

# Risks

issue no 145 – 28 February 2004



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

## CONTENTS

- Action: [Asbestos multinationals gag top safety campaigner](#)  
Feature: [International RSI Awareness Day](#) \* [RSI Day - employers should train staff to type safely](#) \* [Workforce warned on dangers of RSI](#) \* [Construction work is a strain](#)
- Union news: [How was it for you?](#) \* [Overworked? Tell someone about it!](#) \* [CWU threatens legal action after death let-off](#) \* [Campaigners call for end to "joke" work death penalties](#) \* [Teacher gets £250,000 payout after pupil attack](#) \* [UNISON calls for end to dirty needle terror](#)
- Other news: [Lack of worktime control makes you sick](#) \* [Downsizing can kill those left behind](#) \* [Study blows a hole in pub trade smokescreen](#) \* [Most companies say directors should be responsible](#) \* ["Brave" new world or back to the future?](#) \* [Surge in serious accidents offshore](#)
- International news: [Australia: Unions call for work death law](#) \* [Australia: Unions to prosecute banks for hold-ups](#) \* [Canada: Corporate "obligation" to tackle stress](#) \* [Thailand: Officials say 200,000 Thai workers injured](#) \* [USA: Union fund aids "Ground Zero" workers](#)
- Resources: [TUC guide to avoiding repetitive strain injury](#) \* [Slips and trips](#) \* [UnionSafe Network](#) \*

## **Workers' Memorial Day updates and resources**

- [Events and courses: TUC courses for safety reps](#)

**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](#).

## **ACTION**

### **Asbestos multinationals gag top safety campaigner**

A Brazilian safety inspector, known nationwide for her passionate campaign on behalf of the country's asbestos disease victims, is facing a criminal trial for allegedly offending the honour of a former Brazilian government minister.

Asbestos campaigners say the action – which has been stalled until September because the presiding judge has been jailed on corruption charges – is an attempt to silence Giannasi. Charges were dropped after an earlier court challenge brought by European asbestos giant Eternit six years ago.

After pressure from the asbestos industry, the Labour Ministry has confined Giannasi to her office and banned her from travelling or inspecting workplaces. Giannasi's predicament, which has included several death threats, has caused worldwide outrage.

Jim Mowatt, TGWU's national secretary and the union's chief negotiator for asbestos workers in Britain and Ireland, wrote to Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva: "We are profoundly disturbed to learn of the predicament confront Labour Inspector, Fernanda Giannasi."

The letter added: "I am writing to you, as the President of your great nation, to exercise your powers and personal authority to have all criminal charges against Ms Giannasi formally dropped, and that you do everything within your influence to allow Ms Giannasi to do what she does best. That is, assist Brazilian workers to achieve safe working and living conditions for themselves and their families."

Three Brazilian labour inspectors were murdered at work on 28

January.

- [International Ban Asbestos Secretariat report.](#)
- **Stand up for Fernanda! For details of how you can help, see the [Hazards website.](#)**

## SPECIAL FEATURE

### International RSI Awareness Day

#### **RSI Day - employers should train staff to type safely**

The TUC is calling on all employers to ensure that any employee who uses a keyboard regularly is trained to use it so that it does not harm their health. Launching an *RSI: The basics* guide on International Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Awareness Day, 29 February, TUC said the people who have not been trained to type properly are far more likely to develop RSI because they repeatedly use the same fingers and use the mouse too much. Each year 400,000 people suffer from upper limb or neck disorders. Around four million working days were lost in sick leave due to RSI last year at a cost of between £5 billion and £20 billion to employers. Brendan Barber, TUC general secretary, said: "As more and more people are getting computers at their desks we are becoming a nation of two fingered typists. While you can become quite proficient without typing properly, you are putting yourself at serious risk of developing RSI." He added: "The TUC is calling on employers to provide typing training to all regular keyboard workers to help tackle this devastating illness."

- [TUC news release.](#) [TUC RSI webpages.](#) [RSI: The basics.](#) [WorkSMART RSI guide.](#)

#### **Workforce warned on dangers of RSI**



Unions are urging employers to take workplace strain injuries seriously. Union figures released ahead of International RSI Day – the last day of February every year - show repetitive strain injuries (RSI) affect one in 50 of all workers in the UK. TUC estimates 5.4 million working days were lost in sick leave due to RSI last year alone, while every week six people lose their jobs due to an RSI condition. Other research estimates the cost of RSI to the UK industry at between £5 billion and £20 billion

annually. Bill Connor, general secretary of shopworkers' union Usdaw commented: "It can destroy workers' lives, yet in many cases it can be easily avoided through simply changes to work practices." An alert from general union GMB says: "The key causes of RSI are repetitive work, working in a static or awkward position, using force, and continuous gripping or twisting. Other factors which can contribute to RSI include working in cold conditions; work with vibrating tools, poor lighting and excessive noise. Poor work organisation including a lack of adequate rest breaks is also a major contributor." Toronto City Council has officially recognised 29 February 2004 as "Repetitive Strain Injury Awareness Day."

