

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 9,100 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](#).

FEATURE

Global asbestos plc – it lies, it kills, it robs the dead

The asbestos industry's deadly message

The asbestos industry has pulled off possibly the most cynical PR stunt since ex-Tory minister John Gummer publicly force-fed burgers to his daughter at the height of Britain's BSE beef scare. *Toronto Star* journalist Peter Gorrie revealed the asbestos industry's latest terrifying tactic. "The jolt of fright came at the bottom of an information sheet sent to reporters: 'This press release is printed on chrysotile paper'..." Gorrie explained: "Why should that simple statement lead to nervous tremors? Because chrysotile is not just any old ingredient in paper. It's a form of asbestos. And asbestos is a convicted mass-killer, one of the most feared substances on Earth. Over the past century, it has caused millions of deaths, and the annual toll is still at least 100,000." And why would anyone go to these lengths? "The press release, from a Montreal-based lobby group called the Asbestos Institute, is part of an effort by the industry and the federal and Quebec governments to rehabilitate asbestos by demonstrating it can be used safely," Gorrie wrote. Laurie Allen, editor of the *British Asbestos Newsletter*, said the beige-coloured shiny paper looked fairly innocuous and was being promoted by the Asbestos Institute as an innovative product suitable for archival and other uses. Asbestos campaigners in Canada say they plan to refer the Asbestos Institute to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police – the Mounties - on the grounds that unsuspecting individuals could have faced potentially harmful exposures as a result of the asbestos lobby group's irresponsible promotion – tests shows the paper is at least 60 per cent asbestos by weight.

- **Special Hazards asbestos feature:** [Global asbestos plc – it lies, it kills, it robs the dead](#).
- **The good:** [International Ban Asbestos Secretariat](#).
The bad: [Asbestos Institute](#). **And the appealing:**

**[Help victimised global asbestos campaigner
Fernanda Giannasi!](#)**

Asbestos kills 10,000 Americans a year

The first ever analysis of US federal mortality records has found that 10,000 Americans die each year from asbestos exposure and projects that up to 10 times that many will die in the next decade. More Americans die each year from cancers and other illnesses caused by asbestos than from fires and drowning combined, according to the study by the Environmental Working Group Action Fund (EWG). It says although many Americans believe that asbestos has already been banned and its victims have been compensated by the courts, this is almost completely wrong. The study reports that 30 million pounds of asbestos are used in the US each year, with more than one million workers still exposed every year. A new EWG website makes public decades of secret documents proving that the corporations knew asbestos was deadly but continued to poison their workers and the public for the sake of profits. EWG Action Fund researchers found that fewer than two per cent of workers exposed to asbestos have asked for help paying medical bills. It says its research "shatters the bankruptcy myth," revealing that companies tell the world they have been driven bankrupt by asbestos suits but tell their shareholders their bottom lines have not suffered.

- **[EWG news releases](#) and [asbestos website](#). [Planet Ark](#). [FT.com](#).**

Unions expose Australian asbestos "corporate bastardry"

Allegations that Australian building materials giant James Hardie Industries has turned its back on tens of thousands of dying workers are to be investigated by a high-powered official inquiry. New South Wales state premier Bob Carr bowed to vigorous union campaigning when he announced the probe into the failure of trusts established by James Hardie to handle its asbestos-related liabilities. The manoeuvre was criticised by Paul Bastian of the manufacturing union AMWU as a "sham," designed to deny compensation to thousands of dying workers and their families. He accused the company of an "act of corporate bastardry." AMWU said the company knew the effects of asbestos and profited by tens of millions of dollars from continuing production. Unions in the state became key players in a campaign to "unmask" the truth, and last year arranged for dozens of sufferers of asbestos

related illnesses to confront shareholders outside a meeting in Sydney.

- [Workers Online](#).

