

# Risks

issue no 182 – 13 November 2004



Editor: [Rory O'Neill](#) of [Hazards](#) magazine. Comments to the TUC at [healthandsafety@tuc.org.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@tuc.org.uk)

## CONTENTS

- [Special Feature – banning smoking at work: Scotland smoking ban to go ahead](#) \* [Renewed smoking ban call in England](#) \* [Docs may petition parliament for Wales smoking ban](#) \* [New tests convince expert of need for total smoking ban](#) \* [Spain announces plan to outlaw smoking at work](#)
- [Union news: TUC urges government to “give us the tools we need”](#) \* [Health and safety “strong but failing,” says GMB](#) \* [Commissioner calls for 50 more HSE inspectors for Scotland](#) \* [On call teachers could face harassment and abuse](#) \* [Doctor takes asbestos fight to court](#)
- [Other news: Rail union calls for advanced cab warning system](#) \* [Call centre workers in for an acoustic shock](#) \* [“Cynical” insurers seek to dodge asbestos payouts](#) \* [Compensation firms warned over accident claims](#) \* [Stress “linked to miscarriages”](#)
- [International news: Australia: Shearers wary of woolly mammoths](#) \* [Australia: Company backs a loser in the asbestos stakes](#) \* [Canada: Province takes a lead on safer needles](#) \* [Burned out workers costing billions](#) \* [New Zealand: Call for “decisive action” on work deaths epidemic](#) \* [USA: Asbestos company’s very profitable bankruptcy](#)
- [Resources: Your health and safety: a guide for workers](#)
- [Events and courses: TUC courses for safety reps](#) \* [Health and safety through partnership, London, 19 November 2004](#)

**Risks** is the TUC’s weekly online bulletin for safety reps and others,

read each week by over 10,000 subscribers and 1,500 on the TUC website. To receive this bulletin every week, click [here](#). Past issues are [available](#). This edition contains [Useful links](#) [TUC courses for safety reps](#) [Disclaimer and Privacy statement](#).

## SPECIAL FEATURE: Banning smoking at work

### **Scotland smoking ban to go ahead**

Smoking is to be banned in enclosed public places in Scotland, the Scottish Executive has decided. The decision, which was a unanimous one by Scottish ministers, was announced in the Scottish parliament by the First Minister, Jack McConnell, who told MSPs that the ban would be in force from the spring of 2006. The health arguments far outweighed lingering public disquiet about a complete ban and claims by the licensed trade that jobs would be lost, he said. The move was welcomed by health advocates. Bill O'Neill, Scottish secretary of the British Medical Association, commented: "Devolution has provided us with an opportunity to lead the rest of the UK in developing this vital piece of public health legislation." Jim Devine of the public services union UNISON called banning smoking in enclosed public places a "basic health and safety matter," adding: "Passive smoking seriously harms health and can kill those who are exposed to tobacco smoke for extended periods of time - most vulnerable are bar and restaurant workers." David Cameron, president of REHIS, the organisation representing the environmental health inspectors who will enforce the ban, said: "Our membership is wholeheartedly behind the plans to minimise the health risks, and we are standing by to play whatever role is required, within the scope of public health legislation."

- [Scottish Executive news release](#) and [full First Minister's statement](#). [BBC News Online](#). [REHIS news release \[word\]](#). [BMA news release](#). [The Independent](#).

### **Renewed smoking ban call in England**

Doctors have published a dossier of 70 cases where they say passive smoking caused patients to develop lung cancer, respiratory disease and other conditions. The British Medical Association report, *The human cost of tobacco*, is its latest bid to convince the UK government to introduce a smoking ban in public places. The government will set out its views on the issue in its forthcoming White Paper on Public

Health, due to be published on 16 November. The BMA is calling on health secretary John Reid to set a date for a ban on smoking in all workplaces to be introduced and says this would be the biggest single step a government could take to improve public health. The association estimates at least 1,000 people a year die from the effects of passive smoking. James Johnson, chair of the BMA, said: "I am going to give the same advice to John Reid. In the forthcoming White Paper for England, he should set a date for banning smoking in all enclosed public places, this will give the bars and restaurants time to bin their ashtrays and then these workplaces will just have to abide by the law." TUC general secretary Brendan Barber commented: "The Scottish Executive has recognised the detrimental impact that passive smoking has on people's health, especially bar staff and other hospitality workers. It is time for the government at Westminster to properly protect all UK workers from the dangers of second hand smoking. A nationwide ban on smoking in all workplaces, using health and safety law, would save hundreds of lives every year."

