

Risks

TUC 

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**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](#)

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

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Unions step up pleural plaques fight

Unions have stepped up their campaign to win compensation for victims of asbestos-related pleural plaques, with a fresh appeal to the government to overturn a Law Lords ruling. A lobby of parliament organised by unions including GMB, Unite and UCATT this week pressed MPs to support moves to overturn the ruling denying payouts to sufferers of pleural plaques – a scarring of the lungs that has been linked to an increased risk of subsequently developing mesothelioma, lung and other cancer. A decision has been promised for months by the government ([Risks 429](#)). Tony Woodley, Unite's joint general secretary, said: "These men and women went to work healthy, but came home carrying a ticking time bomb and a high risk of full blown lung cancer. Compensation, while it will not restore their health, goes some way towards easing the anguish for them and their families." He criticised the Law Lords for "letting the greedy insurance industry dodge their duty to these people so they can pocket £1.4 billion." Paul Kenny, GMB general secretary, said: "The government has messed around with its decision for long enough. It is time it recognised that working people, who have been exposed to asbestos and are suffering from pleural plaques, have the right to be treated equitably across the UK. It is inexcusable that sick workers are being denied the dignity of proper compensation for being made ill by their employers." The issue was discussed this week at prime minister's question time. In response to a question from MP Stephen Hepburn, Gordon Brown's commitment that there must be "fairness" when seeking a "resolution" for pleural plaques victims. UCATT general secretary Alan Ritchie commented: "UCATT welcomes the prime minister's commitment to fairness on this matter. The only fair resolution is to restore the right to compensation and the establishment of liability for pleural plaques victims who have had their health needlessly damaged by negligent employers."

- [Unite news release](#). [GMB news release](#). [The Scotsman](#)

Soaring workloads lead to paper action

Weekly newspaper journalists in Nottinghamshire have passed a motion of no confidence in their bosses – and agreed to ballot for industrial action over workloads. Members of journalists' union NUJ at the Worksop Guardian are concerned that non-replacement of staff, responsibility for another title, and a reorganisation have contributed to unreasonable demands and stress in their office. Over the past 18 months the Worksop office has lost a sports editor, a news editor, two full-time reporters and a part-time reporter. Those journalists left behind have been expected to work on an extra title – the Gainsborough Standard – and to add video, audio and website reporting to their regular duties. Lawrence Shaw, NUJ assistant organiser, said: "The chapel have repeatedly written to their local management about the situation and to ask for information - but received no satisfactory response." He added: "The journalists in Worksop have been completely disregarded in consultation over plans for a centralised subbing unit, and there has been no consideration of the knock-on effects this has had on staff morale, workloads or health." NUJ general secretary Jeremy Dear

said: "The situation in Worksop is clearly intolerable and is characteristic of the entire local newspaper industry. I applaud the decision of the Worksop chapel to stand up for journalists and journalism and pledge the full support of the union to their dispute."

- [NUJ news release](#)

Give a little respect this hols

Shopworkers' union Usdaw is telling every seasonal shopper to 'Keep your cool at Christmas'. The call comes ahead of the union's Respect Week, which runs from 2 to 6 November and which will highlight the problem of abuse of shopworkers. During the week, shopworkers and MPs will be holding stalls throughout the country. John Hannett, Usdaw general secretary, said: "Things get busier in the shops in the run up to Christmas. When the queues are long and the high demand means that some items are out of stock, customers often feel angry and, unfortunately, they often take this frustration out on the shopworker." The respect week has three key audiences, he said. "Firstly, we aim to ensure that employers are doing everything they can to minimise the problem by implementing measures that provide a safer working environment for staff. Secondly, we are lobbying the government for stronger measures to be taken against those who perpetrate this unacceptable behaviour. Thirdly, we are appealing to the shopping public to keep their cool. You might be busy in the run up to Christmas and have a shorter fuse, but shopworkers will also be working extra hard and be under extra pressures." The union leader concluded: "I would ask you to think twice before being abusive towards a shopworker, show them some respect and keep your cool at Christmas."

- [Udaw news release](#) and [Freedom from Fear campaign](#).

