

Risks

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

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Risks is the TUC's weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others, read each week by over 8,500 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](#).

UNION NEWS

TUC appoints new head of safety

Hugh Robertson has succeeded Owen Tudor ([Risks 128](#)) as the UK union movement's top safety official. Hugh, who took up the post of TUC Senior Health and Safety Officer this week, has impressive credentials, having started out in the 1970s as a union safety rep in the paper making industry and a member of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science – the organisation that gave the world *Hazards* magazine. He's also got over 20 years experience as a union negotiator and organiser under his belt, most recently as the head of bargaining and health and safety at Britain's largest union, UNISON. He told *Risks*: "It is important for TUC to be active supporting unions in strengthening health and safety organisation." He added that active and informed safety reps were the key to union success on safety. "Without people on the ground, it is all effort wasted," he said.

- [TUC health and safety](#). [UNISON health and safety](#).
- [Why unions are good for safety](#).

TUC welcomes European working time review



The TUC's campaign against the UK's opt-out from the working hours ceiling has received a major boost from Europe. This week the European Commission announced a review of the Working Time Regulations, which will give particular attention to the opt-out which the EC believes has been misused. Commenting on the review, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The Commission is right to express concern at the way the Directive has been applied in the UK. We've had rules on working time for over five years but because of lax enforcement and the individual opt-out, UK workers still work the longest hours in Europe." He added: "It's about time UK workers got the same protection against bullying bosses and long working days as workers do in the rest of Europe. Removing the individual opt-out would help signal the end of Britain's unhealthy long hours culture." Late last year, the TUC presented a dossier of evidence to EU Social Affairs Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou, calling on Europe to end the opt-out, bring UK public holiday entitlement up to European standards, and to toughen enforcement of working time rights ([Risks 136](#)). The European Trades Union Confederation (ETUC) expressed "disappointment" at the EC consultation document for not

proposing concrete measures to address the opt-out problem.

- [TUC news release](#). [ETUC news release](#). [EC news release and frequently asked questions guide](#). [EC consultation document](#), **deadline for responses 31 March 2004.**
- [BBC News Online](#). [The Independent](#). [UNISON news release](#). [CBI news release](#).
- **We can help:** [TUC "It's about time!" campaign](#) and [Hazards worked-to-death web resource](#).
- **You can help:** The TUC is also asking workers to tell their long hours stories either via the [workSMART website](#) or by calling the TUC timeline on **0870 8 500 500**.

Make the boss own up to accidents

It used to be so simple for union safety reps. Go to the accident book, read the form, get something done. But new-style workplace accident books, introduced at the start of the year, could mean there will be nothing much to read, just a stub with bare bones information ([Risks 137](#)). The revised approach, designed to protect confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Act (DPA), means safety reps, using to regularly thumbing through the accident book for clues to what is going wrong at work and why, will now have to adopt a different approach. UNISON warned in June last year that the new book was inadequate, and urged safety reps to negotiate access to accident data. GMB's safety department says it has been told by the HSE director general Tim Walker employers can meet their duties under both the Safety Reps' Regulations and DPA "by providing the information in an anonymised form ie. where specific personal information such as the worker's name and address is removed, or by giving the information in full if the worker who has been injured has given explicit consent to personal information being disclosed." GMB adds: "Explicit consent means that the injured person must be told clearly what personal data the employer is asking them to reveal, to whom it will be revealed and how it will be used." In other words, ask and you shall receive – at worst, in a slightly edited form. UNISON says the only information that can be withheld from safety reps, is the worker's name and home address.

- [GMB alert](#) [full version of the *GMB Health and safety matters alert* in [pdf format](#)]. [Amicus MSF alert](#).

[UNISON Health and Safety Organiser](#), June 2003.

- [HSE news release](#). Accident book, HSE, ISBN 0 7176 2603, £4.75 plus VAT. [Order online](#) or from [HSE Books](#).

Lifting aid causes lifting injury

A Walsall care worker injured trying to use a mobile hoist to move a disabled woman in her home has been awarded nearly £20,000 damages. TGWU member Susan Harvey successfully sued Walsall Council over its failure to carry out a proper risk assessment. The 47-year-old former auxiliary nurse suffered strain injuries as a result of trying to lug the large hoist over carpet. TGWU took up the case following the accident more than four years ago. Ms Harvey was awarded £19,380 after claiming Walsall Council was negligent and breached its duty to her as an employee. Making the award at Birmingham County Court, Judge William Woodward said: "The use of the hoist exposed the claimant to a foreseeable risk of injury. The care workers were having to struggle to move it both into the room and about it." He added: "Difficulties were to have been anticipated by reason of the size of the hoist and the presence of the carpet, quite apart from the question of the weight of the person being moved."