- [Usdaw news release](#). [GMB news release](#). [RSI Association](#). [Union campaigns](#). [The Scotsman](#).

### **Construction work is a strain**

Research by physios' union CSP has revealed that builders in the North East are more likely to suffer from a work-related upper limb disorder (WRULD) or RSI than journalists in London. Commenting on the statistics, which also reveal that workers in the skilled construction and building trades are over five times as likely to get a WRULD than corporate managers, Jacqui Smith, Chair of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Ergonomics and Occupational Health (ACPOHE) said: "The statistics show that these disorders can affect all types of workers - not just those who use computers for a living. They also suggest a lack of awareness among employers about access to physiotherapy experts in the field of occupational health and ergonomics. There is also likely to be a link between patterns of employment where there have traditionally been high levels of repetitive, routine work." Advice for the public and employers on minimising the risk of RSI is available on the CSP website.

- [CSP news release](#) and [RSI advice](#).
- **Advice on construction strains from the [Laborers' Fund for Health and Safety](#).**

## **UNION NEWS**

### **How was it for you?**

So, are you feeling rested, happy, at peace with the world? Did you do the unthinkable and just work the hours you were paid for on Friday

27 February, the TUC's first ever Work Your Proper Hours Day? A TUC league table shows many of us haven't hit pay dirt yet this year – it spells out which groups of workers do the longest unpaid overtime, and the day when they stop working for free and start being paid during 2004. The TUC working-for-free calendar shows telephonists who do unpaid overtime started to earn on January 19, while top civil servants will have to wait until March 27 as they do the longest unpaid overtime. Many groups including care home managers (February 27), journalists (February 28), accountants and accounts staff (February 29) are only just starting to work for wages.

- [TUC news release. Work your proper hours days webpages.](#) The unpaid overtime league table and calendar [[pdf](#)].
- [BBC News Online. The Guardian. Connect news release. PCS news release.](#)

### Overworked? Tell someone about it!



TUC didn't want you to sneak off quietly on Work Your Proper Hours Day, Friday 27 February – it wanted you to tell the world you were getting off. It provided snazzy free eCards to send an electronic greeting to friends or colleagues, a print-

off-and-stick-up A4 sized poster and a chart of the best long-hours related tunes to whistle while you worked. Have a look at the TUC resources – who knows when you might want to use them again?

- [TUC news release. Work Your Proper Hours Day webpage.](#)
- [Send a Work your proper hours day e-card!](#)
- "I've already left" desk sign [[pdf](#)].
- Colour poster [[pdf](#)]. Black and white poster [[pdf](#)].
- [TUC top tunes chart. Let TUC know](#) if you've got a favourite time tune that we've missed and we'll add the ones we like, email us at [poppickers@worksmart.org.uk](mailto:poppickers@worksmart.org.uk).

### CWU threatens legal action after death let-off

Communications union CWU has vowed to challenge the Scottish

Procurator Fiscal's decision not to prosecute BT for negligence over the death of jolter Donald McAndrew. Donald, a 45-year-old father of three, died in September 2003 after the trailer he was using to recover cables ran over him as he was entering a manhole ([Risks 125](#)). CWU national health and safety officer Dave Joyce said: "The Procurator Fiscal's decision is illogical as there is no dispute that the cable trailer had a faulty braking system and the safe system of work was ineffective with no fail safe arrangement. Decisions like this hand a 'licence to kill' to employers and demonstrates graphically how ineffective the law is in the UK in dealing effectively with fatalities at work where there is clear evidence of negligence and failures to organise health and safety and comply with the law." He added: "We will consider a judicial review challenge if the Procurator Fiscal does not budge."