Safe danger brings forward back problem

A council worker is stuck with a chronic back problem after using a badly positioned safe. GMB member Sharon Kerry, 41, a hostel duty officer for Leicester City Council, was putting money into the safe when she hurt her back in October 2007. She has been told the injury accelerated a pre-existing back condition by two to three years and is now deciding whether to undergo surgery. Employees had complained on a number of occasions about the position of the safe, which was on the floor. Users had to kneel or bend down to access it. In a GMB-backed compensation case, Leicester City Council admitted liability and settled the claim for £10,250 out of court. Sharon said: "We had complained time and again about the safe. It was awkward to get into and should have been moved long before I had the accident. Fortunately since pursuing my claim the safe has now been moved." She added: "I am still suffering from back pain and have been told that I can have surgery on my back but there is a 20 per cent chance that treatment will worsen my condition. I am now trying to decide what would be for the best."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

Drayman run over twice by lorry

A Unite member has received £350,000 in compensation after his leg was crushed by a delivery lorry that ran over him twice. The 46-year-old from Wolverhampton, whose name has not been released, was working as a drayman for Marstons plc when the incident happened on Christmas Eve 2007. He was helping a colleague to deliver beer to The Mug House public house in Worcester. The lorry was too big to turn in the car park and so the Unite member agreed to go and ask the pub manager to move his car. As he walked around to the front of the lorry his colleague, who was driving, didn't see him and knocked him over. He ran over his left leg and then reversed back over it before he realised what he had done. The incident caused a fractured fibula, a lacerated Achilles tendon and stripped the skin off his left ankle. Experts had thought they would have to amputate, but after seven operations they were able to save his foot. In a Unite-backed compensation claim, Marstons plc denied liability but settled out of court. The injured man, who was a martial arts instructor with black belts in karate and kick boxing, is now unable to work. He can only walk short distances with the help of a stick and cannot go upstairs. Unite servicing officer Peter Clewes commented: "We are only too happy to have been able to support his claim for compensation and hope this money will go some way towards making his life easier while he learns to cope with his injuries."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

Made deaf by work in middle-age

A welder who was exposed to dangerous levels of noise is suffering occupational deafness aged just 46. GMB member John Walton, 46, worked for British Steel Corporation, now known as Corus, from 1978 to 1983, Darchem Projects Limited from 1985 to 1987 and Turbros Engineering from 1987 to 2007. He was diagnosed with hearing loss after a medical in 2007. He said he'd had a problem with his hearing for a number of years but it wasn't until he had the medical that he realised the extent. After his diagnosis he was advised by a colleague to pursue compensation. Facing a GMB-backed compensation claim, all three employers admitted liability and a £12,750 settlement was agreed out of court. Mr Walton, who is from Penrith, said: "We were never warned that we might become deaf as a result of our work. I'm not even 50 yet but already I find it difficult to hear when there is background noise and it can be embarrassing in a social situation. By claiming compensation I wanted to warn others to demand adequate protection for their ears when working in a noisy environment."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

Work fatalities at a record low

Workplace fatalities fell to a record low last year, according to latest Health and Safety Executive (HSE) figures. Fatal injuries at work fell from 233 in 2007/08 to 180 in 2008/09, and there was a reduction of more than 7,000 in the number of reported major injuries. HSE says across England, Scotland and Wales, 29.3 million working days – the equivalent to 1.24 days per worker – were lost to injury and ill health last year, compared with 33.9 million in 2007/08. The watchdog says reported major injuries at work have fallen since 2000 and this trend continued last year with 28,692 workers reported as being injured in 2008/09 (94.8 per 100,000) compared with 29,389 in 2007/08 (96.5 per 100,000). A statistically significant fall was recorded in the estimated number of self-reported injuries – down from 299,000 in 2007/08 to 246,000 last year. HSE said this improvement saw business lose 1.6 million fewer working days through all types of injury, a total of 4.7 million. The number of people estimated to be suffering from work-related ill health fell by 79,000 in 2008/09 to 1.2 million. As a result three million fewer working days were lost to ill health in 2008/09 – a total of 24.6 million. HSE chair Judith Hackitt said the improvements were “really encouraging” but added: “History suggests that when we start moving back into economic growth the rate of work-related injuries will tend to increase. Preventing history from repeating itself is a challenge facing everyone with a stake in health and safety in the workplace – regulators, employers and employees alike: we all need to be part of the solution.” HSE enforcement activity – enforcement notices and prosecutions – remains much lower than at the start of the decade, but is slightly up on 2007/08. Asbestos deaths continue to increase dramatically. Latest mesothelioma statistics released the same day as the HSE figures show a record 2,156 people died of the asbestos-related cancer in 2007, up from 2,058 the preceding year.

