

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 18,000 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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Contents

Union News

Rail firm 'gloats' over dangerous jobs cull

News staff stressed by 'silly' changes

Prison staff denied stab protection

Nurses say no to unsafe cuts

Burns resulted from poor protection

Hospital porter faces deadly DVT risk

Factory oils caused worker's asthma

Slip leads to months off work

Other news

Biffa condemned for lack of care

Biffa fined for another waste death

'Best recycler' fined £200,000 for death

Recycling firm fined for crush injury

Five-year ban for unsafe director

Directors fined after slabs kill man

Scottish courts to probe company finances

HSE targets meat industry risks

The sick are more likely to be in work

International News

Global: Unions worldwide prepare for 28 April

Korea: Samsung PR push won't cure cancer woes

USA: Green buildings should not hurt you

Resources

Disability and health and safety

Events and Courses

TUC courses for safety reps

Useful Links

Rail firm 'gloats' over dangerous jobs cull

Network Rail's 'gloating' over its cull of frontline maintenance jobs has been condemned by rail union RMT. The union has demanded a reversal of cuts in what it says are safety critical jobs. According to RMT, Network Rail has boasted that 500 frontline staff will leave by the end of May. The union charges that the company's "slash-and-burn attack on jobs and conditions" has nothing to do with overstaffing, new technology or outdated working practices, as indicated by the company, but is a dangerous money-saving gamble. RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "Network Rail is trying to con the public into believing that a cost-led jobs cull is safe when we already know that inspections and maintenance frequencies are overstretched and that most safety recommendations made after the Grayrigg crash have not been implemented in full or in part." He added: "The fact is that Network Rail is under pressure to slash 21 per cent from its budget, wants to axe 1,500 frontline posts, lump maintenance functions onto over-worked signallers, and impose changes that will undermine rail safety and make another disaster inevitable." The union leader said: "The only part of Network Rail that needs a jobs cull is the boardroom, whose latest wheeze will result in an increase in the ratio of over-paid executives on telephone number pay and bonuses to frontline skilled staff, at the direct expense of rail safety." Mr Crow warned: "The company's plans are simply dangerous and RMT will continue to resist them, including re-balloting for strike action."

- [RMT news release.](#)

News staff stressed by 'silly' changes

Angry journalists are demanding Johnston Press Group stop making their local papers look silly through ill-thought out organisational changes that are also putting serious strain on overworked staff. The union NUJ says the Atex content management system the company has imposed with inadequate training and staffing, has led to incidents like editions of the Sheffield Star and the South Yorkshire Times being published with blank spaces and a whole front page with blacked out pictures. "We warned Johnston Press Group that Atex was unproven, untried and untested," said NUJ organiser Chris Morley. "We said it was being implemented to a totally unrealistic timescale with woefully inadequate training and support locally. The net result is a publishing disaster that is seriously impacting on the health and well-being of members, putting some on the edge of physical breakdowns." The union says the reorganisation is hitting other titles across the group and is warning of industrial action. NUJ general secretary Jeremy Dear said: "The changes that Johnston management is forcing through the group's newspapers are, ultimately, about cutting jobs." He said NUJ members employed by the debt-laden group "refuse to be victims of that mismanagement car crash."

- [NUJ news release.](#)

Prison staff denied stab protection

Leaders of the prison officers' union POA have responded angrily to a refusal by the Ministry of Justice to provide anti-stab vests to prison officers and other frontline prison staff. The union said in March two officers would have been murdered in a glassing incident, but for the "heroic actions" of another officer who was also badly injured ([Risks 449](#)). POA national chair Colin Moses said it was "absolutely disgusting" that prison staff were being refused stab vests. "The life of a prison officers should and must be valued the same as a police officer," he said: "We await the views of the three major political parties and how they would safeguard prison staff and the public in our dangerously overcrowded prisons." On 15 March three members of staff at Frankland Prison, County Durham, were stabbed by a prisoner using a glass bottle purchased from the prison shop. All three needed hospital treatment.

- [POA news release](#).