- [Evening Mail](#).
- **Safety information:** [UNISON's guide on lifting of home care clients](#).

Airline unions say guns and planes don't mix

Airline unions have warned that armed sky marshals and planes are a bad mix. Responding to government attempts to insist armed marshals travel on some US bound flights, a move demanded by the US government, pilot's union BALPA commented: "BALPA believes we need to focus on the many stages before a terrorist gets near an aircraft. Sky marshals could give a false sense of security and may lull us into dropping our guard." The union added: "BALPA does not support armed sky marshals although, as professionals, we will work to make their deployment as risk free as possible." Brendan Gold, who represents cabin crews at the Transport and General Workers Union, said security should be tight on the ground, not in the air. While Denmark, Portugal and Sweden have all refused to be bullied by the US government into accepting armed marshals on planes, the UK

government has attempted to be more accommodating, leading the UK pilot's union to comment: "BALPA believes that international consensus is needed to improve security, not unilateral action by one state irrespective of the cultures, traditions and security record of others." It wants the government to call a "security summit" and is advising members to refuse to fly with armed sky marshals until an agreement is reached.

- [BALPA position statement, campaign news release and letter to the Transport Minister](#). **BBC News Online on Portugal, Denmark and Sweden's refusal and BALPA call for an agreement**. [Ananova](#). [The Independent](#).

Small card hits big problem of school violence

A comprehensive guide to tackling violence, abuse and harassment in schools and colleges has been sent to every member of teachers' union NASUWT on a credit card-sized CD-ROM. The hi-tech aid, which has survival tips for victims of assault and bullying, offers practical guidance on responding to school indiscipline including: formulating a code of conduct for students who fail to adhere to behaviour policies; banning from school premises parents who threaten or attack teachers; restraining violent and disruptive pupils; dealing with workplace bullying by students, parents, colleagues or management; and advice for teachers facing allegations of assault. Eamonn O'Kane, general secretary of NASUWT, said: "As part of its continuing campaign, NASUWT will build on its landmark victory in the House of Lords case of 2003 which defended the rights of teachers to refuse to teach violent and disruptive pupils." He added: "NASUWT has pursued consistently the entitlement of teachers to work in an environment free from violence and disruption."

- [NASUWT news release](#).

Retail jobs serve up daily violence



Over 70 per cent of respondents to a retail union's survey of violence at work say they have experienced violence or abuse at work. Usdaw says the statistic offers more evidence of a worrying trend. Visitors to the union's website were asked to click "yes" or "no" to the question: "Have you

experienced violence or abuse at work?" Nearly 900 visitors to the site said they had, with 375 saying they had not. Usdaw says latest retail industry figures reveal that a shopworker is attacked or abused every minute of the working day in Britain. In 2002, 16,200 shopworkers were physically assaulted, 48,600 were threatened with attack and over 70,000 were verbally abused. The union says these figures are "without doubt, underestimates." It says shopworkers often opt against reporting incidents, "as they are rapidly becoming daily occurrences in some stores across the UK."

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

OTHER NEWS

More delays for the corporate killing law



The government has confirmed the timetable for the promised corporate killing law has been delayed again. In May 2003, when the Criminal Justice Bill was being debated in parliament, the Home Office - in response to an amendment that would have introduced a new offence of corporate killing - issued a statement in which it said that "a timetable for legislation and further details would be announced this autumn" ([Risks 107](#)). It missed this deadline, promising instead proposals by the "end of the year." Now the Centre for Corporate Accountability says it has been told by the Home Office the proposals will not be published until "late January or early February," though the Home Office says it still intends to publish a draft bill in the Spring of 2004. Whenever the proposals do emerge, it is unlikely they will satisfy unions ([Risks 110](#)). Home Secretary David Blunkett has already said the proposals will not include new measures to make it easier to jail company directors and senior managers for safety crimes.

- [CCA news release.](#)
- **CCA is seeking a case worker to run its Work-Related Death Advice Service; closing date for applications 5pm, Wednesday, 28 January 2004. [Further details.](#)**
- **For updates on workplace safety crimes in the UK,**

visit the [CCA website](#). For the latest news worldwide, see the [Hazards deadly business website](#).