- [HSE news release. *Health and safety: Statistics 2008/09*](#), National Statistics, 28 October 2009.

Teachers use voice-saving headsets

Thousands of teachers are using pop star-style headsets in lessons to help protect their voices. The equipment, linked to speakers around the classroom, not only prevents hoarseness but is said to help pupils to hear better and learn more. Thousands of schools in areas including Birmingham, Swindon, Norfolk, Suffolk, Devon and London are using the system. Hertfordshire's 525 primary and secondary schools have also been equipped with 2,000 amplification systems. These consist of loudspeakers around the classrooms, a wallmounted box and a small microphone worn by the teacher. The teacher's voice is amplified, meaning that children in the back row can hear as clearly as those in the front. Many new schools are incorporating 'Soundfield' systems. Jane Birch, headteacher of the Moulton School, Northwich, Cheshire, said spelling has improved among her 200 primary pupils since teachers started wearing microphones. It has also reduced the number of teachers losing their voices. Teachers used to wear headsets but now wear new microphone pendants around their necks. She said: “It originally

started because we had two or three deaf children and we were recommended the Soundfield system. But we've now got them in every class. It's been great. It's helped with spelling as children are hearing the words properly." However, Phyllida Furse, of the Voice Care Network UK, which runs workshops for teachers, said headsets should be a "last resort if no other changes can be made, for example to the acoustics of a room." She added: "Headsets don't cure the problem of the person's voice production in the first place. It's like putting ointment on but it doesn't cure the wound." A report five years ago from the workers' health magazine *Hazards* said one in five teachers missed work due to voice problems in any one year, five times the rate for the workforce as a whole.

- [Daily Mail](#). [Voice Care Network UK](#). [Hazards voice loss webpages](#).

Job stress led to suicide

The pressure of an unwanted promotion led to a young professional's suicide, an inquest has heard. On his 29th birthday, 30 May this year, Benjamin Cheung drove his BMW to a secluded train station car park and stabbed himself three times with a kitchen knife. Hours before he had been released from hospital after taking an overdose of sleeping tablets. Bolton Coroner's Court heard Mr Cheung, who worked for ADT Fire and Security Solutions, had become depressed after accepting a promotion for which he felt he was not ready. Suicide notes explained how he "couldn't cope anymore." Recording a verdict of suicide brought on by clinical depression, assistant deputy coroner Peter Watson said: "Benjamin was a model son, a model brother, a model employee and a model citizen. It was clear he was struggling to cope with his new responsibilities." Recent reports from the US, UK, France and Ireland have linked occupational factors to suicides, with recession related pressures thought to be compounding the problem ([Risks 423](#)).

- [Preston Citizen](#).

New benefits have 'caused misery'

Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) says it has been "flooded with complaints" about the Employment Support Allowance (ESA) benefit introduced a year ago. ESA replaced Incapacity Benefit and Income Support for people who are sick and disabled. But CAS said the system had caused "misery and frustration" for vulnerable people. Examples cited by CAS include individuals who have been told by the same agency they are both fit and unfit for work, depending on which benefit they applied for, ending up with nothing. It gives the example of one client who "was judged by the ESA Medical Assessor to be fit enough to work, so wasn't entitled to receive ESA. So, he applied for JobSeekers Allowance (JSA), and was told (by the same Jobcentre) that he was unfit to work so couldn't receive that either. He is therefore receiving neither benefit." CAS said reports gathered from its offices across Scotland showed a consistent "catalogue of errors." Kaliani Lyle, CAS chief executive, said: "Far from simplifying the system, the ESA has made matters much worse. It

has created barriers to entitlement, and caused unnecessary financial distress and emotional strain to sick and disabled people all over Scotland. And this is not just a few isolated cases. Evidence from CABs throughout the country shows a catalogue of errors, from the first day the system was introduced right up until the last few weeks." One former serviceman diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder after witnessing a colleague's death in Iraq was originally denied benefit after a medical that lasted six minutes and did not consider his mental health.

