outcomes, would be allowed to refuse entry to official inspectors in anything other than an emergency." A similar system in the US, on which the Tory proposals appear to be based, has been criticised for being ineffective and having high administration costs. In June, concerns that audits were fixed and oversight was minimal led the US safety watchdog OSHA to launch an investigation "to address problems identified in its Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP)". Acting head of OSHA, Jordan Barab, commented: "Our evaluation of these programs in the context of OSHA's limited resources will help ensure that OSHA will be able to reprioritise these resources in the most effective manner."

- Regulation in the post-bureaucratic age, Conservative Party [\[pdf\]](#).

## Unions slam 'disastrous' Tory plans

Unions have said Conservative Party plans to allow firms to opt-out from official health and safety oversight will be "disastrous" for health and safety. Prospect, the union that represents Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspectors and specialists, said health and safety inspections and firm law enforcement are the hallmarks of a civilised society and have contributed to the UK having one of the best workplace health and safety records in the world. Sarah Page, the union's national safety officer, said: "Is Ken Clarke seriously saying that employers in these industries should regulate their own health and safety arrangements and close the door to our protectors?" She added: "Clarke's proposals are a recipe for avoidable deaths and injuries at work and catastrophic events such as Buncefield." Alan Ritchie, general secretary of construction union UCATT, said: "These latest Conservative proposals are very disturbing. It would prove disastrous in an industry like construction." Unite said it was concerned externally audited inspections would not be backed up by proper "enforcement powers." The union's national officer for construction, Bob Blackman, said: "The Tories should be focusing on preventing accidents and deaths rather than looking at ways of saving money for the employers. The HSE is not perfect, but at least it is trusted by the workforce and carries 'enforcement powers'." He said the policy "goes to show the Tories' true colours," adding: "They are the party of the bosses and by cutting 'red tape' for employers they will be putting the lives and health" of workers at risk.

- [Unite news release](#). [Environmental Health News](#). [Contract Journal](#). [Construction News](#)

## Regulation is popular and lifesaving

Nearly two-thirds of people in Britain agree they benefit from regulation in their everyday lives and 70 per cent think the benefits of regulation outweigh the burdens, according to a new report from the Department for Business (BIS). Commenting on 'Better regulation, better benefits: getting the balance right', better regulation minister Ian Lucas said "regulation makes a vital contribution to Britain's economic growth, protection of the environment and health and well-being of its citizens." The reports shows regulation has "wide ranging and significant impacts" not only on the economy but virtually every aspect of our lives, the government said. The report notes "health and safety regulation changes business behaviour. Fatalities decreased by threequarters and injuries at work have fallen by 70 per cent since 1974," when the Health and Safety at Work Act was introduced. The report notes: "Regulations add value where they change behaviour. Changing behaviour means ensuring that organisations or individuals comply with these regulations. Academic experts agree that compliance cannot be predicted just by reading rules, but is strongly affected by the motivations of regulated businesses and the approaches to offering support to comply and to enforce them." Research for the report found "70-85 per cent agreed 'overall the benefits outweigh the burdens' for environmental standards on air/water, food hygiene, health and safety and smokefree law."

- [BIS news release](#). Better regulation, better benefits: Getting the balance right, BIS, October 2009 [[pdf](#)]. [TUC Touchstone blog](#).

### **Mother dies after asbestos fight**

A woman who battled for two years for a payout after contracting an asbestos-related cancer has died a day after a judge confirmed she should be paid £240,000. Dianne Willmore, 49, from north Wales, passed away on 15 October from malignant mesothelioma. She inhaled asbestos as a pupil at Huyton's Bowring School in Merseyside in the 1970s. In a landmark ruling, the High Court decided that Mrs Willmore was entitled to the cash because Knowsley Council "knew or ought to have known that any more than minimal exposure to asbestos dust was foreseeably hazardous." It is the first time a case relating to exposure in a school has been found in favour of a pupil. Her solicitor, Ruth Davies from John Pickering and Partners, said: "She was a very courageous, bubbly woman who had to face a lot to find justice." The mother-of-two, who died within hours of her solicitor phoning her with news of her High Court victory, managed to attend much of the hearing despite the severity of her condition. Mrs Willmore was diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma in 2007 and in July 2009 Liverpool High Court found Knowsley Council liable for damages for negligently exposing her to asbestos fibres while she was a pupil. The local authority then appealed against this decision and it went to the Court of Appeal. The hearing was heard on 14 October, where the judge said the council did not have a case to pursue. After losing its appeal, the council issued a statement saying it was "extremely surprised and disappointed", adding "we have requested leave to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court."

- [John Pickering and Partners Solicitors news release](#). [IBAS statement](#). [Liverpool Echo](#). [BBC News Online](#) and [Radio 4 Today programme news item](#). [Daily Mirror](#).
- [Asbestos in Schools website](#).