- [CWU news release.](#)

### **Campaigners call for end to "joke" work death penalties**

Unions and legal experts have renewed calls for a work death law. The move comes after continuing government delays in bringing forward promised corporate killing legislation. At a 20 February conference at Cardiff University, David Jenkins, general secretary of the Wales TUC, said: "February has been the worst month in the lives of many families across the world because their loved ones were killed in workplaces across the UK." He added: "Too many people in Wales have to work everyday in dangerous conditions and the only way they can be protected is by strong corporate killing laws." Mick Antoniw of trades union solicitors Thompsons said: "Existing law is too weak. Too many employers treat health and safety as a soft option. And it is just too easy to cut corners on safety to increase profitability... This should include increased fines, punitive damages, disqualification of directors and where a clear line of responsibility is established the use of custodial sentences. Current penalties are a joke and are just not taken seriously."

- [Wales TUC news release. TUC/Hazards deadly business campaign.](#)

### **Teacher gets £250,000 payout after pupil attack**

A special needs teacher who was kicked and battered with furniture by a pupil has been awarded an estimated £250,000 in the High Court

following a case brought by teaching union NASUWT. Sharon Millward, 51, was forced to retire on ill-health grounds after she was attacked in a secure unit in April 2000 by a 13-year old pupil. She suffered post-traumatic stress disorder after the attack at Thornbury House secure unit in Kidlington, Oxfordshire. Making the award, Mr Justice Hughes noted the failure of the unit's management to inform Mrs Millward of the pupil's history of violence and aggression, particularly towards women. Eamonn O'Kane, general secretary of NASUWT, said: "The profession loses too many experienced teachers through resignations, early retirement or, in the worst cases, ill-health retirement because of the scourge of violence and disruption in the classroom. He added: "NASUWT will continue its 'Enough is Enough' campaign to raise awareness among schools and local education authorities of the need to tackle effectively violence and disruption." The union has also called for "airport style" security checks to keep weapons out of schools.

- **NASUWT news releases on the [compensation and security checks](#).**

#### **UNISON calls for end to dirty needle terror**

"Subjecting thousands of NHS workers to the terror of dirty needles is unnecessary and inhumane," health union UNISON has said. The claim came on 23 February, the day that health unions launched a major campaign demanding "Safer Needles Now." A giant billboard overlooking the Thames and the Houses of Parliament was unveiled as part of the launch at St Thomas Hospital in London. Karen Jennings, UNISON head of health, said: "Safer needles are available and so subjecting thousands of NHS workers to the terror of dirty needles is unnecessary and inhumane. Four health workers have already died after contracting HIV from needlestick injuries and there are another 12 cases of probable infection - action has to be taken now before more workers die." She added: "The cost of providing safer needles is pennies, especially when you add together the cost of treating someone with a needlestick injury - the tests, post exposure treatment, time off and compensation - and all this is nothing compared to the human misery and anxiety caused by this sort of injury."

- **[UNISON news release](#). [Needlestick Forum news release](#). **Related information:** [Hazards needlesticks webpages](#). [Safer Needles Network](#).**

## OTHER NEWS

### **Lack of worktime control makes you sick**

Control over your working hours is not just necessary so you run your life, it is essential to your health. A study of Finnish local authority workers in the March 2004 edition of the journal *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* looked at self rated health status, psychological distress and medically certified periods of sickness absence. It found women with a low level of worktime control were almost twice as likely to have poor self rated health, were 40 per cent more likely to report psychological distress, and had a 50 per cent higher risk of medically certified sickness absences than women with a high level of worktime control. The health effects of worktime control were particularly evident among women with families. Among men, worktime control was not associated with self rated health or distress, but it predicted sickness absences in two subgroups: those with dependent children and those with manual occupations. The authors conclude a low level of worktime control increases the risk of future health problems. They say the results suggest that worktime control can help workers integrate their work and private lives successfully.

- **L Ala-Mursula, J Vahtera, J Pentti and M Kivimäki. Effect of employee worktime control on health: a prospective cohort study, *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, vol.61, pages 254-261, 2004 [[abstract](#)].**
- **How bad are long hours for you? See the [Hazards worked-to-death webpages](#).**

### **Downsizing can kill those left behind**

Cut-throat modern management is not just damaging for the workers who are fired, it leaves behind an insecure and unhappy group of workers that are more likely to go sick and more likely to develop permanent, debilitating and possibly life-threatening health problems. A *British Medical Journal* report, published online on 23 February 2004, describes a study of 22,430 municipal employees in four Finnish towns during a national recession. Major downsizing - more than 18 per cent reduction in personnel - was associated with an increase in sickness absence in permanent employees. Employees who had experienced major downsizing were also twice as likely to die from cardiovascular disease, particularly during the first four years after the job cuts. TUC

general secretary Brendan Barber commented: "This report confirms what we've been saying all along - unemployment and redundancies are a tragedy for everyone affected. Bosses wishing to avoid potentially tragic consequences should aim to work closely with unions whenever job losses loom. By keeping workers informed, helping redundant employees find new jobs quickly, and providing support for those colleagues still in work, employers can help limit the damaging effects of big job cuts."