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

Over £1m in fines after rail deaths

Carillion and Network Rail have been fined £1.1m and ordered to pay £100,000 costs between them, following the deaths of two rail workers. David Pennington, 46, and Martin Oakes, 38, were hit by a reversing road rail vehicle (RRV) while laying new track over night near Hednesford, Staffordshire in September 2004. The two firms were successfully prosecuted by the British Transport Police and Crown Prosecution Service and were sentenced this week at Stafford Crown Court. Network Rail, which was charged with endangering a non-employee, was fined £666,667 and ordered to pay £50,000 costs. Carillion, which was charged with endangering an employee and a non-employee, was fined £444,444 and also ordered to pay £50,000 costs. Three individuals operating the RRV were also prosecuted under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Wayne Brigden, 29, was fined £3,000. David Jones, 48, and John Brady, 45, were each fined £3,000, reduced to £750 because they are currently out of work and receiving benefits. A Network Rail spokesperson said: "This was a very tragic incident and our thoughts remain with the families of the deceased." A Carillion spokesperson said: "We extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Martin Oates and David Pennington. Carillion's prime concern remains the health and safety and well being of all our employees, sub-contractors and anyone who may be affected by our activities."

- [Contract Journal](#). [Express and Star](#)

Directors fined after explosion death

A North Devon crop spraying manufacturing company and two of its directors are facing a fines and costs bill totalling £152,165 following the death of an employee in an explosion. At Exeter Crown Court, RJ Bateman Engineering was fined £65,000 for safety offences and ordered to pay costs of £67,165. Directors of the family-owned firm, father-and-son Richard and Jason Bateman, were each fined £10,000. Their safety failings led to the explosion of a coolant drum and the death of 40-year-old Anthony Reed on 3 April 2006. A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found a 2004 incident, in which a worker fell through the roof suffering chest injuries, had gone unreported. Sentencing, Judge Philip Wassall said: "The court has to consider the breaches that have occurred and the failings that led to those breaches in assessing the

levels of those fines. The death of Mr Reed was an aggravating feature and I want to say that so the family realise that I have not forgotten about them." The court heard Mr Reed died following an explosion at the company factory in Bycott. At the time he was learning welding and was working on a drum which provided a makeshift work bench. However the drum was being use to collect waste materials, including highly flammable liquids, which ignited. The explosion blew off part of the roof. Mr Reed sustained severe head injuries. He was taken by air ambulance to hospital but died later from his injuries. Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Jo Fitzgerald said: "Mr Reed should never have been in the position he found himself in, practising his skills using a makeshift set up, with no knowledge of the significant danger in which he had placed himself. This terrible tragedy was the result of years of inadequate health and safety management and could have been avoided if proper systems had been adopted by the company."

- [HSE news release](#). [North Devon Gazette](#).

UK Coal closes mine after death

Britain's biggest coal producer, UK Coal, has suspended production at one of its sites following the death of a worker. The company said investigations were continuing into the incident, which happened last week, and the colliery in Kellingley, north Yorkshire, would remain closed for the next fortnight. Father of two Ian Cameron, 46, died after an apparent equipment failure, the company said. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) announced this month it was prosecuting the company and two of its managers over three deaths at its Daw Mill site in Warwickshire between 2006 and 2007 and one at its Welbeck colliery near Mansfield in 2007. The case, in which UK Coal will face ten safety charges, will open at Doncaster Magistrates' Court on 26 November, and is expected to be heard next year. Commenting after the latest fatality, a UK Coal spokesperson said the firm was stopping production "while suspect valves on the roof supports of the coal face are changed." The firm added: "Whilst we believe that we continue to make improvements in our safety culture, as part of our drive for zero incidents, it is with deep regret that we must report the recent loss of the life of a colleague at Kellingley. Both company and HSE investigations are continuing into the accident. Our condolences go to relatives and friends of our colleague." UK Coal said in its latest update that production across its mining operations in the year to September was broadly the same as 2008 – at 5.4 million tonnes compared with 5.5 million tonnes. But it added: "The recent tragedy at Kellingley has, however, introduced an increased degree of uncertainty regarding the output from Kellingley for the year."

- [The Guardian](#). [The Scotsman](#).