Global threat from asbestos "timebomb"

The International Labour Organisation estimates that mesothelioma, a tell-tale asbestos cancer, kills about 3,000 people in the United States and perhaps 5,000 in Europe every year, and says the numbers are expected to increase. It is an ongoing problem - white asbestos is still used in many parts of the world. According to a report in the latest issue of ILO's *World of work* magazine, ILO convention no.162 on safety in the use of asbestos bans only certain types of asbestos and has only been ratified by 27 of the ILO's 177 member states. "This means that - despite the known health risks of asbestos - some people may still be working with materials whose impact may only become apparent many years from now," it concludes. According to Gerd Albracht, chair of the September 2003 European Asbestos Conference: "Twenty-thousand asbestos related lung cancers and 10,000 mesotheliomas occur annually across the population of Western Europe, Scandinavia, North America, Japan and Australia alone ([Risks 141](#)), but developing countries have much higher risks of exposure. In such countries, asbestos is thus a timebomb that looks set to lead to an explosive increase in asbestos related diseases and deaths in the next 20 to 30 years."

- [ILO World of Work report](#). **ILO and asbestos: Presentation by Jukka Takala, head of ILO's SafeWork programme [pdf]**.

Southern Africa faces asbestos fight

Zimbabwe's asbestos lobby is becoming increasingly concerned at speculation that South Africa is seriously considering a total ban on asbestos products. The ban proposal, which was last year debated at length in the South African parliament and which led to a reduction in imports, is seen a major threat to Zimbabwe's large asbestos trade. In response, the Zimbabwe National Chrysotile Asbestos Taskforce (NCATF) has strengthened its campaign to tell the world that Zimbabwe's asbestos is not harmful and should not be banned. The Chamber of Mines of Zimbabwe says the country mines about 10,000 tonnes of asbestos every month. Zimbabwe's major export destinations are South East Asia, the Far East, Middle East, and Africa.

It is the fifth largest producer of white asbestos fibre after Russia, Canada, China and Brazil. In South Africa, concern is growing about the deadly asbestos legacy. Members of the Asbestos Industry Group are combing villages in the Northern Cape to spread the word that "Asbestos kills". The group is part of an extensive network involving local and provincial government officials, the National Union of Mineworkers, and groups including the Environmental Justice Networking Forum and sympathetic academics in South Africa and worldwide.

- [All Africa.com](#). [Business Report](#).

UNION NEWS

Sportswear industry violates the Olympic spirit

Giant sportswear brands are violating the rights of millions of workers in order to get the latest sportswear into the shops in time for the Athens Olympics, according to anti poverty campaigners and trade unions. At the UK launch of the Play Fair at the Olympics campaign, Oxfam, Trade Union Congress (TUC) and Labour Behind the Label



called on Puma and the British Olympic Association to clean up their act. A campaign report "exposes the ruthless tactics employed by the global sportswear industry to produce the latest sportswear, cheaper and faster." It says in order to deliver, suppliers are forcing their employees to work longer and harder for less money. Brendan Barber, TUC general secretary, said: "The Olympic Games are supposed to be a

showcase for fairness and human achievement. But the sportswear industry is violating that spirit by exploiting and abusing workers rights. We want the companies to talk to us so we can work together for fairness for workers in the industry." At the worldwide campaign launch in Brussels, Guy Ryder, who heads the global union federation ICFTU, said: "It is not only the big brands which are responsible. Governments must also work together and resist pressure to sacrifice labour standards and local factory owners need to accept their responsibility to respect workers' rights and to pay a living wage."

- [TUC news release](#). [ICFTU news release](#). **Full report: Play fair at the Olympics [pdf]**.
- [BBC News Online](#). [Yahoo](#). [Ireland Online](#). [FT.com](#).

- **See these websites: [Play fair at the Olympics campaign](#). [Labour Behind the Label](#). [Make trade fair](#). [Clean Clothes Campaign](#).**

TUC challenges Labour to produce vision of work

The TUC has challenged the Labour Party to produce a programme for the workplace in its election manifesto that sets out an ambition to ensure all jobs are well-rewarded quality jobs in organisations where people are treated fairly. In its response to the Labour Party's "Big Conversation", TUC says "unfairness is still endemic in Britain's workplaces." TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "No one should doubt the positive changes at work since 1997, but there is much unfinished business, and some that has not even been started. Work is where most of us spend a large part of our waking hours, and in this document unions are challenging government to spell out how they will make work a better place to be." Health and safety features in the TUC's wish list for Labour's next term. TUC says there must be an end to Britain's long working hours culture because it is bad for productivity, damages home life and "it's bad for health and safety - long hours cause heart problems, stress and depression; tired workers are a danger to themselves and others, particularly if they are driving." It adds that employment law should be amended to give equal safety protection to agency and casual workers.