Nurses say no to unsafe cuts

Nurses will not tolerate job cuts that put patients' lives at risk, the union UNISON as said. The union's five-point plan for nursing, launched this week at the union's health conference, comes with a 'Safety before shortcuts' message. Gail Adams, UNISON's head of nursing, said: "This is a hard-hitting manifesto for hard working nurses, who put people before profit and deserve to be valued for the amazing job they do." She noted: "We need a well trained NHS workforce to cope with increasingly complex medical treatments, the demands of a growing ageing population and the switch from in-hospital to community based patient care," adding action was needed to "heal the wounds caused by putting shortcuts before safety and restore public confidence – it is not the time for 'light touch regulation' and job and training cuts. Let's give nurses the means to keep patients safe and reward them for doing so." Safe staffing level campaigns in the US have delivered better patient care and improvements in the health and safety of nursing staff.

- [UNISON news release](#).

Burns resulted from poor protection

A factory worker was seriously burned after being provided with inadequate protective gear at work. GMB member Scott Harper, 33, from St Neots in Cambridgeshire was left with a six-by-three inch scar across his forearm after the incident while working as a shift leader for food packaging manufacturer Sealed Air Limited. He was adjusting bolts on a machine when an allen key slipped, causing him to fall onto a hot part of the machine, burning his left bicep and forearm. Thompsons Solicitors, the law firm brought in by GMB to act in the case, found Mr Harper was provided with inadequate heat resistant gloves. The gloves had protective sleeves but these were prone to fall down easily, leaving employees' arms exposed. The law firm argued he should have been given full protective clothing

which would have guarded his body against the extremely hot machinery. Sealed Air Limited admitted liability and settled the claim out of court, paying Mr Harper £3,800. Andy Worth from the GMB said: "Mr Harper has been fortunate that he did not need to take time off as a result of his accident but he must now live with scarring on his arm for the rest of his life because of his employer's lax health and safety procedures."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

Hospital porter faces deadly DVT risk

A theatre porter has been forced to give up his 14-year career and face the daily risk of developing a fatal blood clot after a workplace injury. UNISON member John Beresford, from Nottingham, has to take medication for the rest of his life to avoid a clot, after developing Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) from twisting his knee at work. The 64-year-old, who worked for Nottingham Universities Hospitals NHS Trust, was expected to use an old supermarket trolley to collect gas canisters needed for theatre. On the day of the injury, a stone got caught under the back wheel, causing it to swerve into the path of an oncoming car. Mr Beresford tore his left knee trying to steady the trolley and now suffers from long-term knee problems, which have forced him to retire. He said: "This accident has taken everything away from me. I have had to give up work and my golf and my family have seen me go through hell. I also have to take morphine every day and attend pain management courses, as the risk will be with me for life." UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis said: "It is shocking that John Beresford faces daily agony because his employers failed to provide him with safe equipment. It is good that UNISON has managed to secure some compensation for him, but it will not make up for the fact that he can never have his old life back. Employers need to put safety before shortcuts and put a stop to these easily preventable accidents." The Trust finally agreed to an undisclosed compensation payout more than 14 times the original offer.

- [UNISON news release.](#)

Factory oils caused worker's asthma

A factory worker has received £32,000 compensation after he developed asthma as a result of exposure to dangerous fumes for over three years. The 49-year-old Unite member from Bolton, whose name has not been released, was diagnosed with occupational asthma after he was exposed to a mix of hydraulic oil and coolant mist at Edbro Plc in Lancashire. He complained about an oil leak with the machine he was working on for the HGV lorry parts manufacturer in November 2004 but nothing was done to fix it. He later noticed mist was coming out of the machine and reported the problem on two further occasions. The machine wasn't fixed until it broke down completely in August 2007. He first started suffering from breathlessness in 2005 but wasn't diagnosed with occupational asthma until March 2006, when he noticed his condition affecting his life outside of work. However, he wasn't assessed by his employer's occupational health department until January 2009. He was then

moved to a job where he wasn't exposed to fumes. He said: "It was obvious there was a problem with the machine we were working on but despite my complaints nothing was done about it." He added: "It wasn't until I started struggling to walk upstairs and suffered a few attacks of breathlessness that I told my GP about my working conditions and he diagnosed me with occupational asthma. Even then my condition wasn't assessed by occupational health until three years later." Unite regional secretary Paul Finegan said: "This successful claim should send a clear message to employers about listening to their workforce on issues of health and safety. Edbro should have provided extraction or ventilation to avoid exposure to the mist caused by the oil leak."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