Worker gets 3,300-volt electric shock

A Scottish company has been fined £1,500 for breaching health and safety law after a worker was burned by live power cables. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuted Grangemouth-based

refinery and petrochemical company Ineos Manufacturing Scotland Ltd for failing to ensure a safe system of work was in place before undertaking excavation work near live electrical cables. A subcontractor needed hospital treatment for burns to his hands and face after he struck two live 3,300-volt cables with a jackhammer on 3 November 2006. Ineos pleaded guilty to a breach of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and was fined £1,500 at Falkirk Sheriff Court. HSE inspector Dr Heather Gates commented: "The men are lucky to be alive following this terrible incident, which could easily have been prevented. This type of work requires careful planning and management in order to avoid danger." She added: "Ineos Manufacturing Scotland Ltd and contractors should have conducted an adequate risk assessment before work started. They were aware of the live cables but underestimated the risks associated with working so close to them. They did not give sufficient consideration to the option of isolating the cables, nor could they justify why the electricity supply was not isolated. Ineos did not use other measures to minimise the risks to staff, such as using digging techniques that would not have damaged cables." HSE says around 1,000 people are injured every year from electric shocks while at work in the UK, and about 25 people die from their injuries.

- [HSE news release.](#)

Broken back highlights demolition dangers

A Norwich employer has been fined £7,500 after a worker broke his spine in a fall at the former RAF Watton site in Norfolk. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuted Tim Philpott, trading as Philpott Demolition and Recycling, for his role in the incident on 20 April 2007. Mr Philpott pleaded guilty at Norwich Magistrates' Court to breaching safety rules. The court heard that Lithuanian worker Gediminas Vasiliauskas was removing old roof tiles and timber from a former aircraft hangar at the site when the incident happened. Mr Vasiliauskas broke his spine in the incident and had to have a metal disk inserted into his back. He was unable to work for a year and during that time he also lost his sense of taste and smell. Prosecuting, Matthew Taylor said Philpott was carrying out the demolition job for free so he could salvage the materials. He added: "It was a case of putting profit before safety. It was obviously done as quickly as possible without proper instructions." Following the hearing, HSE inspector Nicola Surrey said: "Mr Vasiliauskas was lucky to survive this incident, which could have been avoided if his employer had taken precautions to ensure his employee's safety. Working at height is one of the most dangerous things employees can do. This case highlights the need for companies to do everything possible to minimise the risks employees face when working at height."

- [HSE news release](#) and [falls webpages.](#) [Norfolk Eastern Daily Press.](#)

Fund sets aside £85m for asbestos claims

An £85 million asbestos compensation fund has been set up for London's public sector, amid warnings that claims could double in the next decade. The London Pensions Fund Authority is putting aside the cash following estimates that the number of cases will rise to 25 a year and total more than 400 by 2035. The organisation deals with about 12 claims a year over asbestos-related illness. But a landmark legal case has led to the authority paying out in a case involving a teacher. It was the first time the fund, which is responsible for former staff of the Inner London Education Authority and GLC, has paid compensation in a case that did not involve a manual labourer who had direct exposure to asbestos. The widower of teacher Joan Henry, who died from the asbestos cancer mesothelioma, received £180,000 in an out-of-court settlement in July. Mrs Henry died in 2007 aged 57 after a 30-year career. She had worked in two east London schools whose buildings contained asbestos.

- [London Evening Standard.](#)

Cancer sufferer escapes insurance trap

A 76-year-old grandfather has succeeded in his claim for compensation for asbestos related cancer after being told at first no employers' liability insurer could be found to cover the payout. Ronnie Cadwallader was told in November 2007 he had mesothelioma. He was exposed to asbestos in his former work as a welder and metal worker, stripping asbestos lagging off pipes, turbines and boilers during maintenance and repairs. However, the two firms who were responsible for exposing him to asbestos folded many years ago. An attempt by local solicitors to track down the employers' liability insurer for one of them, Carolina Engineering Ltd, using the voluntary Association of British Insurers (ABI) system, resulted in disappointment. After further inquiries, however, his new solicitors, personal injury specialists John Pickering and Partners, were told insurer Zurich provided cover for the periods 1950-1955 and 1957-1960. Lawyers quickly obtained a £50,000 interim payment for Mr Cadwallader. Following negotiations, and with a court case looming, an offer of £140,000 compensation was accepted. Mr Cadwallader said: "My case proves that the insurance scheme for trying to trace policies just doesn't work, it is totally hit and miss." In a bid to end this insurance lottery, unions and asbestos campaigners are pressing for the creation of an Employers' Liability Insurance Bureau (ELIB), to step in when insurers cannot be identified.

