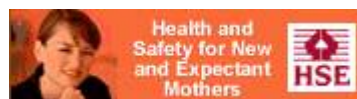


# Risks

issue no 113 – 5 July 2003

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Editor: [Rory O'Neill](#) of [Hazards](#) magazine. Comments to [Owen Tudor](#)

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**Risks** is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 7,500 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 statement](#). The TUC website lists future health

and safety events in [What's On – new events](#) are covered below.

## UNION NEWS

### **UCATT condemns construction carnage**

There were 26 deaths in the construction industry during the three months April 1 to June 30 – a 44% increase on 2001 when 105 fatalities during that year prompted John Prescott to call the Safety Summit. Of the 26 fatalities in the three-month period, 12 were falls from height, four were people struck by a moving vehicle, four were people trapped by something collapsing or overturning on them, and six were other causes. George Brumwell, general secretary of the building workers' union UCATT said today: "This is truly horrific. If things go on this way we will have a record number of deaths this year. The construction industry is supposed to be bringing down the numbers of deaths and injuries through a number of new initiatives, but clearly something is going badly wrong. I am sick to the back teeth of hearing the employers' representatives complaining about bureaucracy and health and safety rules being biased towards unions, when what they should be doing is making sure their members are doing everything possible to prevent this carnage." UCATT has asked for an urgent meeting with new construction Minister Nigel Griffiths.

- [UCATT press release](#)
- [HSE construction blitz](#) and [research into small falls that kill](#)

### **Farms are workplaces not playgrounds**

An overwhelming number of people in the UK believe children under 16 should either not be allowed to work in dangerous farm jobs, according new research. An opinion poll by ICM for rural workers' union TGWU found nearly 20 per cent believe there should be a total ban and 65 per cent said children should not be able to use farm equipment. "In the last ten years 42 children have died and nearly 350 have been seriously injured in accidents on farms," said Peter Allenson, TGWU national secretary for agriculture. "What more evidence is needed for a change in the law to make farms safer places to work? Children are not allowed to work in factories or on construction sites but there is nothing to prevent them operating dangerous machinery on farms. In the 21st century that cannot be right." The opinion poll showed that nearly half the UK population would be unhappy to let their own children work on farms. As part of a new TGWU farm safety campaign, specially produced postcards addressed to the Prime Minister present

the union's demands. "The opinion poll shows the public agree that the 50-year old law is overdue for change," said Mr. Allenson. "Today we are sending our message to the politicians that they must act." Figures released this week by HSE show 38 people died on farms in 2002/03, including one child. HSE says child safety is one of its priorities for the coming year.

- [TGWU news release](#). [HSE news release](#). [HSE agriculture webpage](#)

### **Shop assaults "an epidemic" says union**

Physical attacks and threats on Scots shop workers have reached record levels, a union has revealed. Research carried out by shopworkers' union Usdaw found that, on average, at least one shop assistant is attacked every hour of each working day. It also found Scotland to be worse for shopworker assaults than anywhere else in the UK. John Hannett, Usdaw's deputy general secretary, said violence and abuse of Scotland's shopworkers has reached "epidemic proportions". He added: "More and more shop workers than ever before are being attacked, threatened or abused at work." Justice minister Cathy Jamieson has given her backing to Usdaw's campaign. She said: "Physical and verbal abuse must not be accepted as part of the job for shopworkers and the 'Freedom from fear' campaign will help to harden the public's attitude against this sort of unacceptable behaviour." Eight out of every 1,000 Scottish retail workers have been victims of violence at work, according to Usdaw - compared with five per 1,000 in the UK as a whole.

- [BBC News Online](#). [Usdaw Freedom from Fear campaign](#). Also see: [Violence at work](#)

### **Wannabe rock stars face RSI risk**

Music lovers inspired to pick up a guitar over the summer festival season need to watch out for symptoms of repetitive strain injury (RSI), suggest recent research into the health risks of rock guitar playing. Physiotherapist Kathy Lewis, whose research uncovered the link, is working with physios' union the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) to help beginners reduce their injury risk. She says the good news for would-be rock stars is that the majority of RSI injuries are preventable, and urges guitarists to think of themselves as "musical athletes." According to Lewis: "The most important thing to remember is to listen to your body. Do not play through pain. If you experience pain or discomfort, seek help from a chartered

physiotherapist who will assess your condition, offer a suitable treatment programme and provide you with advice on how to prevent further problems.”