Slip leads to months off work

A factory worker was forced to take almost six months off work after a serious fall that led to injuries, a compensation payout and a change in work practices. Unite member Brent Songhurst, 59, from Bridgend was left with a broken wrist and severe shoulder pain after he slipped on dust created by shot blast while working at medical instruments manufacturer, Biomet UK Ltd in Bridgend. He was unloading a barrel of acid in the walkway area outside of the blasting room when he lost his footing on debris that had come from the cleaning of blast machinery within the room. Brent, who works as a laser etcher for the manufacturer, needed surgery to mend his left wrist and was off work for 22 weeks. His injury also brought on a painful impingement syndrome in his left shoulder which may need surgery. Medical experts said his fall accelerated the problem by five years. The condition, sometimes known as swimmer's shoulder, means he suffers from pain and restricted movement. Biomet did not admit liability but settled a union-backed compensation claim out of court for £20,000. The firm has also changed its working procedures to make sure the area outside the blasting room is kept safe. Eamonn McDonough from Thompsons Solicitors, who acted for Mr Songhurst on behalf of the union, said: "Keeping a workplace safe should be paramount for employers. Good housekeeping is simple and ignoring it carries a real risk of serious injury as Mr Songhurst found to his cost."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#)

Other news

Biffa condemned for lack of care

Safety campaigners have joined the family of Dennis Krauesslar, killed as a result of criminal safety breaches at a Biffa waste site, in condemning the company for its lack of care. The firm received a six figure fine this week after pleading guilty to two safety charges. Dennis' widow Linda Krauesslar and her daughter Victoria said Biffa must learn lessons from its past mistakes. Commenting after the conclusion of the court case on 19 April, Linda said: "Whilst nothing will ever compensate us for the loss of Dennis and life will never be the same again, we are pleased with today's outcome and in

particular the judge's conclusions. As he said this accident was foreseeable and avoidable and this was no way for a man to lose his life." She added: "We are however disappointed never to have received a personal apology or condolences for Dennis' death from the company." Henrietta Phillips of Thompsons Solicitors, who acts for the Krauesslar family said: "Today's sentencing will never make up for Mr Krauesslar's death or what his family have gone through coping with his loss but hopefully it will provide some sense of justice to his family." The Hazards Campaign said it was going to again challenge the main political parties to say "where they stand on employers who kill and injure their workers, and especially those who do it again and again." It said "given the history of repeated criminality of the company and the deadly nature of their crimes - why hasn't any senior director been called to account in the courts for causing these deaths and many other potentially lethal breaches of safety and environmental laws?" The campaign said "company directors and employers will not give due regard to preventing workplace death, disability, injury and ill-health until they are held personally liable and we want to know which political party will act to put a stop to this corporate crime wave."

- [Thompsons Solicitors news release.](#) [Hazards Campaign news release.](#)