- **[TUC news release](#). Full report: [TUC response to The Big Conversation: The place of work in a fairer Britain An agenda for the workplace](#).**

New law a "fitting memorial" to cockle pickers

The Transport and General Workers' Union has expressed delight that the Gangmasters (Licensing) Bill gained its second reading in parliament unopposed, with government and parliamentary backing. Jim Sheridan MP's private Members' bill, the centrepiece of a TGWU gangmasters' campaign, received support from members of the main political parties, and has been backed by a "remarkable" coalition including the National Farmers' Union, TGWU, TUC, Tesco's, Sainsbury's, ASDA, the Bishop of Lancaster, the Institute for Employment Rights, reputable gangmasters and migrant worker groups. Jack Dromey, TGWU deputy general secretary, said: "The days of rogue gangmasters who exploit employees and undercut reputable employers are numbered. There is now an impressive consensus inside

and outside Westminster that the Morecambe tragedy should never be allowed to happen again. A new law to license gangmasters will be a fitting memorial for the 20 young people who died a terrible death on Morecambe Sands." Bill Spiers, the general secretary of the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), told last month's Scottish Labour Party conference that mandatory jail sentences for employers convicted of illegally hiring people would be an effective deterrent for "scum" employers.

- [TGWU news release](#). [TGWU gangmasters' campaign](#). [Sunday Herald](#). [Femail.co.uk](#).
- **New! HSE response to Morecambe deaths - [Guidelines for safe working in estuaries and tidal areas](#).**

Call to celebrate Xmas on 26 March

Shopworkers are calling on MPs to back the next crucial stage in their campaign to get a guaranteed day off on Christmas Day. Retail trade union Usdaw is seeking MPs' support for legislation to ban larger stores from opening on any future 25 December. It says the landmark is on 26 March 2004, with the second reading in the House of Commons of a Private Member's Bill to be moved by Kevan Jones, the Labour MP for Durham North ([Risks 137](#)). The Bill seeks to ban stores with a floorspace in excess of 280 square metres from opening on Christmas Day in England and Wales. Bill Connor, Usdaw general secretary, said: "Victory is clearly in our grasp. We have received widespread support, including government backing, for this campaign. Now we must ensure that MPs attend the second reading of Kevan Jones' Bill on 26 March, and show their support for shopworkers who want to spend Christmas Day at home." Usdaw is running a parallel campaign in Scotland where the union is supporting The Christmas Day and New Year's Day Trading (Scotland) Bill, proposed by Karen Whitefield, the Labour MSP for Airdrie and Shotts ([Risks 136](#)).

- [Udaw news release](#) and [Udaw campaign in Scotland](#).
- **Check to see if your MP is signed up to Kevan Jones MP's [Xmas Day closing Early Day Motion, EDM 327](#) – if not, ask why not. Also make sure you MP will there to back the Bill on 26 March. [Find your MP](#) - you only need to know your postcode.**

Tube staff to strike in sober sackings row

London Underground workers are to stage a one-day strike in a row over the sacking of sober maintenance staff under a "zero tolerance" alcohol policy. RMT members employed by Metronet voted to back a campaign of industrial action by five to one. The strike, on 12 March, will be the biggest walkout on the Tube for more than 18 months. Tube drivers could refuse to take out trains if they have concerns over safety as a result of the absence of "safety critical" staff, which could cause even further disruption. The dispute follows the sacking of eight maintenance workers at Farringdon in central London after empty alcohol containers were found in a mess room ([Risks 144](#)). Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT, said: "All of the people who were sacked were tested and proved negative for alcohol. There is not a shred of evidence that the men had been drinking. The company must stop conducting a witch hunt and reinstate the sacked members." He added: "Safety is paramount to our union and the RMT would never condone the use of drink or drugs while staff were on duty."

- [RMT news release](#) and [full letter to Metronet management](#). [The Independent](#). [The Guardian](#). [This is Local London](#). [BBC News Online](#).
- **Related information:** [Union alcohol and drugs policies](#).