- [CSP news release](#)
- [RSI Association](#)

## OTHER NEWS

### **Government’s top doc backs work smoking ban campaign**

The government’s top public health adviser has said introducing smoking bans in public places including bars is “the only way” to successfully tackle the health risks from second-hand smoke. *The State of Public Health*, the annual report of government Chief Medical Officer Sir Liam Donaldson, recommends “very serious consideration should be given to introducing a ban on smoking in public places soon.” It adds: “All employers should plan to introduce smoke-free workplaces.” The report concludes: “Moves to make public places smoke-free will both eliminate the health risks and lead to more people giving up smoking.” It says bar workers, waitresses and waiters are “particularly vulnerable”, adding: “Going smoke-free also represents an opportunity for pubs, bars and restaurants to attract new customers; as well as fully protecting the health of their employees. As more and more countries and cities around the world make the change from smoke-filled to smoke-free rooms our country has the opportunity now to be in the forefront of this improvement in public health.” The report accuses the hospitality industry of being “painfully slow” to take measures to protect the health of staff, echoing recent criticism from TUC, anti-smoking and public health groups ([Risks 105](#)).

- [DoH news release](#). CMO annual report, [On the State of Public Health \(html and pdf versions\)](#). [BBC News Online](#). See the [smoking chapter](#). [ASH press release](#)
- **ONS findings that 87% back a workplace smoking ban – ONS [report](#) on *Smoking related behaviour and attitudes 2003***
- [Union campaign to tackle workplace passive smoking hazards](#)

### **Health chiefs plan to stub out pub smoking**

Public health officials in the north east of England are to seek a blanket smoking ban in pubs and clubs. They have applied for a £5 million funds boost to help set up a new office for tobacco control in the area

and believe smoking bans could lead to a drop off in the number of smokers in the region. The idea has been proposed by the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority. A spokesperson said the most outstanding example of combating smoking had been in California where, since a law banning smoking in public places was passed in 1988, smoking had fallen by 50 per cent compared with 20 per cent in the rest of the country, and that similar schemes had begun to be adopted elsewhere in the United States. UK doctors' union BMA this week voted overwhelmingly for a ban on smoking in public places.

- **Ananova on the [north east plan](#) and the [doctors' vote](#). [Sky News](#). [BBC News Online](#). [BMA conference resolutions](#)**

### **Factory boss guilty of manslaughter**

A factory boss whose negligence led to the deaths of two employees has been found guilty of manslaughter. Ian Morris had denied failing to implement a safe working environment at his paint-stripping factory, ENG Industrial Services. Birmingham Crown Court heard that the two employees, Ghulam Sarwar and Mumtaz Hussain, died after being overcome by a cloud of poisonous vapour in August last year. They were found slumped in a restroom after 22-year-old Mr Sarwar had desperately tried to phone for help before being overcome by the fumes. John Saunders QC, prosecuting, said ENG had a contract to strip aluminium wheels, which meant dipping them into vats of dichloromethane (DCM). The men had been working on a night shift and were discovered by workmates at 7am the following morning. Mr Saunders added: "Morris paid lamentably little regard for health and safety legislation. Had he done so these two men would have been alive today and their tragic deaths would have been avoided." Sentencing was adjourned for reports. Morris was granted conditional bail. The potentially fatal hazards of DCM have been known for decades. TUC-backed health and safety magazine *Hazards* urged workers to seek safer alternatives as long ago as 1986.

- [Birmingham Post](#) and [earlier story](#)
- ***Toxic paint stripper*, [Hazards magazine](#), no.10, September 1986**

### **Committee set to fight growing bullying threat**

An all-party group of MPs led by Baroness Gibson is to investigate widespread staff bullying within the NHS, following a string of

complaints to anti-bullying support organisation the Andrea Adams Trust (AAT). Gibson, who is chair of AAT and who before she joined the Lords was a TUC member of the HSC, told *Personnel Today* that, as Europe's biggest employer, the NHS is particularly prone to workplace bullying. The 50-strong group of MPs and trade union members hopes to make its findings public by the end of the year. The government has resisted moves to introduce a law on workplace bullying – trade union MSF has been a major player in the bullying law campaign ([Risks 100](#)) – and has argued bullying should be considered as a workplace stressor. Last month, HSE issued new draft management standards on stress ([Risks 111](#)).