- [BMA news release and report, The human cost of tobacco. BBC News Online. TUC news release.](#)
- [ASH briefing – Smoking and the public health White Paper.](#)
- [Hazards smoking and work news and resources](#).

### **Docs may petition parliament for Wales smoking ban**

BMA Cymru Wales says it is seriously considering petitioning parliament for a smoking ban in public places in Wales. Under the rarely used private bills system, organisations outside parliament can seek rights and powers for their localities over and above the current law or common law. These bills have to be presented to parliament on or before 27 November each year. Welsh secretary of the BMA, Dr Tony Calland is enthusiastic about the move. "Although the procedure is extremely complex, it would be worth it to make Wales a healthier place to live. The Scottish Executive is driving the issue forward in Scotland whilst we in Wales look on wistfully." He added: "BMA Cymru Wales will do all it can to help bring in a ban on smoking in public places. We owe it to the hundreds of people who die each year in Wales alone of the effects of passive smoking. Such a ban would do more for public health in Wales than any other initiative."

- [BMA Cymru new release](#).

### **New tests convince expert of need for total smoking ban**

Fresh evidence of the dangers of passive smoking has prompted one of Britain's most distinguished doctors to urge John Reid to introduce a ban on smoking in all public places. Professor Sir Charles George, the medical director of the British Heart Foundation, had not, until now, favoured a ban on smoking in public places but has changed his view because of research showing minute particles of cigarette smoke could trigger heart attacks. Sir Charles, who is also president of the British Medical Association, has written to the Health Secretary, warning him that allowing smoking to continue in public places would lead to more deaths because the risks from passive smoking were being underestimated. In an interview with *The Independent*, Sir Charles, who is a member of the government's task force on coronary heart disease, said anything short of a complete ban would lead to more deaths, particularly among working class people. He said the as yet unpublished research funded by the British Heart Foundation showed that ventilating smoky rooms was "cosmetic" and would not remove hundreds of damaging chemicals in the smoke. The research also shows that particles in cigarette smoke "produce changes in the health of the lining of blood vessels," whose cells have a vital role in preventing heart attacks.

- [The Independent](#).

### **Spain announces plan to outlaw smoking at work**

The Spanish government is preparing a new bill to limit smoking at work, the health minister has said. Elena Salgado said the government will start a public debate about the issue and hopes to reach a "social consensus." Salgado has stopped smoking in the department of health itself, as a prelude to introducing the measure in other workplaces. Health centres and administrative buildings will also be included in this move and other public building will follow in the coming months. Smoking is still the principal cause of ill-health in Spain, where 56,000 people die each year from smoking-related illnesses.

- [Expatica](#).

## **UNION NEWS**

### **TUC urges government to "give us the tools we need"**

The TUC has called for dramatic improvements in the UK's approach to safety. Speaking at a TUC conference to mark 30 years of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the setting up of the Health and Safety Commission, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber outlined the four key requirements for healthy workplaces: resources; enforcement; rehabilitation; and consultation. He said HSC funding had remained static through a decade when there had been a big increase in the number of people in work, the number of employed and self-employed had risen by nearly 5 million and the level of occupational ill-health had increased dramatically. "It makes no sense to spend eight times more on funding state compensation for those injured through work than is spent preventing injury through the HSC," he said. He added HSC "will only succeed if it is given the resources it needs. It will also only succeed if it starts to fight its corner more forcefully. And finally if it is going to make real progress then it must genuinely embrace the concept of worker involvement." Barber said the government could give safety reps important new rights at no cost, adding: "We know that the biggest single improvement in occupational health in the workforce is the existence of unions and safety representatives. If you are serious about meeting the targets within 'revitalising health and safety' then give us the tools we need." Keynote speakers at the conference included Minister for Work Jane Kennedy and HSC chair Bill Callaghan. Both said HSC's first 30 years were a major success story. They assured delegates that enforcement and inspection would not suffer as HSE introduced new voluntary safety compliance measures under the new "2010 and beyond" safety strategy. Callaghan also indicated he would talk to TUC about possible improvements to the "brown book" of safety reps' rights.