Biffa fined for another waste death

The boss of Britain's biggest waste disposal firm quit shortly after a fourth preventable death at its dumps in six years. "There's no suggestion that the resignation of Biffa Waste Services boss Martin Bettington was linked to his firm's appalling safety record," Daily Mirror blogger Nick Sommerlad reported on 22 April. "Bettington just said it was a 'good time to move on' - and left with a £462,000 pay-off and a pension pot worth £3.4 million." Sommerlad was commenting after Biffa Waste Services Ltd received its safety biggest fine yet on 19 April, after admitting safety failings that led to the death of Dennis Krauesslar, 59. GMB member Dennis was dropping off lawn clippings at the company's waste recycling centre in Newbury, Berks, when he was crushed to death by a mechanical digger in 2007. The union had pressed for the prosecution and had called for manslaughter charges to be brought. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecutor Oliver Glasgow revealed "not all operatives" received safety training and said: "Simply not operating the loading shovel in the pit when the public had access would have sufficed." Fining Biffa £280,000 plus £54,907 costs, Judge Stephen Wood said: "The chain of events culminating in this tragic death was foreseeable and preventable." Just 18 months earlier, on a Biffa site in Eversley, Hants, Charlie Smith, 52, was crushed to death when he was run over by a 16-ton digger as he collected scrap metal on foot. Biffa was fined £190,000 and £50,000 costs. That followed two deaths in 2001. Worker Ronald Trow, 54, was killed at a landfill site at Walsall when his head was crushed in a lorry tailgate. Biffa admitted failing to provide a safe work system and was fined £30,000. The same year Gavin Reed, 11, died when he fell 70ft at Biffa's dump at Houghton Quarry, Sunderland. Biffa was fined £2,000.

- [HSE news release.](#) [Daily Mirror blog.](#) [BBC News Online.](#) [Newbury Today.](#) [Morning Star.](#)

'Best recycler' fined £200,000 for death

A global metals and electronics recycling company has been fined after a lorry driver died when a crushed car fell from a scrapheap. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuted Sims Group UK Ltd, part of the world's biggest metal recycling company, after truck driver Adrian Turner was crushed by a metal bale which rolled off the heap at the firm's yard in Newport, south Wales. Mr Turner, 50, from Wolverhampton, was delivering scrap to the site on 28 April 2008 and was directed to deliver his load to the metal shredder area of the yard. He left his cab and was opening the rear doors to his trailer when the one and a half ton metal bale on the scrap pile came loose and rolled down 20 feet straight into him. He had not received any site safety induction from Sims UK Ltd and was following instructions given by Sims operatives when he was killed. Sims Group UK Ltd, pleaded guilty to safety offences. At Cardiff Crown Court on 14 April, the company was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay £57,500 costs. Commenting after the case, HSE inspector Sarah Baldwin-Jones said: "Metal recycling yards can be extremely dangerous places so it's imperative companies have safe working procedures and systems in place that are observed by all staff and contractors." A statement from the Mr Turner's bereaved family said: "While the financial penalty handed down to Sims Group UK Ltd today offers little comfort to our family we hope that it serves a warning to those companies operating in the waste recycling industry. It should be an absolute priority to ensure death and injury to employees and others on site is avoided. We have been torn apart by Adrian's death and wish that no other family has to endure the loss of a loved one in the manner we did." The death and the criminal safety prosecution do not appear to have overly tarnished the firm's reputation. In February 2010, Sims Group UK was named 'Best Recycler of the Decade' by trade magazine Materials Recycling Week.

- [HSE news release](#). [Green jobs, safe jobs blog](#). [BBC News Online](#).

Recycling firm fined for crush injury

European Metal Recycling Limited has been fined after a worker's hand was crushed as he attempted to clear a blockage on a magnetic conveyor. The firm was fined £8,000 with £5,506.50 costs in April after pleading guilty to a health and safety offence. South Tyneside Magistrates' Court heard how on 29 April 2008, employee David Lowery, 49, and a colleague were working at the company's premises in North West Quay, Tyne Dock, using a machine that separates metal from dirt, eventually recycling the metal. Both workers were attempting to clear a blockage on an inadequately guarded magnetic conveyor that was part of a riddling machine cleaning scrap from mud. The machine was re-started and Mr Lowery's right hand got caught inside. He suffered crush injuries and was left with four broken fingers and was off work for six weeks before returning on light duties. Mr Lowery still suffers pain in his hand in cold temperatures and has not regained full movement in one of his fingers. After the case, HSE inspector Bruno Porter said: "David Lowery suffered extremely painful and permanent hand injuries, all because European Metal Recycling failed to install simple, protective guards on the machine and ensure a safe system

of work was being used.” He added: “Workers were exposed to the risk of having a limb crushed as they tried to clear blockages on the conveyor. At the same time, there was no system forcing workers to stop the machine to clear blockages. It was only a matter of time before someone became injured.”