- [BBC News Online](#). [The Times](#). [Globe and Mail](#).
- **Jussi Vahtera, Mika Kivimäki, Jaana Pentti, Anne Linna, Marianna Virtanen, Pekka Virtanen, Jane E Ferrie. Organisational downsizing, sickness absence, and mortality: 10-town prospective cohort study, British Medical Journal, online reference: doi:10.1136/bmj.37972.496262.0D, 23 February 2004. [[abstract](#)]**

### **Study blows a hole in pub trade smokescreen**

A government-backed hospitality industry argument that smoking and pubs can be a safe mix has been torpedoed by new research. A paper in the journal *Tobacco Control* reports research in the hospitality industry in Sydney, Australia, that shows designated "no-smoking" areas in the hospitality industry provide little or no protection against the damaging effects of secondhand smoke. The authors note: "No-smoking areas may provide some reduction in the level of exposure of individuals to environmental tobacco smoke. However, the reduction may be marginal or trivial." Regulations permitting clubs, bars, and casinos to allow patrons to smoke on the premises, provided there are designated non-smoking areas "must be regarded as ineffective in protecting individuals at risk of passive smoking," they conclude. Deborah Arnott, director of Action on Smoking and Health, commented: "This important new research confirms that 'no-smoking' areas in the hospitality trade just don't work. They don't properly protect the public - because smoke drifts. And they don't protect employees at all - because they still have to work in areas where smoking is allowed." TUC warned last year that passive smoking at work was killing three people every day ([Risks 101](#)).

- [ASH news release](#). [BBC News Online](#). [The Scotsman](#). [Reuters Health](#).
- **T Cains, S Cannata, R Poulos, M J Ferson and B W**

**Stewart. Designated “no smoking” areas provide from partial to no protection from environmental tobacco smoke, Tobacco Control, vol.13, pages 17-22, 2004 [[pdf](#)].**

- [TUC smoke at work website. Hazards workplace smoking webpages.](#)

### **Most companies say directors should be responsible**

Most company directors believe a senior director should be responsible for safety and over half think they should be criminally liable for safety failings. Research by law firm Norton Rose, the international City law firm, found 60 per cent of companies thought that the government’s promised corporate killing proposals were primarily a political manoeuvre to satisfy voters. A similar proportion (59 per cent) said their greatest professional fear about a work-related death - outside the fundamental consideration of personal conscience - will be the impact on corporate reputation. Norton Rose adds: “The majority of companies (79 per cent) thought that one individual member of the company board should have overall responsibility for safety issues. Just over half the companies surveyed (55 per cent) actually thought that individual senior company directors should be held personally and criminally liable for failings within their organisations.” The government has said new safety duties on directors will not be included in its now long overdue corporate killing proposals.

- [Norton Rose news release. Personnel Today.](#)
- [TUC/Hazards deadly business webpages.](#)

### **“Brave” new world or back to the future?**

It is billed by the government as a “radical new strategy” to improve future safety standards in Great Britain, has been criticised as resource “rationing” in *The Lancet* and had been been rubbished in advance by HSE inspectors’ union Prospect as a cost-cutting deregulation agenda ([Risks 124](#)). One thing seems certain – HSC’s big new plan will be contentious. Launching the new *Strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond*, which was the subject of a quickie consultation late last year ([Risks 128](#)), safety minister Des Browne and HSC chair Bill Callaghan said it was “ambitious, but realistic, focusing on managing risks and not eliminating them.” Des Browne said: “This new strategy is radical and brave in its approach to reduce workplace risks for everyone, no matter what job they do. But

this cannot be achieved by HSC, HSE and local authorities alone.” Prospect warned in September 2003 the new HSC language is code for a strategy shift from enforcement to a more softly-softly advisory role. Occupational health specialist Morris Greenberg, writing in *The Lancet*, said the strategy amounted to “rationing” and accuse HSC and the government of not providing the data necessary to justify the cuts. The new strategy does acknowledge the importance of promoting greater involvement of workers, something pushed for by TUC. TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson said “we welcome the commitment to work with unions and improve the involvement of the workforce. We will be hoping to see practical examples of how this will be taken forward.”