- [Full text of Brendan Barber's speech.](#)

### **Health and safety "strong but failing," says GMB**

GMB general secretary Kevin Curran has accused the government of having "spurned" another opportunity to improve health and safety in the UK. The union leader told the TUC's safety conference this week: "The UK health and safety system is strong, but failing." He said there had been a failure to respond adequately to the stress epidemic, or to take measures to protect new categories of workers, like migrants, who face high risks. He added that enforcement action was not up to the job and there had been too little done to tackle the employers who refuse to consult properly with their workforce or who victimise them for raising safety concerns. Curran said it was "unbelievable" that the

government had “spurned” the opportunity to respond positively to the Work and Pensions Select Committee report on the work of HSC/E ([Risks 180](#)), which called for more inspections, more enforcement, directors’ safety duties and for more rights for union safety reps ([Risks 167](#)). Instead, he said the safety debate “continues to be overshadowed by the creeping spectre of deregulation. Any flirtation with this approach would be a disaster.” He warned that if the government did not listen, it would be “sounding the death knell for tripartism, a departure from regulation and a further step towards supporting the pursuit of profit whatever the cost.”

- [GMB news release](#) and [Kevin Curran’s speech in full \[pdf\]](#).

### **Commissioner calls for 50 more HSE inspectors for Scotland**

A top union official is warning that any cuts to the Health and Safety Commission’s budget could leave Scottish workers without the protection they deserve. Danny Carrigan, Amicus assistant general secretary, who represents Scottish workers on the Health and Safety Commission, told the TUC’s safety conference this week he would be seeking an increase of 50 inspectors in Scotland to deal with the growing number of migrant and temporary agency workers. He said there has been a year on year increase in workplace fatalities in Scotland since the turn of the century. “As we move towards the end of what has been a tragic year for the families of the nine workers who lost their lives in Maryhill it is vital that there is more money for safety and not less,” he said. Carrigan, who chaired the TUC event to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Health and Safety at Work Act, added. “The government have to demonstrate that they are interested in the safety of workers and any apparent move away from that would concern not only their traditional working support but also the thousands of new workers who look to Labour to protect them from exploitation.”

- [Dundee Messenger](#).

### **On call teachers could face harassment and abuse**

Teaching union NASUWT has warned that teachers could face increased workloads, harassment and abuse as a result of new government proposals. Commenting on press reports that the minister for school standards, David Miliband, is encouraging schools to abandon traditional study leave for pupils taking GCSEs but calling for

teachers to be available out-of-hours, the NASUWT general secretary Chris Keates said: "It is completely unreasonable to expect teachers to be on call, online out-of-hours. This proposal appears to conflict with the reasonable work-life balance contractual change the government has introduced to bring downward pressure on teachers' overall working hours." The union leader added that "the most serious aspect of this proposal is its potential to leave teachers vulnerable to e-mail harassment and abuse." NASUWT will be seeking an urgent meeting with the DfES to discuss these issues before the trials begin next year, she said.

- [NASUWT news release.](#)

### **Doctor takes asbestos fight to court**

A doctor is fighting a legal battle to raise awareness of the dangers of asbestos after his wife died from cancer caused by her exposure to fibres in the hospital where she worked as a nurse. Julian Little's wife Becky died aged 53 in February 2002, two years after being diagnosed with the asbestos cancer mesothelioma. The legal case is backed by Amicus, her union. Before her death, Mrs Little told how she would sweep up the crumbling insulation of water pipes, believed to be asbestos, at the old Charing Cross Hospital, London, where she worked between 1968 and 1970. Dr Little, 59, commented: "Becky wanted the problem of asbestos brought to the forefront - she wanted something done about it." A High Court writ accuses the Department of Health, as Mrs Little's employer, of negligence and breach of statutory duty. "Reports on the dangers of asbestos were made in 1896. The Department of Health, of all people, certainly should have known of the risks in the late 1960s," said Dr Little. He says intends to give a large portion of any compensation to a cancer charity. Solicitor Adrian Budgen of Irwin Mitchell will be seeking six figure damages. Mr Budgen has previously secured a £1.15m settlement for the family of hospital consultant James Emerson, who death from mesothelioma was linked to exposure to asbestos at London's Middlesex Hospital.