“Utterly reckless” boss jailed for worker's death

An “utterly reckless” boss has been jailed for a year for manslaughter after one of his workers was crushed to death. Father-of-three Shaun Cooper, 27, was found dead in a poultry shed after becoming trapped in equipment. Peter Pell pleaded guilty to manslaughter after it was found he removed all the safety features on the machine. Mr Cooper was the second employee working for Mr Pell's poultry shed cleaning company to die in less than six years. A judge at Nottingham Crown Court heard the 62-year-old bought the skid steer loader in 1994 and within days had pulled out the safety mechanisms designed to protect the operator. Mr Justice Morland jailed Pell for 12 months and ordered two charges under the Health and Safety at Work Act to lie on file. He said the sentence would have been longer but for Pell's age and poor health, adding: “This was a case of a flagrant disregard for the safety of your employees, utter recklessness.” Peter Allenson of rural workers' union TGWU commented: “In agriculture, as in construction, there has to be a change of culture, which we think will only come about when strong custodial penalties are handed down to employers who breach health and safety law and it results in death. Education is important but on its own won't save lives.”

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

Six figure fine after teenager dies

A company which designed a steel column that fell on a 16-year-old worker, killing him instantly, has been ordered to pay £160,000 in fines and costs. Christopher Kesterton, who had left school just weeks before the accident in 2000, was helping construct a warehouse in Leicestershire when he was struck by the 17-metre structure weighing almost two tonnes. He was the second person in four years to be killed in an accident linked to Conder Structures Limited, Leicester Crown Court was told. Judge Christopher Metcalf, passing sentence, said: “On 28 November 2000 a tragic but avoidable accident occurred... It was avoidable because if the proper design structures and supervision had been in place he would probably still be alive today.” The company was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay £59,374 costs. In 1996, an employee of Conder Structures Ltd was killed by a 3.5-tonne truss which fell on him. On that occasion the company was fined £50,000 and

ordered to pay £10,000 costs. Construction Safety Campaign members protested outside the court, carrying placards calling for the jailing of company bosses responsible for deaths at work and highlighting government footdragging on the promised corporate killing law.

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

HSE accused of “superficial” inspections

The government's safety watchdog has been accused of failing to protect thousands of workers in the microelectronics industry, where jobs have been linked to cancer and pregnancy problems ([Risks 46](#)). Researchers Professor Andrew Watterson and Dr Joseph LaDou say Health and Safety Executive inspections are “superficial,” “substandard” and “seriously flawed,” and add HSE “is creating the illusion that the semiconductor industry in the UK is being rigorously inspected and regulated.” Writing in the *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health* (IJOEH), they say: “The shortcomings in the HSE appear to be the result of apathy, complacency, underfunding and an industry fairly secure in the belief that it will not be regularly or rigorously inspected, and even if it will, not much in terms of punitive action will occur.” Commenting on the findings, Ian Tasker of the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) said some sections of industry are known to be lobbying the government to weaken health and safety regulations. He said: “With limited resources we believe the HSE is not in a position to properly investigate causes of industrial cancers and anything other than run-of-the-mill accidents.” Silicon Glen has been criticised for having the worst safety record in the UK ([Risks 122](#)).

- [The Sunday Herald](#).
- **A Watterson and J LaDou. Health and Safety Executive inspections of UK semiconductor plants, [IJOEH](#), volume 9, number 4, October-December 2003, pages 392-395.**
- [International Campaign for Responsible Technology](#).

Nasty message in the inbox? You’ve got stress

Abusive emails from the boss can send your blood pressure soaring, a study has shown. But while a flaming missive from a superior can send make your blood boil, nicer notes or those penned by someone similarly placed in the pecking order have no adverse effect. Experts

from Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College attached blood pressure monitors to volunteers before they opened their inboxes. They found that blood pressure shot up if emails were from their superiors - or written in an aggressive tone. A group of 48 volunteers had their blood pressure tested before and after they looked at a variety of emails, both from colleagues of equal status and those of higher status - and written in a neutral or aggressive tone. The researchers, who presented their findings at the British Psychological Society conference this week, concluded that it is counter-effective for managers to write aggressive emails as it increases negativity in staff. Researcher Howard Taylor said "although participants blood pressure rose to some degree after reading the threatening email and the email from a superior, the highest increase was seen in those reading an email which was both threatening and from a higher status colleague."