- [HSE news release](#). ***The strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain to 2010 and beyond is free from HSE Books or online. The Lancet.***

### **Surge in serious accidents offshore**

The number of major injuries offshore soared by 36 per cent last year. Latest HSE figures for the offshore oil and gas industry show there were 64 major injury incidents during 2002/3, up from 47 incidents the previous year. The number of less serious “over three day” injuries declined, with 118 incidents reported in 2002/3 compared to 187 during 2001/2. There were no fatalities during the period, although there have already been three deaths this reporting year. The HSE report shows that the number of dangerous occurrences fell slightly with 636 during 2002/3 compared with 652 in 2001/2. In addition there were 19 cases of work related diseases reported during 2002/3, an increase of six on the previous year. Graham Tran, regional officer of Amicus, commented: “Whilst we welcome the improvements that have been made in the area of ‘over three day’ injuries, we are deeply concerned about the two other major areas - fatalities and major incidents. We know that there have been three fatalities since the end of the reporting period, one of which was in the drilling sector.” He said it was “disappointing” that the industry had not heeded earlier warnings about a maintenance backlog.

- [HSE news release](#). ***Offshore injury, ill health and incident statistics report 2002/3 (Provisional data), HID Statistics Report HSR 2004 001, free from HID Data Management section, CD4C, Hazardous***

**Installations Directorate, HSE, 2nd Floor, St Anne's House, Bootle L20 3RA or [online](#). Related information: [Step Change in Safety](#) network.**

## INTERNATIONAL

### **Australia: Unions call for work death law**

Families and friends of workers killed at work have told a parliamentary enquiry in New South Wales (NSW) that the low fines for workplace deaths are a "disgrace." A union submission to the enquiry is calling for industrial manslaughter legislation to be introduced. "It's important that WorkCover [NSW's HSE] lift its game in terms of the way it relates to victims and their families," said NSW Upper House MP Ian West. The Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) wants answers from WorkCover as to why prosecutions were not pursued following a number of workplace fatalities. NSW Labor Council occupational health and safety officer Mary Yaager told the enquiry that legislation needs to be strengthened to bring about a cultural change in the state's workplaces. The Labor Council proposed that the numbers and resources of workplace inspectors be increased, along with the powers of union and safety representatives to issue improvement notices. An industrial manslaughter law will take effect in the Australian Capital Territory on 1 March 2004 ([Risks 134](#)).

- [Unionsafe. ACT news release \[pdf\]](#)
- [More on Provisional Improvement Notices/Union Inspection Notices](#).

### **Australia: Unions to prosecute banks for hold-ups**

Australia's Finance Sector Union is planning a series of prosecutions against banks because it believes they have failed to reduce injury risk to staff during robberies across Sydney, now rated Australia's bank robbery capital. A prosecution is underway against the ANZ Bank, over its alleged failure to remove a "known hazard" at the Peakhurst branch. ANZ faces a maximum fine of \$550,000 (£227k) if found guilty. The union says some banks have failed to invest in good security at their branches, making them too easy a target. The union's state secretary, Geoff Derrick, said the union had started proceedings against the ANZ in the New South Wales (NSW) Industrial Relations Commission over two alleged breaches of occupational health and

safety provisions at Peakhurst, which had been held-up four times in eight months. ANZ was fined \$150,000 (£62k) last year after pleading guilty to failing to protect staff at its Brookvale branch.

- [Sydney Morning Herald](#).

### **Canada: Corporate “obligation” to tackle stress**

Workplace stress and depression are exacting a heavy toll, particularly among conscientious employees “in their prime working years,” say a group of business leaders. Guidelines from the Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health say mental illness is now the leading cause of employee disability so should be addressed at the corporate board level. The document acknowledges that “workplace stress is a factor in the onset of mental illness,” with depression being the most common disorder. John Evans, a physician, chair of Toronto-based Torstar Corp and one of seven top bosses who have already endorsed the guidelines, said business leaders not only have a moral duty, but a corporate obligation, to address mental health issues in their workplaces. He said corporate boards should be compelled to report on what they have done to reduce the risk factors that contribute to stress and depression. The guidelines advise corporate boards that the risks can be reduced “through sound management practices.”

- **Global Roundtable news release** [[pdf](#)]. [Globe and Mail](#).

### **Thailand: Officials say 200,000 Thai workers injured**

More than 200,000 Thai workers were injured and 769 killed in work-related accidents last year, according to Thailand’s labour ministry. The number has been rising since 2001 when 189,621 work-related accidents were reported. In 2002 more than half of the 650 work-related deaths were the result of road accidents, according to the Workmen's Compensation Fund. The fund gathers statistics on how many workers were killed, became disabled or were seriously injured while on the job each year, and pays compensation to them or their families. The construction industry had the highest number of accidents and the food and beverage manufacturing industry was second.