- [North Yorkshire Advertiser.](#)

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **Rail union calls for advanced cab warning system**

Train drivers' union ASLEF has repeated its call for investment in

advanced warning systems for train drivers' cabs. Commenting in the aftermath of last week's level crossing disaster in Berkshire in which seven people including the train driver died, ASLEF's acting general secretary Keith Norman said: "Level crossings are a major site for deaths on the railway network. The technology exists to give train drivers advance warning of blockages on the track." A preliminary report from the Health and Safety Executive concluded neither railway staff nor rail infrastructure was to blame for the fatal train crash on 6 November. The report found the driver of the high speed First Great Western service from London to Plymouth had just two or three seconds to brake before his train smashed into a car apparently parked on a level crossing near Ufton Nervet. Seven people, including the driver of the car, died in the crash, and another 37 were taken to hospital. The driver of the train, ASLEF member Stanley Martin, had been driving at the permitted speed for the stretch of line and there was no blame attached to him, the report said. This finding backed up a statement from ASLEF that Mr Martin had done everything possible to avert the accident.

- [ASLEF news release and statement on the death of ASLEF member Stanley Martin.](#) [HSE news release and interim report and related documents.](#) [The Guardian.](#) [BBC News Online.](#)

### **Call centre workers in for an acoustic shock**

Hundreds of thousands of UK telephone headset users could be at risk of "acoustic shock", a workplace health condition that has already resulted in £10 million out-of-court settlements worldwide. Marcus Quilter, chair of the Call Centre Management Association (CCMA) issued the warning. He said: "The health of operators has been at risk for far too long and there is a great misunderstanding between what constitutes acoustic shock as opposed to trauma, and to what extent employers are required by law to mitigate against this risk." According to CCMA, acoustic shock is caused by a sudden spike of noise through a telephone headset, a hazard it says is faced by 1 million UK call centre operators. Research by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found 30 per cent of those interviewed reported symptoms. HSE's Keith Broughton said "call centre operators are becoming the modern victims of noise at work." Typical symptoms are tinnitus (a buzzing or ringing in the ears), a burning sensation and hypersensitivity to loud sounds. It can also lead to anxiety, phone phobia, tiredness or depression. CCMA's Acoustic Shock Programme, which is supported by the union

CWU and other organisations, is running a series of awareness workshops.

- [CWU news release. Call Centre Management Association acoustic shock programme. HSE statement on acoustic shock, June 2004.](#)

### **“Cynical” insurers seek to dodge asbestos payouts**

The insurance industry has been accused of a “cynical attempt” to dodge its responsibility to some workers affected by asbestos exposure. For the past twenty years, the courts have awarded compensation to people with “pleural plaques” – a scarring of the lungs caused by asbestos. In court cases involving 10 men with pleural plaques that opened in the High Court sitting in Manchester on Monday, insurers will try to overturn the law and persuade the courts that compensation for the condition, which currently costs insurers about £25m a year, should be scrapped. Colin Ettinger, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), said: “People diagnosed with pleural plaques... are living under a black cloud day after day, wondering if they are going to develop a lung disease which could kill them.” He added that for years insurers had set premiums too low, “even though they were fully aware of the dangers of asbestos and the consequences of exposure. Now they expect these people, who have been subjected to negligence, to bail them out and it is simply unbelievable.” If the judge, Mr Justice Holland, rules in favour of the insurance firms, compensation payments to people with pleural plaques could be stopped forever. Typical awards for pleural plaques are £5,000, with the right to return to court if more serious asbestos-related illness occurs, or £10,000 for a final settlement.

- [APIL news release \[pdf\]. Irwin Mitchell news release. BBC News Online. The Scotsman. The Herald.](#)

### **Compensation firms warned over accident claims**

Companies that encourage people to make frivolous compensation claims are being warned they have one last chance to avoid new regulations. The lord chancellor says “no win no fee” claims firms must end misleading advertisements and sales practices which falsely raise compensation hopes. “People should not be encouraged to always ‘have a go’ however meritless the claim,” Lord Falconer said. “The

perception that there is easy money just waiting to be had - the so-called 'compensation culture' - creates very real problems." In fact, while the Conservatives ([Risks 171](#)) and others have claimed this is a real problem, statistics show personal injury claims are falling and a Better Regulation Taskforce (BRTF) investigation this year concluded there was no evidence of a US-style litigation happy culture in the UK ([Risks 159](#)). In the government's response to the May 2004 BRTF report, issued this week, Lord Falconer noted: "The number of actual accident claims had gone down over the last few years." The total number of claims fell by 9.5 per cent in the year to March 2004.

- [DCA news release](#). [BRTF news release](#). [BBC News Online](#). [The Independent](#).
- **Compensation culture - Government response to the better regulation task force report (BRTF): Better routes to redress [[pdf](#)]**.