- [BPS news release](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Ananova](#).
- **Concerned about workplace stress? [Check out the Hazards get-a-life" guide](#) and [latest news](#).**

Frontline health staff face violence and abuse

A survey of hospital staff has found violence and abuse targeted at staff is widespread, with midwives, nurses and health assistants the worst affected groups. The Institute of Employment Studies survey for NHS trusts in London, found 38 per cent of midwives said they had experienced "some form of harassment or violence, including verbal, racial, sexual and physical abuse," compared with 36 per cent of hospital nurses, and 33 per cent of healthcare assistants. Doctors, administrative staff and other groups came lower down the abuse league. The findings come as the NHS Security Management Service launches a new strategy to tackle NHS violence, including a new national reporting system and a Legal Protection Unit to work with the police, NHS bodies and the Crown Prosecution Service, to increase the prosecution rate of individuals who assault staff. The initiative has been welcomed by health union UNISON ([Risks 128](#)). "A safe and secure working environment is integral to the successful delivery of patient care in the NHS," said UNISON head of health Karen Jennings. "For NHS staff and professionals to be able to deliver the care that patients expect, they need to be able to work without the fear of assault."

- [The Independent](#). **UNISON news releases on [the IES](#)**

[study](#) and on [NHS violence strategy](#).

Stressed pilots driven to drink

Airline pilots driven to drink by soaring workplace stress need support, not the sack, say experts. An investigation by *The Observer* found that pressure caused by long hours, cost-cutting following the growth of no-frills airlines and security measures to combat terrorism have all exacerbated the problem. One ex-pilot, who now specialises in the human factors associated with flight, said: "The Civil Aviation Authority is very concerned - everything is about money, cutting costs and pushing hours up. It leads to fatigue which itself can be highly dangerous and it leads to an increased prevalence of alcoholism." Kate Keenan, a business psychologist at Keenan Research who specialises in mental health and alcohol, said: "Companies are screaming for random testing, but they have to support workers first." The British Air Line Pilots' Association (BALPA) also says there needs to be a more cooperative system. Jim McAuslan, BALPA's general secretary, said: "This is our number one priority. We strongly believe there should be a system where any pilot can try and persuade another to go to a neutral board where they don't lose their job but get help."

- [The Observer](#). [The Guardian](#). **BALPA policy on drug and alcohol** [[pdf format](#)].
- **TUC/Hazards guide to [workplace drugs and alcohol policies](#), stress and other [work-related causes of substance misuse problems](#) and to [Member Assistance Programmes](#).**

Ministers criticised for failing to curb smoking

The government has been criticised for failing to ban smoking in pubs and restaurants. Tessa Jowell, the Culture Secretary, said she was calling in leaders of the hospitality industry to persuade them to improve facilities for non-smokers and tap into demand from non-smokers. She criticised the fact that only a "tiny" number of pubs and restaurants offered no-smoking areas and air conditioning to cut the risk of passive smoking. However, Jowell has been a strong supporter of the failing voluntary agreement. Anti-smoking group Action on Smoking and Health (Ash) believes only legislation would combat the problem. Deborah Arnott, the director of Ash, said: "We feel people working in pubs and restaurants have a right to a smoke-free workplace and for that to happen legislation is necessary." She added:

"There's support for this from the British Medical Association, all the royal colleges and health experts. Plus it's popular with the public; this is what they want." A joint TUC and ASH report last year warned that passive smoking at work is killing three workers every day and called on the government to introduce a legally binding Code of Practice on smoking at work ([Risks 101](#) and [Risks 105](#)).

- [BBC News Online](#). [The Independent](#). [Ananova](#). [The Guardian](#).
- [TUC SmokeatWork website](#) and [Hazards smoking webpages](#).
- **Hazards magazine briefing on [the hospitality industry smokescreen](#) and [latest news on smoking at work](#).**

OBITUARY:

Dame Sheila McKechnie

Sheila McKechnie, who has died aged 55, was one of the original gang of high profile union safety figures that emerged in the 1970s and had a dramatic impact on workplace health and safety. Although she is best known for her role as director of homeless charity Shelter and then of the Consumers' Association, a post she held until her death, Sheila first came to prominence as a national union health and safety officer, working for the ASTMS union from 1976 to 1985. Whilst at ASTMS (later MSF, now part of AMICUS) she ran effective campaigns on neglected workplace health issues including carbon disulphide and heart disease, workplace carcinogens including cytotoxic drugs, reproductive health risks and on women's occupational health and safety, and had played a part in the development of a national network of informed and trained workplace safety reps. She was awarded an OBE in 1995 and became a dame in 2001.