GMB on HSE – not enough vision, not enough resources

General union GMB says the UK's safety watchdog has a lack of funds and a lack of vision. In written evidence to the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee inquiry into the work of the Health and Safety Commission and Health and Safety Executive ([Risks 144](#)), GMB says HSE is too focused on "goal-setting" rather than real, enforceable laws and "does not enforce the law effectively." It adds that while HSE is terrified of being labelled "over-zealous," "trades union safety representatives representing the victims of occupational injury and disease regard the HSE's enforcement activities as weak and ineffectual." GMB adds the new HSC "2010 and beyond" strategy ([Risks 145](#)) presupposes HSE will do less and without the checks and balances in the current tripartite – unions-employers-government – system. The union calls for greater efforts to harness the union safety effect, more funds for HSE and for a new Work Environment Fund "to general dedicated resources" for occupational ill-health and injury prevention activities.

- [GMB news release](#) and full written evidence [[pdf](#)].
- More on the [union safety effect](#) and [safety reps at work](#)

OTHER NEWS

HSC makes the case for worker involvement

The Health and Safety Commission says a new statement on worker involvement and consultation "reflects the vital importance we place in having a workforce that is fully involved in health and safety." In the collective statement, backed by HSC, employers and unions and tagged the first "deliverable" of HSC's brand new "2010 and beyond" strategy ([Risks 145](#)), it acknowledges that this involvement provides a "reality check" and "that trade union safety representatives, through their empowered role for purposes of consultation, often lead to higher levels of compliance and better health and safety performance than in non trade union systems. We recognise this, support the invaluable contribution they continue to make to health and safety and want dialogue between us to continue and where possible expand into new areas." Hugh Robertson, TUC head of safety, commented: "The TUC is delighted that the HSC has recognised the value of worker involvement and the valuable role that trade unions safety representatives make in creating a safer working environment." HSC says at the moment too few employers involve their workers and too few workers come forward to be involved.

- [HSC introductory note](#). **Full statement: A collective declaration on worker involvement** [[pdf](#)].
"Stakeholder" endorsements from HSC, TUC, CBI and Federation of Small Businesses [[pdf](#)].

Official support for Scots corporate killing law

The Scottish Executive is committed to bringing forward laws to deal with corporate killing, Cathy Jamieson, the justice minister, has said. Speaking at the Scottish Labour Party Conference in Inverness, she insisted that no-one who committed a crime would be above the law. "So if legislation is needed to deal with corporate killing, we will bring forward legislation," she said. "Too many people have told me that the scales of justice have tipped too far in favour of the lawbreaking few." In his address to the conference, Bill Speirs, general secretary of the Scottish TUC, highlighted workplace health and safety. He said while

safety law was still a matter for the Westminster parliament, the Scottish Executive and unions had been worked together to secure practical improvements. He added that Scotland's safety record was worse than in the UK as a whole, yet there were fewer prosecutions for safety breaches. These issues and others "such as the introduction of a specific offence of corporate culpable homicide, are being taken forward in a positive way by the Executive," he said.

- [The Scotsman](#) plus [commentary](#). [BBC News Online](#).

Manure attack farmer jailed

A Cornish farmer has been jailed for two years for plunging an animal health inspector and a vet into a slurry pit. Roger Baker, 61, was found guilty in January of attacking Jonathan McCulloch and Susan Potter on his land at Ventongimps, near Truro, last year ([Risks 141](#)). Sentencing Baker, Judge Stephen O'Malley described the incident as a "deliberate and violent attack." Baker, who lived in a caravan on his land, came "out of nowhere," running at full speed to attack the two officials in his slurry-filled farmyard. He first grabbed Mr McCulloch by his overalls, dragged him across the yard and attempted to dunk him in the putrid liquid - consisting of mud, animal faeces and urine. Baker, who was "very, very angry," grabbed Mrs Potter by the neck when she attempted to help her colleague, then pulled her to the ground and dragged her into the mire. Sentencing, Judge O'Malley said: "You attacked two animal health inspectors who were visiting your farm, two inspectors simply doing their job when you came charging at them. It was a repeat of violent behaviour - behaviour for which you had already been sent to prison."

- [BBC News Online](#). [Sky News](#).