### **Stress "linked to miscarriages"**

Stress could be linked to miscarriages, researchers have suggested. A research team led by Dr Petra Arck monitored the progress of 864 pregnant women. Blood samples were taken at the start of their pregnancies. The women also completed standard questionnaires to measure their own perceptions of the stress they felt. It was found that the 55 women who miscarried were more likely to have reported stress than women whose pregnancies continued. Dr Arck said: "We can clearly say that stress has a major impact on pregnancy maintenance." The research was presented to a meeting of the British Society for Endocrinology last week. The authors say their work with mice suggests giving at-risk women extra doses of the hormone progesterone could protect pregnancies.

- [BBC News Online](#).

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Australia: Shearers wary of woolly mammoths**

Sheep shearers are being advised to give big, dangerous rams a miss as long as farmers refuse to have the beasts sedated. Mick Madden, New South Wales (NSW) state president of the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) and long-time shearer, issued the advice as the National Farmers Federation dug in its heels against calls to have rams, some

as big as 170kg, sedated for shearing. "This is an occupational health and safety issue and a serious one," Madden said. "Shearers should assess the rams they are confronted with and where they are big and dangerous, insist on sedation, or refuse to shear them on health and safety grounds. Selective breeding means some of these animals are 50 per cent bigger than they were 20 years ago but shearers haven't been put through the same programme." AWU says specifically-bred super rams are now twice as heavy as many shearers. Madden, who was once knocked out by a ram in a holding pen, says that the federation's response highlights the need for shearers to protect their own health and livelihoods. "Shearers should take this matter into their own hands," he said. "They can't afford to be injured, their families can't afford it and, despite what the Farmers Federation might think, wool growers can't afford to lose them either."

- [AWU news release. Workers Online.](#)

### **Australia: Company backs a loser in the asbestos stakes**

James Hardie Industries may come to rue to day it decided to skip Australia, leaving asbestos disease victims in the lurch. The company, now headquartered in the Netherlands, is reeling in the face of very creative attacks from unions and campaigners ([Risks 178](#)). In the latest twist in the increasingly acrimonious dispute, horse racing fans will be reminded of the union movement's drive for compensation for James Hardie asbestos victims. Racegoers in Melbourne last Saturday witnessed the inaugural Make James Hardie Pay Maiden Plate. Ahead of the event, Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) secretary Leigh Hubbard said "it is only appropriate the first race of the day will remind everyone that the fight to make James Hardie pay is far from over." In another move, municipal councils across Australia voted this week to boycott James Hardie products until the building materials giant compensates adequately asbestos victims. The motion said until James Hardie provides for current and future victims affected by its asbestos, all existing and new council contractors would not purchase or use the company's products. A New South Wales state inquiry ruled in September that James Hardie Industries, once Australia's largest asbestos products maker, deliberately misled the public by stating it had set aside enough money to compensate asbestos victims before it moved its headquarters to the Netherlands in 2001.

- [Virtual form guide. Forbes. Hazards asbestos news and resources. International Ban Asbestos](#)

## [Secretariat.](#)

### **Canada: Province takes a lead on safer needles**

The first Canadian legislation mandating the use of safety-engineered needles and medical sharps has been announced in Saskatchewan. Debra Higgins, the province's labour minister, said her government will implement regulations to protect workers from diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C through the mandatory use of engineering controls on medical sharps. Ted Mansell, national health and safety coordinator for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), said the proposed legislation will save thousands of workers the anguish of undergoing months of testing after suffering needlestick injuries. "By eliminating the use of conventional needles, everyone from postal workers who find syringes in mailboxes to children who find needles in the province's playgrounds will be safer," he said. Mansell added that since needlestick legislation was announced in the United States in 2000, studies have shown as much as a 51 per cent reduction in needlestick injuries. He is working on persuading other Canadian provinces to follow Saskatchewan's lead. In February this year, on the day that UK health unions launched a major campaign demanding "Safer Needles Now," UNISON said: "Subjecting thousands of NHS workers to the terror of dirty needles is unnecessary and inhumane" ([Risks 145](#)). Head of health Karen Jennings said the cost of providing safer needles "is pennies."

