

Risks

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MAGAZINE



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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](#).

UNION NEWS

Work is making us hoarse says TUC



With a big chill and the season for coughs and colds fast approaching, a new TUC report is warning that the combination of germs, dry, centrally-heated offices and jobs that place a strain on employees' vocal chords, could prove disastrous for the millions of UK workers who rely on their voices to do their jobs. "Work hoarse," which appears in the latest issue of the TUC-backed health and safety magazine *Hazards*, says as many as five million workers in the UK – from teachers to trade unionists, call centre workers to checkout staff - could be routinely affected by voice loss, at annual cost to the economy of over £200 million. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "Voice loss can develop into a serious occupational health condition that can cost workers their jobs and companies trained and valued staff. The lesson for employers is to listen to their workers while they still can, provide adequate breaks and welfare facilities and avoid coercing sick employees back to work before they are fully recovered." He added that "workers need to know that voice loss is no laughing matter - they should speak up when they first develop symptoms or risk suffering in silence." *Hazards* editor Rory O'Neill said: "In many service sector jobs, it is easy to forget the voice is working overtime throughout the entire shift - and that is dangerous talk. Whatever name you give it - repetitive voice injury, call centre-itis or the curse of the chalkface - it is a potentially career threatening condition."

- [TUC news release](#). [BBC News Online](#). [ITV News](#). [Western Mail](#).
- [Hazards online report on occupational voice loss, include jobs, symptoms and prevention guide](#). [TUC WorkSmart voice loss advice](#).

TUC call for new powers to save workers' lives

A further rise in workplace deaths and injuries exposes Britain's failing safety enforcement regime, says the TUC. Commenting on the health and safety statistics 2004 published this week by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The fact that deaths and serious injuries at work have risen again this year is a damning indictment on the levels of safety and the enforcement regimes in British workplaces." The latest official figures

show there were 235 fatal injuries to workers in 2003/04, an increase of 4 per cent on the 2002/03 figure of 227. The number of reported major injuries to employees was 30,666 in 2003/04, up 9 per cent on the previous year. And reported over-3-day injuries to employees increased by 0.7 per cent in 2003/04 to 129,143. "We urgently need increased resources and proper powers for both the HSE and local authorities to reflect the increased numbers of people in work," said Brendan Barber. "Without proper enforcement regimes there is little evidence... to suggest that fatalities and serious injuries in British workplaces will decrease." Tony Woodley, general secretary of TGWU, commented: "The rise in deaths and injuries at work are quite simply unacceptable. They show safety regimes are falling short of what workers can and should expect." He added: "Each of those individual tragic cases should be a knock on the door to the Prime Minister... we expect to see legislation on corporate killing now, not later. It's been seven years coming, we should not have to wait seven more days."

- [TUC news release](#). [HSE news release](#). [National Statistics/HSE statistics news release](#). [The Scotsman](#).
- **Health and Safety Statistics Highlights 2003/04, free online [[pdf](#)] or from the Statistics Co-ordination Unit, Health and Safety Executive, Room 462, Magdalen House, Bootle, Merseyside L20 3QZ, tel: 0151 951 3479/435.**

HSE board "eroding safety" say inspectors

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) frontline staff say cutbacks and a move to leaflet rather than legislate pushed through by senior management is eroding workplace safety. In a devastating indictment of top HSE bosses, 96.4 per cent of HSE inspectors, scientists and other professionals responding to a ballot by their union Prospect said they had no confidence in HSE's board to manage the organisation in a way that would maintain both staff and public confidence. "We are disappointed that we've had to take this step," said Prospect negotiator Richard Hardy. "But the executive's response to criticism from MPs ([Risks 167](#)), unions and employer organisations has been far from impressive and we are concerned that workplace safety is being eroded." The announcement came on 18 November, the day MPs debated a Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee report ([Risks 180](#)) which backed Prospect's call to adequately fund HSE and double the number of HSE field inspectors ([Risks 181](#)). The union has

warned HSE that it must acknowledge the recommendations made by the select committee and start rebuilding staff morale or risk the loss of both public confidence and experienced personnel from its workforce. Steve Kay, Prospect HSE branch chair, said: "Workplace safety will not improve while HSE cuts trained inspectors and replaces them with visiting staff armed only with a handful of leaflets to encourage employers not to kill their workers."