Workers driven to drink by bad jobs

Undervalued and overworked employees are being driven to drink by their bad jobs, new research shows. The findings, published in the journal *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, are based on a study of 8,000 British civil servants. The authors conclude there is a "striking association between adverse psychosocial work conditions in terms of effort-reward imbalance and alcohol dependence in men." They add the link remains after consideration of possible confounding factors. The prevalence of problem drinking among the men was roughly the same (between 10 and 12 per cent) from clerical right

through to senior executive grades. Female bosses were found to be more than three times as likely to have drink problems than lower level female staff (14 compared to 4 per cent). They are also more inclined to turn to alcohol than men in similar grades, according to researchers at University College London. Jenny Head, who led the research team, said: "People who find they put in effort and don't feel they are getting rewards are more at risk of becoming a problem drinker. We have already shown that stressful conditions at work can lead to poorer health for people. This is just another way that stress can impact on health... They are also turning to alcohol because they feel they are not being adequately rewarded for their efforts." There should be greater emphasis on psychosocial factors in occupational health research and prevention, the team concludes.

- **J Head, S A Stansfeld and J Siegrist. The psychosocial work environment and alcohol dependence: a prospective study, *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, vol.61, pages 219-224, 2004 [[abstract](#)].**
- [HR Gateway. BBC News Online.](#)
- **Related information: [Union guidance on alcohol and drugs at work.](#)**

Launch of "biggest ever" public health consultation

Health secretary John Reid has unveiled a huge national consultation on how to improve the nation's health and wellbeing. The *Choosing Health?* consultation sets out wide-ranging questions on how the country might tackle health problems like obesity, smoking and sexually transmitted infections and includes a call for action at workplaces. Mr Reid said: "We are setting up the biggest consultation exercise of its kind to ensure we hear from across the country – from people of all backgrounds, from industry, sport, the media – and of course the NHS." The government says its strategy to tackle Britain's public health problems includes "employers providing healthy workplaces." TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson commented: "A healthy lifestyle is of course essential - and a lot could be done at work. The government could help by abandoning the working hours ceiling opt out, which leads to overwork and serious and sometimes fatal disease, and leaves workers with neither the time nor energy to lead healthy lives outside of work." He said the government should also drop its opposition to workplace smoking controls and added "the single most effective measure the government could make to improve

health at work, would be to ensure better health and safety standards through effective enforcement and full union and worker participation.”

- [DoH news release](#). [DoH choosing health consultation](#). [Reuters Health](#). [BBC News Online](#). [ASH news release](#).
- **Related information:** [US steps to a healthier workforce initiative](#).

INTERNATIONAL

Canada: Nurse sues as study shows SARS legacy

A nurse who contracted SARS during last year's deadly outbreak in Toronto is suing the city and the Ontario and federal governments, claiming they were more concerned with tourism than with protecting public health. “I ask myself why people in charge, the politicians and health care officials, stopped taking SARS seriously,” Andrea Williams said. “Why did people like me and many others have to experience near-death situations when this could have been prevented?” A study this week found nurses reported the most emotional distress during last year's SARS outbreak, and almost two-thirds of hospital staff were concerned for their health or their family's health. Researchers at Toronto's Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre used questionnaires to survey the hospital's employees during the peak of the city's first outbreak. Nurses reported more signs of emotional distress, such as having trouble sleeping or fearing for their lives, compared to hospital administrators, supervisors or doctors. Previous research showed having some level of control, whether real or perceived, reduces the risk of feeling threatened by the disease.

- [Toronto Star](#). [CBC News](#). **Leslie A Nickell and others. Psychosocial effects of SARS on hospital staff: survey of a large tertiary care institution, Canadian Medical Association Journal vol.170, no.5, published online 2 March 2004, ref: doi:10.1053/cmaj.1031077 [[summary](#)].**

European Union: Groups challenge EU paraquat approval

A coalition of international trade union organisations and environmental groups has filed a lawsuit with the European Court challenging the European Commission's decision in December 2003 to

grant EU-wide approval for the deadly herbicide paraquat. The coalition contends that the Commission decision ignored readily available scientific evidence on the toxic effects of paraquat on humans and the environment. It says this is a breach of European legal requirements, particularly the operation of the "precautionary principle." "Paraquat has no place in an agriculture which is socially and environmentally sustainable," commented Ron Oswald, general secretary of global agricultural workers' union federation IUF. "EU approval not only places European agricultural workers at greater risk, forcing it on to the market in countries where unions have successfully fought to have it banned. It encourages its further use in developing countries, despite the known dangers it poses to humans and the environment. The EU must assume global responsibility for its decisions in this area."