- [The Nation](#). **Related information:** [Asian Workers](#)

**Occupational Health, Safety and Environment  
Institute (OHSEI).**

**USA: Union fund aids "Ground Zero" workers**

The emotional and physical scars for workers who helped clean up Manhattan's "Ground Zero" after the 11 September 2001 attacks haven't gone away. In response, the union-backed Laborers Health and Safety Trust Fund and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are teaming up to address the medical problems. *Lifelines*, the Laborers' health and safety magazine, reports the union and the agency have extended free crisis counselling for the Ground Zero cleanup workers until June 2004. Dr Jim Melius of the Laborers' fund says 19 per cent of a sample of workers who helped clean up the site still suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Some 7,500 workers have been examined. "If you've lost energy or your sex drive, can't sleep at night, have haunting images or just don't feel like doing the things you used to enjoy, it may be connected to your experiences around 9/11," Melius cautions. Another 40 per cent of the tested workers have some of the post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, while 48 per cent have ear, nose and throat problems and 30 per cent suffer breathing difficulties, he said.

- **[Workday Minnesota. The World Trade Center worker and volunteer medical screening programme. Critical incident stress debriefing guide. Laborers' Health and Safety Fund.](#)**

## RESOURCES

### **TUC guide to avoiding repetitive strain injury**

A TUC "RSI: The Basics" guide tells office workers how to avoid ending up in pain, splints or worse. It says repetitive strain injury is a major problem in white collar work, adding that it does not just affect typists. Anyone who regularly uses a keyboard or mouse can be at risk. TUC says RSI is easily avoidable lists four easy steps to making screen-based work safer. It adds that you are legally entitled to have your computer equipment and workstation assessed to make sure that it meets your own individual needs. You are also entitled to regular breaks or changes of activities. "Your employer must provide a safe environment that ensures that you are not put at risk of RSI. If you feel that they have not done this then speak to your union safety

representative,” the guide concludes.

- [RSI: The basics guide](#). [TUC RSI webpage](#). Also see the [TUC workSMART website](#).

### **Slips and trips**

A new UNISON information sheet on “slips and trips” says they are responsible for 33 per cent of all major injuries to employees that are reported to HSE, 20 per cent of over-three-day injuries to employees and two deaths per year. UNISON says the solution to preventing slips and trips are often simple and cost effective. A suitable risk assessment should identify factors including: the slip and trip hazards; those who may be harmed, paying particular attention to those more at risk; the likelihood of a slip or trip; and then the necessary controls to prevent or minimise - where prevention is not possible - the risk of slipping and tripping. As with all risk assessments, it should be recorded and reviewed periodically and when there has been any significant change, says UNISON.

- [UNISON information sheet](#).

### **UnionSafe Network**

The proliferation of top quality websites for Australia’s union safety reps continues. First came OHS Reps in the state of Victoria. Then came UnionSafe in neighbouring New South Wales. Now Queensland has got in on the act with UnionSafe Network. This latest initiative is “a collaborative project involving Queensland unions working together and pooling resources relating to occupational health and safety.” The network is coordinated by the Queensland Council of Unions Workers’ Health Centre. UnionSafe Network says it involves full-time occupational health and safety professionals employed by individual Queensland unions and the Queensland Council of Unions. Other resources include union contact officers, workplace safety representatives and other participating organisations.

- [UnionSafe Network](#). [OHS Reps](#). [UnionSafe](#).

### **Workers' Memorial Day updates and resources**



*Hazards* magazine has updated its website to include new information on Workers' Memorial Day 2004 events and resources. The web-pages will be regularly updated to include materials from union and campaign organisations worldwide. Print-off-and-use artwork, including the new Workers' Memorial Day posters, are now available.

- [Hazards Workers' Memorial Day global guide](#). Also see [Amicus briefing on Workers' Memorial Day](#).
- [TUC WMD 2004 webpage](#). Send details of your events to [TUC's safety department](#). Workers' Memorial Day posters (free) and forget-me-knot ribbons (30p each plus a SAE, 30p each for 2-99 ribbons including p+p, or £25 per 100 including p+p) are available from [Greater Manchester Hazards Centre](#), 23 New Mount Street, Manchester, M4 4DE. Tel: 0161 953 4037.

## 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/](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.