- [Personnel Today](#). **Related information: Bullying at work article from [UNISON's U magazine](#)**

### **Our jobs make us sick - official**

Going to work is making millions of us ill, new official figures show. The latest HSE analysis of figures for self-reported illnesses suggest that among males who have ever worked there is a higher prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders (3 per cent) than females (2.2 per cent) whereas the corresponding rates of stress, depression or anxiety were both the same (1.3 per cent). The gender-specific incidence rates were of a similar order for musculoskeletal disorders (0.8 per cent of males and 0.7 per cent of females), but for stress, depression or anxiety the rate for females (1.1 per cent) was higher than for males (0.7 per cent). The study found full-time workers carried higher prevalence rates than part-time workers for work-related musculoskeletal disorders (2.2 per cent of full-time workers and 1.6 per cent of part-time workers) and stress, depression or anxiety (1.5 per cent of full-time workers and 0.8 per cent of part-time workers). The headline figures previously released indicated that the estimated prevalence of self-reported work-related illness in 2001/02 was 2.3 million, equating to 5.3 per cent of the population who have ever been employed.

- [HSE news release](#). **Self-reported work-related illness in 2001/02: Results from a household survey, (SWI01/02), [HSE statistics webpage](#). [Full report in pdf format](#). [Workplacelaw.net](#).**

### **Met chiefs will not face retrial**

Sir John Stevens, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, and his predecessor Lord Condon, will not face a retrial for alleged safety breaches. The decision not to go ahead with a costly retrial was made

by the HSE, which had first brought the prosecution against Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir John Stevens and Lord Condon ([Risks 108](#)). HSE had claimed the police chiefs failed in their duty to protect officers under their command from harm while at work, after one police officer was killed and another injured in roof top pursuits. But High Court judge Mr Justice Crane criticised the HSE for bringing the case to court, which has cost about £3 million. In a statement the Metropolitan Police Authority said "we simply cannot understand why the Health and Safety Executive judged it to be in the public interest to bring this prosecution. The Met had already complied readily with improvement notices." However, HSE deputy director general Justin McCracken said: "HSE brought this prosecution because we found evidence to suggest that there were persistent failures by the Metropolitan Police to protect their officers while carrying out their duties." The TUC wants to stop Home Office plans ([Risks 95](#)) to shift responsibility for health and safety from Chief Police Officers to Police Authorities. Owen Tudor said: "accountability and responsibility should stay with the Chief Police Officers."

- [BBC News Online](#). [MPA news release](#). [HSE news release](#)
- [Police Federation](#)

### **Lawyer-lite solution could slash compo bill**

Improved access to "return to work schemes" for victims of workplace accidents or diseases could cut the cost of compensation paid through employers' liability (EL) insurance by up to 40 per cent, a new study claims. The research, backed by the Association of British Insurers (ABI), argues that employers and claimants must be obliged to get involved for the scheme to be a success. The report concludes that compensation legal costs could be slashed by restricting litigation to just the contentious parts of claims, such as the level of pain and suffering. It argues that a "no fault" system, similar to those in financial difficulty in the US ([Risks 112](#)), would not be cost effective alternative. Owen Tudor, TUC's head of safety, commented: "It's good news that the ABI has come out against no-fault compensation, which is bad for victims, bad for business and bad for prevention. Like the TUC, insurers seem to be edging towards a lawyer-lite solution to the compensation problem, encouraging non-contested damages awards at the earliest possible moment." He added: "It's also welcome that ABI's not letting the need for rehabilitation drop. But making rehabilitation mandatory for employers and workers may seem simple, it wouldn't work in practice: voluntarism with lots of incentives and

encouragement is a more attractive option, because forcing people undermines the whole essence of rehabilitation.”

- [ABI news release](#). **Full ABI report: Workplace compensation and insurance – three options for reform: A study** [[pdf format](#)]

### **HSC criticises rail crash investigation delays**

The HSC has criticised delays in completing rail accident investigations and says it wants a “more mature relationship” with the industry. HSC chair Bill Callaghan told the Railway Forum’s annual conference that after a difficult period of criticism, change and uncertainty for the industry, the HSE and its Railway Inspectorate want to work with the industry to restore pride and public confidence in the railways. He added: “We want to see a more mature relationship between the safety regulator and the industry – a relationship characterised by mutual respect and shared understanding of the problems and how to solve them.” He criticised ongoing delays on major accident investigations, saying: “These delays cast a shadow on management and individuals within the rail industry, as well as being a source of frustration for the bereaved.” He added: “The challenge is to make this an industry which can be truly proud of its safety performance – a performance based on actual achievement and real commitment to continuous improvement.” Rail unions have warned that improvements will remain elusive until the subcontracting culture on the railways is ended.