### **Fears for pleural plaques action**

A draft law that would reinstate compensation for workers with pleural plaques caused by asbestos exposure at work has successfully completed its third Commons reading, and has now been passed onto the House of Lords. However, hopes the private members' bill will complete its parliamentary progress and become law are fading as the parliamentary session ends in a month, meaning the proposal is likely to run out of time. The government has been accused of "foot dragging" on the issue, as following a consultation it has been promising an announcement a pleural plaques for months. Labour MP Mick Clapham commented: "There is just not the time now. It will get into the Lords and get lost in the Lords. Something as important as this really needed government backing." He added: "I am very disappointed that here we are 15 months after the consultation and still without a decision from the Ministry of Justice." The Damages (Asbestos-Related Conditions) Bill was drawn up by Hendon MP Andrew Dismore to overturn the October 2007 Law Lords ruling, which stops pleural plaques sufferers who were exposed to asbestos from making claims against

insurance companies. Justice minister Bridget Prentice told MPs last week that the government was still unable to spell out its position on the way forward for compensation. She allowed Mr Dismore's Bill to go to the Lords but made it clear that the government was prepared to step in and block it if necessary. Unions and asbestos groups are to hold a 28 October protest outside of the Houses of Parliament to press for pleural plaques compensation.

- [Yorkshire Evening Post. Damages \(Asbestos-Related Conditions\) Bill. UCATT news release.](#)
- Justice for Asbestos Victims: Demonstration and lobby to restore pleural plaques compensation, assemble College Green, Houses of Parliament, Westminster, London at 1.30pm, Wednesday 28 October 2009.

### **Store fined for horrific facial injuries**

A supermarket giant has been fined after one of its staff lost half his face in an accident as he arrived for work. Morrisons was fined £172,000 for health and safety offences and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £16,681 following a hearing at Chester Crown Court. Kevin Brookshaw, 52, had worked as a stock replenisher at the Crewe store for almost five years before suffering the "staggering" injury on 6 December 2006. He decided to fill up at the Morrisons petrol station at the start of his night shift. As he approached the safety barrier it suddenly swung across and smashed through the passenger side of the windscreen and into his face. He underwent a series of operations for his facial injuries and remained in a critical care unit for three weeks. The injuries, which include the loss of one eye, have left Mr Brookshaw unable to talk and he will never be able to eat or swallow again. He is fed overnight by a gastric tube and has to write down what he wants to say. Deirdre Healy, the partner at Pannone law firm represented Mr Brookshaw, said: "Morrisons have admitted liability regarding their lack of a secure system for the barrier." She added the firm had taken action to remedy the problem with the barriers but said "their retrospective action does not alter the fact that Kevin has suffered staggering injuries and his life and those of his family have been dramatically altered."

- [The Sentinel.](#)

### **Power cables cause massive burns**

A scaffolder suffered burns to 52 per cent of his body and had to have his heart re-started when a pole he was carrying hit a 66,000 volt overhead power line. Manor Homes (Midlands) Ltd and G Wright Scaffolding of Redditch were both fined after pleading guilty to safety charges following the incident in November 2007. The court heard how three workers arrived at the site to dismantle scaffolding. The injured man Ian Maxwell, 39, who worked for the scaffolding firm, was removing a 6 metre guard rail, 4 metres above the ground, when it made contact with the 66,000 volt overhead cable. He was removed from the scaffold platform by firefighters and flown to hospital where he was treated for serious burns and

other injuries. Manor Homes (Midlands) Ltd was fined £11,985 and ordered to pay £3,000 costs at Redditch Magistrates Court. G Wright Scaffolding Ltd was fined £5,985 plus £1,500 costs. Gary Wright, the director of the scaffold firm, was fined £5,985 and £1,500 costs. HSE inspector Tariq Khan said: "Mr Maxwell is very lucky to be alive. He was let down by a system of work that failed to take account of the danger posed by the live overhead cables. Work close to overhead cables should be avoided but where this is unavoidable then a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks needs to be carried out and a safe system of work devised with the assistance of the owners of the electricity cables." He added: "Electricity can also arc or 'flashover' small distances, so direct contact with electricity cables is not always necessary to result in an incident. This case should act as a warning to all those who have to work close to live cables such as those in agriculture, construction and quarrying where scaffold poles, vehicles and cranes are used."

- [HSE news release](#). [Contract Journal](#).

### **HSE issues site falls warning**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is urging employers to ensure their workers are protected when working at height after a man fell from the first floor of a building he was working on, suffering life-threatening injuries. The man was using a power saw at Barnfields Industrial Estate in Leek, Staffordshire, when he fell through the side of the building to the ground on 30 October last year. An investigation showed the walls of the building had been removed and there was an inadequately positioned steel girder around the sides. G Baskerville Ltd pleaded guilty at Newcastle-under-Lyme Magistrates Court last week to a health and safety offence. The company was fined £8,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,000. HSE inspector Guy Dale said: "Although there was a horizontal steel girder around the sides of the building, there were still substantial gaps and there was a significant risk that other workers could also have fallen four metres to the ground below. The injured party sustained serious injuries from the fall. He had to be sedated for three weeks and spent a further three weeks in hospital. At one stage his injuries were believed to be life threatening." He warned: "It is vital that if workers have to work at height that there are adequate barriers erected to prevent them from falling."