- [Consumers' Association](#). [BBC News Online](#). [The Guardian](#). [The Daily Telegraph](#). [The Independent](#).

INTERNATIONAL

Australia: Bursting bus drivers told to wait and wee



Bus drivers in Australia are piddling in bottles, buckets or at the road side because of a chronic lack of toilets. Drivers in New South Wales say this is an industry wide problem and

New South Wales say this is an industry wide problem and that operators and the government are failing to address a serious health issue. Former bus driver and Transport Workers Union organiser Mick Pieri said: "The drivers have to hang on for hours on end. A lot of time when you need to go to the loo you have to go through passengers just to get to the toilet. The passengers can be irate because the bus is running late." Pieri says the issue is about more than just toilets. "We need facilities with hot and cold running water, proper meal rooms, proper amenities." He suspects that being forced to hold off going to the toilet on a regular basis could be linked to a high incidence of prostate problems among bus drivers. TUC launched its own "gotta go!" campaign last year after *Hazards* magazine revealed UK workers were routinely being denied loo breaks and were at risk of a range of health problems as a result ([Risks 94](#)).

- [Workers Online](#).
- [Hazards toilet breaks guide](#) – including case histories and a guide to related health problems and the work breaks law. [TUC WorkSmart guide](#).
- **The TUC wants workers to send in their loo break laments so it can shame bad bosses into providing better toilet breaks. Examples of disrespect can be sent by [email](#) to badbogs@worksmart.org.uk or posted to "Got to Go" at TUC, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS.**

Australia: Psycho testing is not a safe option

A report has thrown doubts on a key test used by Australia's State Rail to measure train driver vigilance and attention. The Safe Concentration and Attention Test (SCAAT) has been used by State Rail as a part of a psychometric testing programme, given to safety critical employees. However, registered psychologist Winston Horne has called for State Rail to conduct more research on how it conducts psychometric assessments of employees. "As a test of vigilance it's not too wonderful," says Horne, one of the report's authors. "There is no published research available." The report concluded there is "a lack of evidence that it does predict driver vigilance, concentration and attention." It is also critical of another part of the psychometric testing package, the Mackworth Clock test. "There is no evidence that the test can predict, with any accuracy, driver propensity for train accidents and it would seem that the test may unfairly discriminate against older

train drivers who, while still being capable of driving trains safely, may not react as quickly." Earlier this week, a plan to force 1,000 tax office staff to undergo aptitude and psychological testing was blocked by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

- [Workers Online](#). [The Age](#).

China: Gas blast death toll rises

The number of deaths from December's gas drilling accident in south-west China has risen to 243, the official Xinhua news agency has said. It adds another 396 people are still receiving medical attention, 27 in a critical condition, after China's worst industrial accident. The leak occurred on 23 December 2003 near the city of Chongqing. An explosion at a well released natural gas and hydrogen sulphide over the mountainous area - described by Chinese media as a "zone of death." More than 9,000 people were treated for injuries and more than 60,000 were evacuated. "This was an accident due to negligence," Sun Huashan, deputy director of the State Administration for Work Safety, said on state television. "Those people who were responsible will be dealt with." China is notorious for its dangerous working conditions. An average of more than 10,000 people a month died in work-related accidents from January to September last year. That figure is a 9 per cent rise from the same period in 2002 - despite a government campaign to improve work safety conditions.

- [BBC News Online](#). [Ananova](#). [China Labour Bulletin](#).
- **More on China: Special issue: Occupational health and safety in China, [International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health](#), volume 9, number 4, October-December 2003.**

Global: Asbestos ban hopes boosted

The global asbestos industry's desperate and dirty campaign to save its deadly product ([Risks 133](#)) has suffered two massive blows. A national ban has taken effect in Australia and India, one of the industry's top targets, has announced it to end asbestos mining because of health concerns. Under Australia's new law, which took effect from the start of the year, it is now illegal to use, re-use or sell any products containing asbestos, including automotive brake pads and gaskets. The Indian government announced in December 2003 it

would not grant any new asbestos mining licences. In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament, Minister for Mines Ramesh Bais said: "In view of the hazardous effect of asbestos mining on health, the government has decided not to grant any new lease for mining of asbestos and minerals found along with asbestos." He added that the government would not renew existing asbestos licences, but said imports of white asbestos would continue. The issue remains highly contentious in India, which is seen as a key market by the Canadian asbestos industry. Campaigners and medical experts who have opposed asbestos use have faced harassment and victimisation ([Risks 120](#)). One prominent occupational health academic who angered pro-asbestos lobbyists was subsequently told his contract would not be renewed.