- [HSE news release.](#)

Five-year ban for unsafe director

A director of a fuel tank manufacturing business has been banned from directing any company for five years after breaching a raft of health and safety regulations. Brian Nixon, the managing director of Transtore (UK) Ltd was also fined £17,000. Workers at Transtore (UK) Ltd in Stratford-upon-Avon were exposed to lead and other harmful chemicals while paint was sprayed at the plant. Workers were also put at risk of falls from height, with no safety equipment provided. Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigated and prosecuted Mr Nixon and the firm after receiving a complaint from a concerned employee. Mr Nixon was also ordered to pay £9,169 costs after admitting multiple criminal safety breaches at Stratford-upon-Avon Magistrates' Court. The company was fined £70,000 with costs of £27,507 after being found guilty of eight separate breaches of health and safety law. Transtore (UK) Ltd is now in administration. During HSE's investigation, specialist inspectors took air samples as well as blood and urine samples from the workers to assess their exposure to lead. This was one of the harmful chemicals, which included cancer causing lead chromate, that was being sprayed unsafely in the plant. Five workers needed blood and urine tests after exposure to fume with the potential to cause headaches, tiredness, and stomach pains. Long-term exposure can lead to irreversible central and peripheral nervous system damage, kidney damage and gastrointestinal problems. All results from the workers showed higher levels of lead than the UK population average. HSE inspector Peter Snelgrove said: “Mr Nixon deliberately flouted health and safety laws and paid scant regard to the safety of his employees.”

- [HSE news release.](#)

Directors fined after slabs kill man

Two directors of a marble and granite manufacturing company have been fined after a worker died and two others were injured when six tonnes of stone slabs fell on them. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuted Marble City Ltd (MCL) and company directors Gavin and Jamie Waldron following the incident on 20 March 2008 outside the company's site in Wandsworth, London. It happened while the slabs were being unloaded from a truck. Judge Taylor at Southwark Crown Court heard MCL director Gavin Waldron was supervising the unloading operation, assisted by employees Ronald 'Ron' Douglas and Franco Moscelli. Driver Gelsomino Pacifico was instructed to park his truck and trailer nearer the yard. This meant the vehicle was parked on a slope on the road, causing the stone slabs on the trailer to lean towards the kerb. Mr Pacifico, Mr

Moscelli and Mr Douglas got into the trailer to begin unloading the slabs. As they carried this out, six tonnes of stone slabs that had not been restrained toppled and fell, crushing Mr Douglas. He died from his injuries in hospital a week later. The court heard that Mr Moscelli and Mr Pacifico tried to catch the slabs but became trapped themselves. Mr Moscelli sustained injuries in his right arm which has led to parasthesia (irritation of nerves in the limb) and Mr Pacifico sustained bruising to his right arm. The company pleaded guilty and was fined £100,000 and costs of £47,564.00 Directors Gavin and Jamie Waldron pleaded guilty to two breaches of Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 by allowing their company to commit breaches due to their negligence. They were fined £10,000 each. Commenting on the conviction, TUC Head of health and Safety, Hugh Robertson said: "Although we welcome the recent increase in the number of convictions of directors in recent years, these have all involved small or medium-sized firms where the directors have been directly involved in managing the company. This shows that there is still a need for a legal duty that can be applied to the directors of large companies where decisions made at boardroom level can lead to safety breaches further down the line".

- [HSE news release.](#)

Scottish courts to probe company finances

Scottish companies found guilty of causing workplace deaths will no longer be able to dodge hefty fines by pleading poverty. Courts in the country will soon be able to order background checks on convicted companies' accounts. Under the current system, companies present their own report on the state of their finances. The Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee has now agreed to accept an amendment proposed by Dr Bill Wilson MSP to the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Bill. The amendment virtually guarantees that Scottish courts will soon be empowered to order background inquiry reports into convicted companies' finances. Dr Wilson said: "I trust the Bill will become law and my amendment with it. This is long overdue. My research showed that companies found criminally responsible for killing people in Scotland were being fined £12,500 or less in 50 per cent of cases. A significant contributing factor to this is the fact that courts have no power to order independent inquiries into companies' finances." He added that "it strikes me as ridiculous that we rely on convicted companies to provide the reports which will influence the level of fine. It is the equivalent of a judge sternly wagging his finger at a convicted housebreaker and saying, 'You are a terribly naughty fellow. Now please tell me how much of a fine you can afford to pay?'"

