

Bill calls for safety duties on directors

A Labour MP is pressing for a new law to place legally binding, explicit safety duties on company directors. Aberdeen North MP Frank Doran presented his Health and Safety (Company Director Liability) Bill in a House of Commons debate on 19 January. Commenting on the existing voluntary code, produced by the Institute of Directors, he told MPs: "Despite the enthusiastic reception of the code by business organisations, the majority of companies have not implemented its recommendations." He added: "The voluntary approach is not working, so more encouragement is needed to persuade employers to take health and safety much more seriously. Further research commissioned by the HSE shows how important legal regulation is in comparison with the voluntary approach." The MP said his Bill "will place a positive duty on all company directors to take all reasonable steps to ensure health and safety in all aspects of the company's activities - effectively to put them in the same position as all other employers and to remove a glaring anomaly in our health and safety laws. The evidence clearly shows that this will save the lives and livelihoods of people across the UK." The Bill is scheduled to receive a second reading on Friday 23 April. The TUC, trade unions, personal injury lawyers, health and safety campaigners and victims' advocates have all called for explicit legal safety duties on company directors.

- [House of Commons debate, Hansard, 19 January 2010. Health and Safety \(Company Director Liability\) Bill. Theyworkforyou.com.](#)