- [IUF news release.](#)

Ireland: "Smoke-free works" campaign launched

Ireland's health minister Micheál Martin has launched a "Smoke-free works" campaign. The move comes as the country prepares for a ban on smoking in public places – including bars – to take effect on 29 March. The media and online campaign will show the harm caused by second-hand tobacco smoke. The minister commented: "Since the announcement that I would be introducing a ban on the smoking of tobacco products in the workplace just over a year ago, there has widespread support and acceptance of the need for this measure across all sectors." He added: "Health and quality of life issues are important to people in their place of work. The bottom line is that regular exposure to second hand tobacco smoke, in enclosed workplaces, is a cause of ill health, which is actually preventable." A study released last week by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found that there was "no statistically significant change" in bar revenues after a smoking ban took effect in El Paso, Texas. This mirrors the findings of other studies – the only exceptions are studies backed by the tobacco or hospitality industries ([Risks 105](#)).

- [Politics.ie. Smoke free at work website. CDC MMR Weekly, 27 February 2004.](#)
- **Union resources:** [TUC Smoke at work website.](#)
[Hazards smoking website.](#)

USA: IBM settles birth defect lawsuit

Computer multinational IBM has settled a lawsuit involving a former worker who blamed her daughter's serious birth defects on exposure to chemicals at an IBM plant in New York ([Risks 143](#)). The confidential settlement with Candace Curtis, the 23-year-old daughter of ex-IBM employee Heather Curtis, came on the day jury selection was scheduled to begin in the case. IBM is defending itself against about 200 cancer- and birth-defect related claims brought by current and former workers. IBM spokesperson Chris Andrews said: "IBM firmly believes, based on facts and evidence, that it had no liability in this case and its workplace did not cause the plaintiff's injuries." Three years ago, IBM settled a \$40 million (£22m) lawsuit brought by the parents of a boy who was born blind and with physical deformities that prevent him from breathing through his nose or his mouth. Last week, a Silicon Valley jury handed IBM a major victory by dismissing the claims of two former workers who developed cancer after decades of work in an IBM computer disk plant. Safety standards at microelectronics plants worldwide have faced strong criticism this year ([Risks 141](#)).

- [CNN News](#). [Silicon Valley.com](#). [USA Today](#).
- **Related information:** [International Campaign for Responsible Technology](#). [Dirty secrets of the cleanrooms](#), *Hazards* magazine.

RESOURCES

HSE website mapped

The Health and Safety Executive had made its enormous website easier to navigate. A new site map lists all the major website areas, including safety topics, industries, public consultations, other HSE websites, new stuff and enforcement action.

- [HSE website map](#).

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](#)

What about the workers? London, 30 March 2004

A Royal Society of Medicine conference is addressing the neglected questions in occupational health - how can we treat workers more efficiently to maximise their early return to health and work? Why do we have so few occupational physicians compared to our European neighbours? And who picks up the real bill for workers' ill health? Speakers include TUC safety officer Tom Mellish.

- [**What about the Workers?**](#) Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 0AE, Tuesday 30 March 2004. For more information, email [Sharan Gallagher](#). [Register online](#).

Railway Workers' International Action Day, 31 March 2004



The Railway Workers' International Action Day – theme, “Safety First” – will take place on Wednesday 31 March 2004. The annual campaign day organised by ITF, the global transport workers’ union federation, “is when railway workers' unions all over the world take action to highlight the importance of railway safety.” ITF believes that increased competition can lead to poorer working conditions and social standards, jeopardising safety. It adds: “Our position is simple but fundamental; ‘safety is our highest priority.’ This message applies to all the railways, be they public or private. We also stress that the governments and employers must listen to the knowledge and experience of the railway workers in promoting railway safety.”

- [ITF action day campaign page](#).

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](#).

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