- [John Pickering and Partners Solicitors news release.](#)

International News

Australia: Don't cave in to business on safety!

Unions in Australia are concerned time is running out in their battle to persuade politicians not to cave in to a big business bid to slash regulation at the expense of workers' health and safety. Jeff Lawrence, secretary of the national union federation ACTU, said

draft laws circulated in September would put workers at risk from lower safety standards. Commenting as unions prepared for a series of national protest meetings and events on 28 October, he said unions were determined to campaign for improvements to the proposed laws to ensure they raised standards, not lowered them. "A once-in-a-generation opportunity to lift protections for workers by achieving the world's best safety standards for the entire country is in danger of being missed," Mr Lawrence said. "As they stand, the draft laws are about taking away protections and rights for workers, rather than lifting the overall standard. We are determined to make sure politicians take notice of workers' concerns." Mr Lawrence said one of the main concerns was that the new laws would diminish the rights, powers and protections of health and safety representatives (HSRs) in workplaces. "Health and safety reps play a crucial role in preventing workplace accidents and incidents. They need the power to be proactive, not just called in as a last resort," he said. Unions also want to ensure that victims have the right to prosecute and that employers are held responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace. "Under the proposed laws, a decision by the regulator not to prosecute a breach of the laws means that the law is not enforced," Mr Lawrence said. "Unions believe victims should be able to enforce safety laws where the regulator fails to do so. Union initiated prosecutions in NSW have led to improvements in safety standards in workplaces as diverse as banks and schools."

- [ACTU news release.](#)

Australia: Unions want nano labels

Workers could be exposed to hazardous nano products at work, but never know it, unions in Australia have warned. Unions Tasmania secretary Simon Cocker told a nanotechnology seminar this week he has written to the workplace relations minister "to draw her attention to our concerns regarding the use of nanotechnology in certain products which may pose a health risk to current and future generations of Tasmanians." He added: "The lack of any labelling means that the public is none the wiser to the risks of choosing a certain sunscreen or shampoo containing nanoparticles and sending people off to work in factories that handle this potentially toxic technology." He said it would be "deeply unfortunate" if the state government "did not heed the warning of many of our scientists about the risks some nanoparticles may pose to the health of Tasmanians. It is imperative that, thirty years from now, we do not experience another asbestos-like tragedy and bear the shame of a generation looking back at our inaction on this issue and asking the question: 'Why didn't they do something?'" Last week, German's Environmental Protection Agency (UBA) called for mandatory labelling of nano products.

- Unions Tasmania news release [[pdf](#)]. [Tasmanian Times](#). [CosmeticsDesign.com](#).

USA: Giant quilt pictures work's pain

Hotel housekeepers this month embarked on a seven-city tour with a gigantic "hope quilt" providing a craft-y depiction of injuries caused by their work. They say it is also a symbol of their determination to rally union and non-union hotel housekeepers against harsh working conditions and workplace injuries. The Hope for Housekeepers tour organised by the hotel workers' union UNITE HERE aims to kick off a "national movement of women to stop the abuses of women in the hotel industry." The strategy is to rally union and non-union hotel housekeepers against harsh working conditions and workplace injuries in front of Hyatt and Hilton hotels where active, heated organising drives are underway. Each square of the elaborate quilt is crafted by housekeepers themselves and symbolises the different kinds of occupational injury they face. Housekeepers sign orange squares to indicate how many years they've dealt with long-term pain. Brown squares denote permanent injuries. The workers say the introduction of industrial "lean production" techniques into the sector mean fewer housekeepers are being required to do a lot more work at breakneck speed. The union has been actively building community coalitions to support the fight against workload increases, and each supporting group has added its own multi-coloured squares to the quilt.

- [Labor Notes. UniteHere 'Hope' campaign.](#)

Events and Courses

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR NOVEMBER 2009 to JANUARY 2010

- [Northern](#), [North West](#), [Southern & Eastern](#), [Yorkshire & Humber](#), [South West](#), [Midlands](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#)

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- 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

The person responsible for the Risks e-bulletin is Hugh Robertson
Email: healthandsafety@tuc.org.uk