- [The Australian. Australian National Occupational Health and Safety Commission \(NOHSC\). Business News India.](#)
- [International Ban Asbestos Secretariat \(IBAS\), including updates on asbestos campaigns in Australia and India.](#)

Sweden: Most companies failing on hazardous substances

An official survey has found the majority of Swedish employers are guilty of "unacceptable negligence" considering hazardous substances in their workplaces. Kenth Pettersson of the Swedish Work Environment Authority says its inspection of 1,800 workplaces resulted in notices being issued in 70 per cent of the workplaces, "mostly about problems related to chemicals and safety data sheets." Torgny Johansson, chair of the Byggettan Stockholm branch of the Swedish Building Workers' Union, is not surprised. The union's 2001 survey of 1,376 construction workplaces found only a third had conducted risk assessments. "You often do not know what you are building into the houses. This affects our members, who are handling more and more hazardous substances, not just concrete, in their work," he said.

- [Worklife Sweden newsletter.](#)
- **Interested in chemical issues? Check out the US [Chemicals Policy Institute](#) website.**

USA: Employers getting away with "wilful" deadly violations

The official US workplace safety watchdog is facing a storm of criticism

after revelations about its lax approach to safety enforcement. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) scarcely ever seeks prosecution after the 100 plus workplace fatalities each year accepted to be caused by “wilful” safety violations by employers. a *New York Times* investigation found. It says that over the last 20 years OSHA has investigated over 1,200 cases where deaths were caused by wilful safety violations of the employer – cases where the employer knowingly sends a worker into a dangerous situation - but it did not seek prosecution in over 90 per cent of those cases. Democrat Senator Frank Lautenberg called the agency's behaviour “an astounding record of failure by the one federal agency charged with ensuring workplace safety” and promised to introduce a law to make OSHA account each month for its enforcement performance. Under US law it is only a misdemeanour to wilfully kill someone in the workplace, making federal prosecutors reluctant to go through all the work of prosecuting employers for what would be, at most, a six-month sentence ([Risks 97](#)). Another Democrat senator, Joe Corzine, has introduced legislation that would make it a felony and increase penalties when workers are killed because of wilful safety violations ([Risks 110](#)).

- [Confined Space. Sacramento Bee.](#)
- **Find out more about the workplace safety criminals from [Hazards](#) and the [Centre for Corporate Accountability](#).**

RESOURCES:

TUC supports backs Government back to work project:

A project to test new ways of helping sick workers keep their jobs is being launched by the Government. The research project could provide valuable information to enable people to get back to work quickly without losing their current jobs and help businesses retain skilled and experienced workers. The Job Retention and Rehabilitation Pilot (JRRP), funded by the Department for Work and Pensions in partnership with the Department of Health, is set to start on 1 April. It will examine the barriers preventing people from a healthy return to work after sick absence and try to find ways of overcoming them.

DWP Work Minister Nick Brown said: “Every week people lose their job because of health problems. They can then be out of work and relying on benefits for years – a waste of both human and taxpayers’ resources.

"This cutting edge initiative could prove a real boost to workers and bosses across the U.K. Evidence shows that the earlier people off work because of sickness receive help, the better their chance of returning to their job.

"The research project will test how extra health and workplace support can help people get well again, return to work and keep their jobs. We will of course need to carefully evaluate the results to see how successful the different pilot models have been.

Involving 7,500 selected volunteers, the JRRP will run for two years in six pilot areas across the country: Greater Glasgow, Teesside, Tyneside, Birmingham, Sheffield and West Kent.

The innovative project will be open to eligible employed and self-employed volunteers who have been off work for between 6 and 26 weeks. External providers will deliver the pilot under contract.

General Secretary Brendan Barber said "The TUC will be backing these pilot programmes and encouraging our members to sign up. People injured at work - especially RSI sufferers and stress victims - want above all to get back to work and back to fitness."

If your union is has not registered with WorkCare then they should contact WorkCare, or Hugh Robertson (Senior Policy Officer) at the TUC to find out more about the service.

- www.workcare.co.uk

EVENTS AND COURSES

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR JANUARY TO MARCH 2004

[South West](#), [Wales](#) [Scotland](#) [Southern and Eastern](#) [East and West Midlands](#) [Northern Yorkshire and Humberside](#)

USEFUL LINKS

Visit the TUC 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.