- [SEIU Canada news release.](#) [Safetysmart.](#) [Safer needles now.](#) [Hazards needlesticks webpage.](#)

### **Canada: Burned out workers costing billions**

The downsizing that swept Canada's workplaces during the 1980s and 1990s backfired, with so much work piled on surviving employees that billions of dollars have been unnecessarily added to Canada's annual health care bill. A new government funded report has linked mounting workloads and long hours and soaring health costs. The report, released this week by the Public Health Agency of Canada, concludes stress and illness caused by work overload is adding an extra Can\$6 billion (£2.7bn) a year in health care costs while the strain of elder care adds another Can\$5 billion (£2.24bn). "It's time we stop pretending that we're going to fix health care by throwing more money at system fixes and start looking at what makes people sick," said Linda Duxbury, a professor at Carleton University in Ottawa and one of

the report's co-authors. "And what makes people sick is workload and the strain of elder care. Policy makers should recognise we have a finite resource in people and start crying for something to be done about the work environment." Duxbury added: "Canadians are subsidising, through their tax dollars and financial support of the health care system, organisational practices such as 'doing more with less,' downsizing, basing promotions on hours at work, setting unrealistic work expectations."

- [Globe and Mail](#). [The Province](#). [London Free Press](#). [Full report](#).
- [Hazards get-a-life](#) and [worked to death](#) guides. [TUC](#) ["Changing Times" work-life balance webpages](#).

### **New Zealand: Call for "decisive action" on work deaths epidemic**

New Zealand's unions have said "the shockingly high toll of decades of neglect" revealed in a new official report requires "decisive action." The call from Council of Trade Unions president Ross Wilson came after the first National Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee report revealed that every year up to 1,000 workers in New Zealand died from occupational disease - up to 10 times more than died from accidents. Commenting on the report, Ross Wilson said: "This long-overdue research points to an occupational disease epidemic caused by poor workplace health protection over many decades. It is nothing less than a scandal that thousands of workers are dying because new toxic substances have been introduced into workplaces without proper protection." Wilson added: "A taskforce is now required to identify the urgent action necessary to stem this developing epidemic."

- [NZCTU news release](#) and [report summary \[pdf\]](#). [NOHSAC news release \[pdf\]](#) and [full report, The burden of occupational disease and injury in New Zealand \[pdf\]](#). [New Zealand Herald](#).

### **USA: Asbestos company's very profitable bankruptcy**

A multinational which filed for bankruptcy in 2000 in the face of asbestos disease liabilities estimated at \$2 billion (£1.08bn) had sales in the most recent quarter of over \$1.5 billion (£0.8bn). Owens Corning's net income for the quarter rose 71 per cent, to \$94 million

(£50.6m), according to company reports. The company, which describes itself as a world leader in building materials systems and composite systems, had sales of \$5 billion (£2.7bn) in 2003. The bankruptcy strategy has been criticised by health groups as a "business as usual bankruptcy" to evade asbestos liabilities while continuing to operate profitably. According to an Environmental Working Group report this year, "most 'bankrupt' asbestos companies, especially the larger corporations typically offered as examples of asbestos-induced economic havoc, remain very competitive within their industries during bankruptcy, and often flourish afterwards" ([Risks 146](#)). Citing examples including Owens Corning, it says: "The asbestos industry and its supporters use the popular image of bankruptcy to argue that aiding people hurt by asbestos is costing huge numbers of jobs, ravaging the pension plans of innocent workers, and bankrupting the economy." It said this is "a damaging myth."

- [Yahoo Finance](#). **Environmental Working Group on "Business as usual" bankruptcies, including a case history on Owens Corning.**
- [Hazards asbestos pages](#) and [International Ban Asbestos Secretariat](#).

## RESOURCES

### **Your health and safety: a guide for workers**

HSE has issued a short guide to workplace health and safety rights, in collaboration with the TUC. The guide covers the right: to safe work; to join a union and to be a safety rep; to know about risks; to training; and to information. It also outlines briefly how to get further information.

- **Your health and safety: a guide for workers** [[pdf](#)]. [Translations of the guide](#) are available in **21 languages**.

## EVENTS AND COURSES

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

#### **COURSES FOR SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2004**

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

## **Health and safety through partnership, London, 19 November 2004**

South-east region TUC (SERTUC) is to run a day conference for union health and safety reps in the London region. Speakers include HSC chair Bill Callaghan, HSE London regional director Charles Horsefield and TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson. SERTUC says the conference is "an event designed for you, the workplace health and safety rep, aimed at informing you of developments in health and safety law and policy, and to provide you with an opportunity to discuss your issues with key players in the health and safety regulatory system."

- **Health and safety through partnership, 10 am–4pm, Friday 19 November 2004, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. [Further details](#). To book your place at this free event, email [Darren Lewis](#) or phone 0207 467 1220.**

### 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.