- [HSE news release](#). [Railway Forum](#)

### **Construction blitz stops work on 332 sites**

Work was stopped at almost a quarter of the construction sites visited by HSE inspectors during a national blitz on falls from height. Another five per cent of the sites visited were issued with improvement notices. There were also many instances of work voluntarily stopping until easily solved fall from height risks were reduced. HSE say it is considering initiating a number of prosecutions. Inspectors visited 1,446 construction sites across Great Britain during the blitz, which took place over the first two weeks in June. HSE says its aim was to make sure that where work at height was taking place or planned, the risk of falling was being properly managed. It issued 332 prohibition notes, stopping work immediately, and a further 75 improvement notices. The blitz was part of “Don’t fall for it” ([Risks 109](#)), the UK’s contribution to a Europe-wide inspection-led campaign to reduce falls

from height in construction ([Risks 109](#)).

- [HSE news release](#)
- **Free [Falls from Height Action Pack and video](#) - telephone 08457 181819. or contact [HSE Books](#) quoting MISC600, giving your name, address, telephone number, trade/profession and company size when you order**

### **Small falls can kill**

New HSE-backed research has developed a "toolkit" for tackling falls at work, the top workplace fatality risk. HSE says falls from height kill about 70 workers a year and seriously injure another 4,000. They are the most common cause of death and the second most common cause of major injury to employees. HSE's Dr Bill Gillan said the new research report "provides valuable insight into the factors which cause falls from height and offers the priority programme a useful tool to help achieve its target of a 10 per cent reduction in the number of deaths and major injuries as a result of a fall from height by 2010." The report, *Falls from height – prevention and risk control effectiveness*, warns of the risks of "low falls," especially on stairs. The report says around 60 per cent of non-fatal accidents and injuries over the past five years have been due to low - under two metre – falls. The research was commissioned by the HSE as a resource for its "Falls from height priority programme."

- [HSE news release. \*Falls from height – Prevention and risk control effectiveness\*, RR116, £50.00, ISBN 0 7176 22221 5, from \[HSE Books\]\(#\)](#)

### **HSE sees safety reps role in visual display safety**

Stress, visual discomfort, as well as aches and pains in the hands, wrists, arms or shoulders are just some of the problems that can affect people who use visual display units (VDUs), HSE has warned. Launching a new edition of its *Working with VDUs* guidance booklet, HSE's Elizabeth Gyngell said: "The new edition of *Working with VDUs* takes account of minor changes to the law that came into effect last September, as a result of the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002. It also draws more attention to the vital role of employees and safety representatives in taking part in risk assessments and reporting any health problems to employers. The earlier that any problems are reported and tackled, the less severe

they are likely to be.” She adds: “By following HSE's guidance on VDU work, preventive action in most workplaces can be taken quite easily and need not be costly. Indeed it is likely to be far more expensive for employers and their insurers to ignore MSDs, which may lead not only to compensation claims, but also to costs arising from sickness absences and reduced productivity.”

- [HSE news release](#). **Single copies of *Working with VDUs (INDG36 rev2)* are available free from [HSE Books](#) (also see the [HSE free leaflets webpage](#)).** *Work with display screen equipment (L26)*, ISBN 0-7176-2582-6, price £8.95, and *The law on VDUs: an easy guide HSG90*, ISBN 0-7176-2602-4, price £8.50, are also available from [HSE Books](#). [HSE musculoskeletal web portal](#)

## INTERNATIONAL

### **Australia: Union “gutless” jibe at “ Ministry for smoking”**

A move to partially phase out smoking in enclosed places in Western Australian workplaces is “gutless,” hospitality union LHMU has said. “We know that passive smoke is a significant health risk to hospitality workers and patrons,” said LHMU’s Carolyn Smith. “The government seems to have capitulated to the pressure from the hospitality industry about their fears of loss of revenues and profits, rather than listening to health experts and worker representatives.” Contrary to industry claims, evidence from around the world shows that smoking bans have little or even a positive effect on profits, said Ms Smith. “The only way to describe this is gutless,” she said, commenting on the move by what the union has dubbed the “Ministry for smoking.”