- [Bill Wilson MSP news release.](#) [Construction Enquirer.](#)

HSE targets meat industry risks

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has issued new instructions to inspectors on how to police safety at meat and poultry factories. The move follows an official inquiry that uncovered widespread

mistreatment and exploitation of migrant and agency workers in the meat and poultry processing sector. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) investigation found workers reported physical and verbal abuse and a lack of proper health and safety protection ([Risks 448](#)). The guidance to inspectors says personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be provided free of charge to all workers. It adds arrangements should be clear between the agency and the food business about who provides the PPE. Where it has to be shared, it should be cleaned and hygienic – for example, if boots are shared sanitised liners or socks can be used. There is explicit guidance on musculoskeletal disorders, after the EHRC inquiry heard complaints from workers about a lack of training for lifting and about rapid repetitive work over 10 to 12 hour shifts without adequate breaks or job rotation. Guidance is also given to inspectors on effective training for migrant workers, protection for pregnant workers, co-operation and information-sharing between agencies and food businesses, complaints procedures for workers to raise issues and working time issues.

- [Usdaw information note. Inspection of meat/poultry factories 2010/11](#), SIM 01/2010/01, HSE.

The sick are more likely to be in work

Workers are more likely to trail into work when sick than to take the day off, new research has shown. The study by The Work Foundation examined why employees attend work when unwell, with the think tank saying it also addresses a gap in UK data on sickness presence. It concludes employers may be under-estimating employee ill health and may be missing warning signals by focusing on absence alone. 'Sickness presence' or 'presenteeism' was more prevalent than absence, with 45 per cent reporting one or more days working when unwell and 18 per cent reporting one or more days absence over the same four week period. The study also found that those who had time off sick were more likely to work when ill. Overall, higher levels of sickness presence were associated with: lower levels of manager assessed performance; lower levels of self-reported psychological wellbeing; higher levels of sickness absence; higher levels of work related stress; experiencing personal financial difficulties; and higher levels of perceived pressure from managers and colleagues to work when unwell. Lead author of the AXA PPP commissioned report, Katherine Ashby, said: "It is vital to explore the reasons behind sickness presence especially any work-related triggers that are adversely affecting the wellbeing of employees which could be addressed in the workplace." A TUC poll published in March found within the preceding month, more than one in five public sector workers has been to work when too ill to do so (21 per cent). A further 41 per cent (compared to 36 per cent of private sector workers) had gone into work poorly when they should have stayed off sick within the last year, though not in the last month. ([Risks 450](#)).

- [The Work Foundation News release. Why do employees come to work when ill? An investigation into sickness presence in the workplace](#), The Work Foundation, April 2010.

Global: Unions worldwide prepare for 28 April

Early indications are that a record number of union activities in more countries than ever will take place on Workers' Memorial Day this year. The annual 28 April activity, when unions and campaigners pledge to 'Remember the dead and fight for the living', will be marked by events from Argentina to Zimbabwe. An annotated map prepared jointly by global union confederation ITUC and campaigning magazine *Hazards* is already part-observed with activity markers for events in over 50 countries, with more national reports pouring in all the time. "The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has chosen 'Unions make work safer' as our common theme for this day of action and is calling on its members to use this day for deepening discussions on the need for workers to have safe and sustainable working conditions, and for unions to step up their efforts in fighting for safe and healthy workplaces for all," said ITUC general secretary Guy Ryder. Commenting on the hundreds of thousands of work-related fatalities each year, he said: "Unions play a critical role in stopping this workplace carnage. This 28 April is the time to put occupational health and safety back on the agenda of governments and enterprises and show it is a key element of a sustainable future for our people." A related 28 April Facebook group now has over 1,000 members.