- [HSE news release](#).

## *International News*

### **USA: DuPont sued over asbestos in Argentina**

Chemical giant DuPont exposed workers in Argentina to asbestos until the late 1990s despite knowing the risks of the material, according to three lawsuits filed in the US. The lawsuits came from former workers at a Lycra spandex plant in Mercedes, Argentina, that was part of DuPont until the sale of its textile unit in 2004. DuPont knew that exposure to asbestos could harm workers as

early as 1964, the complaints said, but the company continued to use asbestos in the heat pipes and machinery of its Argentina facilities until the late 1990s. The workers, Cristian Dematei, Juan Carlos Laborda and Ceferino Ramirez, are represented by the US law firm Jacobs & Crumplar. The law firm said more lawsuits would follow. Dematei, who worked at the facility for 11 years, suffers from asbestosis, a chronic condition that causes shortness of breath and an increased risk of lung cancer, the complaint said. Laborda worked at the plant from 1968 to 1980, according to his complaint, and suffers from asbestosis and asbestos-related lung cancer. Ramirez worked at the facility for 32 years before retiring in 1993. He has been diagnosed with asbestos-related laryngeal cancer and asbestosis, his lawsuit said. The lawsuits allege that workers were never warned of the dangers of asbestos exposure or given respiratory protection. Amanda Velazquez, asbestos medical paralegal for Jacobs & Crumplar, said: "They need to break the double standard," referring to DuPont's much earlier decision to stop using asbestos in US plants.

- [HESA news update](#).

### **USA: Watchdog recognises it's all about workers**

At a quick glance the change isn't too dramatic. But the simple revisions to the website of US government health and safety watchdog OSHA represent a fundamental shift in the constituency it wants to be seen to serve. Below a simple headline plumb centre on the site – 'Worker fatalities' – is a regularly updated, rolling list of single sentence summaries describing how individual workers died that week. Below this sits a quote from secretary of labor Hilda Solis, who holds the top employment office in the Obama government. She says: "With every one of these fatalities, the lives of a worker's family members were shattered and forever changed. We can't forget that fact." George Washington University occupational health specialist Celeste Monforton welcomed the change. "I applaud OSHA's leadership for putting this worker fatality information front-and-centre on the agency's website," she wrote on the Pump Handle blog. "Now, anyone visiting the site will be reminded that our nation has a very long way to go in preventing workers from suffering fatal occupational injuries (say nothing of disabling injuries and work-related diseases.) This website change by OSHA is a good start, and a work in progress."

- [OSHA website](#) and [fatalities updates](#). [The Pump Handle](#).

### **USA: Good jobs are good for you**

Good jobs are good for workers and good for firms, a study has concluded. The New York-based Families and Work Institute found workers in the US are stressed-out, time-strapped and overworked, with damaging consequences. Just 28 per cent said their health is excellent, down from 34 per cent six years ago. And businesses are suffering as a result. Workers in poor health are less likely to be loyal, engaged, and satisfied with their jobs, the findings show. "You have to pay attention to the small things, the way people treat

each other, whether there are opportunities to learn, whether people's input is asked for and considered," commented Ellen Galinsky, president of the institute. Nearly 40 per cent of employees in a highly "effective" workplace - where people are trusted and supported - report being in excellent health, double the number of those who say they're in the best health at less effective companies. The institute defines an effective workplace as one offering a climate of trust and respect, learning opportunities, worker autonomy, work-life fit, supervisor support, and economic security. High work-life support and flexibility are especially linked to good health outcomes, it found. In turn, good health is correlated with good work: More than a third of those who say they are in excellent health are highly engaged, versus less than a quarter of workers who say they are in poor health.

- [Families and Work Institute news release. Boston Globe.](#)

## *Resources*

### **Health and safety of cleaning workers**

'The occupational health and safety of cleaning workers', a literature review from the Bilbao-based European Agency (EU-OSHA), "provides an overview of the most important issues related to occupational safety and health (OSH) for cleaning workers in terms of working conditions, risks and prevalence of exposures and health outcomes, and identifies information gaps and challenges." It says studies on work-related diseases indicate that musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory diseases including asthma, skin diseases and mental ill-health are the most common work-related health problems found in cleaners, and suggests there is a higher prevalence of health problems in cleaning workers than in other sectors. The report also considers the impact of factors like contract cleaning and domestic and undeclared cleaning work.

- [EU-OSHA publication notice. The occupational health and safety of cleaning workers](#), EU-OSHA, October 2009.

## *Events and Courses*

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

COURSES FOR AUGUST to OCTOBER 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