- [LHMU news release](#). **Union-friendly advice from [SmokeFree’03 \(Australia\)](#); [SmokeatWork.org \(Europe\)](#) and [Hazards \(International\)](#)**

### **Canada: Stressed out by hours and overload**

Long working hours and work overload are stressing out Canadians, an official study has found. Statistics Canada reports that in 2000, the highest proportion of working Canadians - more than one-third (34 per cent) - cited too many demands or hours as the most common source of stress in the workplace. It adds that 15 per cent cited poor interpersonal relations as the main source of work stress and 13 per cent cited risk of accident and injury. The study found work schedules

also play a role in stress at work. A quarter of individuals who worked rotating shifts worried about the risk of accident or injury, compared with only 11 per cent of regular daytime workers. And one-third of workers in health-related jobs cited the risk of accident or injury as a source of workplace stress, "because of the risk of infection from illness and disease coupled with long hours and irregular shifts," the report said. Its findings are based on the General Social Survey, a nationwide annual telephone survey covering about 25,000 people aged 15 and over.

- [Statistics Canada news release](#). [Reuters Health](#). [Globe and Mail](#). [Toronto Star](#). [CBC News](#)
- **Sources of workplace stress, [Perspectives on labour and income](#), vol.4, no.6, June 2003**
- [UK national work-stress network](#)

#### **Denmark: Unions fight for prevention system**

Unions in Denmark are threatening legal action to block government moves to dismantle a highly regarded safety system. It says a plan proposed by employment minister Claus Hjort Frederiksen to introduce private consultants to replace the BSTs, the country's multidisciplinary, local occupational health service system with a preventive focus, could contravene European Union legislation. The BSTs receive mandatory membership dues from 50,000 companies, concentrated in sectors with a high risk of accident and personal injury. The Danish Metalworkers' Federation (Dansk Metalarbejderforbund) is threatening to take the minister to the EC Court if he refuses to withdraw the proposals and says it intends to lodge a complaint with the European Commission. The metalworkers' union campaign is backed by general union SiD, which says BST abolition will systematically sweep away 20 years' hard work. Earlier union campaigns have succeeded in overturning damaging measures sought by the employment minister. An attempt last year to abolish compulsory environmental assessments for companies with fewer than 10 staff was declared illegal under EU law.

- [IMF news release](#)

#### **South Africa: Business and labour should ensure safety at work**

The time has come for both employers and employees to improve safety standards in the workplace, a top South African safety official has said. Esther Tloane, the Labour Department's executive manager for safety, said: "Employers who put profit first before human life must

be exposed so as to ensure that corrective measures are enforced.” She added: “To alleviate the unnecessary deaths and injuries at the workplace, untrained workers should not operate dangerous machines or equipments.” Ms Tloane said her department would not hesitate to close any business where workers' lives were put at risk. Jan Tsiane of union confederation COSATU said health and safety issues needed to be taken seriously. Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana and labour representatives from union federations COSATU, NACTU and FEDUSA signed a National Occupational Health and Safety Accord last year.

- [BuaNews](#)

### **South Africa: Mining union calls for asbestos ban by 2008**

The asbestos industry is claiming asbestos risks are “miniscule” in a bid to frustrate a union’s campaign for an asbestos ban in South Africa. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) says it wants government to impose a total ban on the use of asbestos fibre in South African industry by 2008 at the latest. NUM’s Fred Gona told the environmental affairs portfolio committee of the South African parliament that the industry was “playing down the health effects” of asbestos. The Asbestos Association of South Africa (AASA) argument is the same used unsuccessfully by the industry in Europe, calling for “responsible and safe use” of asbestos-containing products to be allowed. It claims the risks health risks are “minuscule and barely measurable.” AASA member Andre Goosen said as far as he was aware, not a single asbestos-related disease had occurred among employees of his association's members. NUM’s Fred Gona responded: “We don't buy this argument that there are no cases over this period.” This week UK-based asbestos giant Cape plc paid out £7.5 million in compensation to South African asbestos victims. South Africa-based Gencor contributed a further £3.1 million to the settlement. Reports this week said the company could be facing a new tranche of asbestos disease claims.

- **Business Day on [the asbestos ban call](#) and on the [Cape and Gencor settlements](#). Business Report on [the ban call](#) and on the [latest Gencor claims](#)**
- [International Ban Asbestos Secretariat](#)

### **USA: President Bush shows “disdain” for workers’ pain**

After axing the law intended to protect workers from strain injuries ([Risks 47](#)), President Bush seems intent on erasing all evidence of the problem too. The Bush administration on 1 July revoked a requirement

that employers keep records of ergonomics injuries. The move, ditching a rule that would have required employers to check a box on official injury reports if an employee suffered a strain injury, “appears an almost calculated move to demonstrate its disdain for worker health and safety,” commented corporate crime campaigners Russell Mokiher and Robert Weissman. Their “corp-focus” column notes: “The stomped-out reporting requirement is just the latest manifestation of the ideological campaign against rules to protect workers in the United States.” The administration’s latest assault on safety has angered unions, who had campaigned for years for the introduction of the original ergo standard. “Just because the government is not going to require employers to track these injuries, and just because the government is not going to enforce a safety standard, doesn't mean that workers will stop becoming ill or permanently disabled on the job,” commented John Sweeney, president of the national union federation AFL-CIO.