- [ITUC news release](#). [Hazards/ITUC 28 April global activities map and webpage](#). [28 April facebook group](#). [TUC Workers' Memorial Day webpages](#).

Korea: Samsung PR push won't cure cancer woes

Electronics giant Samsung has started a public relations charm offensive in a bid to escape a cancer scandal linked to its Korean factories ([Risks 452](#)). Last week, the company invited reporters to a chip plant south of Seoul to demonstrate its manufacturing process and emphasise its commitment to safety. "There is no risk," said Cho Soo-in, president of the company's memory division. Activist groups say at least 23 people - including six named in a lawsuit related to the cancers - developed cancers over a period of about a decade due to working at Samsung and that at least nine have died. Baak Young-mann, an attorney for the plaintiffs, said Samsung's "opinion is far from the truth." After the leukaemia death of 23-year-old Samsung worker Park Ji-yeon on 31 March, the company went on Twitter to offer an expression of mourning. Cho suggested that Samsung wants to use the current controversy to improve transparency. "From now on, we will openly conduct management that has its basis in communication," he said. US injury lawyer Mandy Hawes, who has won landmark legal cases for workers suffering devastating health problems as result of working in the electronic industry, told *Hazards* magazine: "Question - How many more electronics workers would be alive and well if over the past 30 years Samsung and its semiconductor industry brethren had made hazard communication as much as a priority as 'branding' or other market-based 'communication', strategies." Unions and campaigners in Korea will highlight the Samsung cancer cases on 28 April, Workers' Memorial Day.

- [Washington Post](#). [USA Today](#). [Global Unions cancer campaign](#).

USA: Green buildings should not hurt you

Green building is no less hazardous for workers than the less environmentally concerned alternative, a US study has found. Researchers from Oregon State University and East Carolina University compared reportable injury and illness rates at sites building to the highly sought after green Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standard with comparable conventional sites. The study concluded: "There appears to be little or no difference between green and non-green projects in terms of construction worker safety and health. With both green and non-green buildings having the same safety performance, a question arises as to whether LEED buildings should be labelled as sustainable buildings." In a separate paper in the same issue of the *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, the same authors call for a parallel sustainable construction safety and health (SCSH) rating system to "rate projects based on the importance given to construction worker safety and health and the degree of implementation of safety and health elements."

- [The Pump Handle](#). [Green jobs, safe jobs blog](#).
- S Rajendran and others. *Impact of green building design and construction on worker safety and health*, *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, volume 135, issue 10, pages 1058-1066, 2009 [[abstract](#)].
- S Rajendran and others. *Development and initial validation of Sustainable Construction Safety and Health Rating System*, *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, volume 135, issue 10, pages 1067-1075, 2009 [[abstract](#)].

Resources

Disability and health and safety

The Health and Safety Executive is urging employers, unions and union reps to make better use of its guidance on disability and health and safety. The guide, which is available online, "promotes good practice in disability equality at work and health and safety risk assessment." HSE says it suggests how to do risk assessments involving disabled job applicants and employees "with a minimum of fuss." It also provides links to information and financial grants – these help businesses make the sort of workplace adjustments that enable disabled people to enter and stay in work. According to TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson: "Too often, employers try to use 'health and safety' as an excuse not to employ disabled people. In fact disabled workers do not compromise safety so long as a full individual risk assessment is done. This welcome guidance shows how it can be done and also gives practical case studies that safety representatives will be able to use in ensuring that employers do not discriminate against disabled people under the spurious disguise of 'health and safety'."

- Health and safety for disabled people and their employers, HSE [[pdf](#)].

Events and Courses

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR APRIL 2010 to JUNE 2010

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

Useful Links

- Visit the TUC www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s website pages on health and safety. See what's on offer from TUC Publications and What's On in health and safety.
- Subscribe to Hazards magazine, supported by the TUC as a key source of information for union safety reps.
- What's new in the HSC/E and the European Agency.
- HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA. Tel: 01787 881165; fax: 01787 313995