- [Corp-focus. Confined Space. OSHA news release.](#) [AFL-CIO news release.](#) [The Guardian.](#) [Houston Chronicle.](#) [CBS News](#)
- [AFL-CIO ergonomics campaign webpage.](#) [Check out health problems in your workplace](#)

## RESOURCES

### **MRSA information sheet**

Health and social services union UNISON has produced updated guidance on MRSA - Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus, an antibiotic resistant infection which can affect patients and care staff. UNISON says the guidance is aimed at branch officials, stewards and safety representatives and highlights prevention and control measures in the workplace. It adds that although the biggest threat is to patients, staff can be at risk from contracting MRSA. The detailed guide notes that MRSA should be tackled in line with health and safety law and be subject to risk assessment. It says prevention and control measures to deal with MRSA should be introduced only after a proper risk assessment.

- [UNISON MRSA information sheet.](#) **Also see:** [BBC Q&A on MRSA](#)

### **Preventing injuries to cleaners**

The latest issue of GMB's *Health and safety matters* looks at new HSE

guidance aimed at preventing injuries to cleaners. GMB says cleaners are often the “forgotten workers,” and says GMB safety representatives “can use the union briefing to ensure that cleaners are no longer the hidden workers when it comes to health and safety.”

- [GMB Health and safety matters no.44](#)

### **Slips, trips and falls**

HSE has created a quick and easy route to online information on workplace slips and trips. It says slips and trips are the most common cause of major injuries at work. They occur in almost all workplaces, 95 per cent of them result in broken bones and they can also be the initial causes for a range of other accidents, such as falls. The webpage includes news updates, stats, case histories and links.

- [HSE slips and trips webpage](#)

### **Violence at work**

A new “web portal” on workplace violence is up and running on the HSE website. It says the British crime survey conducted in 2000 showed there were almost 1.3 million incidents of violence at work in England and Wales in 1999. The webpage, which particularly targets workers in the retail, service and leisure industries, includes links to related campaigns, statistics, guides and useful organisations.

- [HSE violence webpage](#)

## **EVENTS AND COURSES**

Only newly announced events, events next week and very important events will be listed here in future. But there is a comprehensive listing of [health and safety events](#) on the TUC website – bookmark it for easy reference!

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

#### **COURSES FOR SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2003**

[Midlands](#), [North](#), [North West](#), [Scotland](#), [South East](#), [South West](#), [Wales](#), [Yorkshire and Humberside](#)

#### **Hazards Conference, 5-7 September**

The Hazards Conference will be in London. Margaret Sharkey at the London Hazards Centre is the co-ordinator of the London end of the

organisation. You can contact her via e-mail at [margaret@lhc.org.uk](mailto:margaret@lhc.org.uk) or on 020 7794 5999.

### **Get in on the ACTS, 17 October**

If you want to know more about the behind the scenes working of a top advisory panel on dangerous substances, you are being given your chance. The HSC's Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances (ACTS), an expert group that advises on "control of risks arising from the supply of or exposure to toxic substances at work," is to hold its first [open meeting](#) at HSE's London HQ. The 17 October open meeting will coincide with European Week for Safety and Health 2003, which this year takes the theme "prevention of risks caused by dangerous substances." Places must be booked in advance, no later than 15 August, by contacting the [ACTS Secretariat](#), HSE, Floor 7NW, Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HS. Tel: 020 7717 6780. Tell HSE your full contact details, your job title and organisation and details of any particular areas of interest you might have in ACTS work. [More information on ACTS](#).

### **European Week for Health and Safety at Work, 13-19 October**

The theme for the Week in 2003 will be 'dangerous substances' (EU Agency [press release](#)). The TUC will be stressing the hierarchy of control, and especially the need for substitutes and general toxic use reduction strategies. Key hazards dealt with will include asbestos, asthmagens and solvents. [Future years' themes](#) have also now been decided.

## USEFUL LINKS

**Visit** the TUC [http://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.