- [Prospect news release](#).

TUC looks forward to work manslaughter bill

TUC says it expects a draft of the promised corporate manslaughter bill to be included "for pre-legislative scrutiny" in next week's Queen's Speech. A TUC online briefing says the effectiveness of the bill will depend on its content and says the new offence of corporate manslaughter should cover all employers, including the government itself. It adds that the removal of Crown Immunity would be "an extremely important indicator of the government's commitment to lead by example." Although the Home Secretary has already indicated the bill will not apply to individual directors, TUC "hopes that, either the scope of the Bill be extended to include individual directors, or that a commitment is made for separate regulation on this." It adds that penalties should be more creative than fines alone, and could for example include measures such as "corporate probation." The TUC briefing adds that the draft bill "will be welcomed as a significant step towards reducing the terrible death toll, not only from accidents, but also negligent exposure to hazardous substances. It will also help reassure relatives of the bereaved who have too often seen those whose negligence has caused the death of a loved one walk away, either totally free or with a small fine, for a breach of health and safety laws. However it will only be effective if it has real penalties, and covers all employers."

- [TUC corporate manslaughter bill briefing](#).
- **Related information:** [Centre for Corporate Accountability](#) and [TUC/Hazards deadly business webpages](#).

Rail unions call for safety measures at level crossings

Rail unions have called for urgent action on level crossing safety. The move follows a 15 November incident on a Lincolnshire level crossing

where a train crashed into a crossing gate. Earlier this month seven people died in a level crossing collision between a train and a car parked on the track near Ufton Nervet, Berkshire ([Risks 182](#)). RMT general secretary Bob Crow said each year “there are scores of level crossing incidents, and everyone agrees they pose the biggest single danger on today’s railways. Level crossings are a 19th century solution - in the 21st century it is high time for a commitment to separate rail and road traffic.” Keith Norman, acting general secretary of the train drivers’ union ASLEF, commenting after the release of the preliminary HSE report into the Berkshire tragedy, said: “This confirms our view that additional active safety measures are needed at level crossings to ensure that either automatic or driver operated braking is triggered if obstacles remain on the line.” Norman added: “ASLEF urges the government and Network Rail to take immediate steps to review new developments in level crossing safety and secure industry wide co-operation to ensure the early installation of such measures.”

- [RMT news release](#). [ASLEF news release](#).

STUC supports Scottish hazards network

The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) has thrown its weight behind grassroots union health and safety activists. STUC hosted last week’s national conference of the Scottish Hazards Campaign Group. Ian Tasker, STUC assistant secretary with responsibility for safety, said: “The STUC has long recognised the role the hazards movement plays in providing information and support to workers throughout Britain, especially in non-unionised workplaces”. He added: “We feel that it is vitally important workers deprived of trade union recognition are provided with such support and the STUC have built close links with the Scottish Hazards Campaign Group to develop work in this area.” Tasker added that the nine deaths in the Stockline factory explosion in Glasgow in May “emphasises the need for improved arrangements to protect workers who do not enjoy the increased protection and improved health and safety practices afforded to those in trade unionised workplaces.” He added that STUC would work with the group “with a view to developing a dedicated hazards centre for workers, denied trade union membership, to access high quality health and safety advice.”

- [STUC news release](#).

OTHER NEWS

HSE report shows a dramatic drop in enforcement

Health and safety enforcement dropped off dramatically last year according to latest Health and Safety Executive (HSE) figures. HSE's fifth annual *Health and safety offences and penalties report* shows that total HSE enforcement action last year - prosecutions taken or HSE enforcement notices issued - dropped by approaching 1,000. In 2003/04, HSE issued 11,295 improvement and prohibition notices, down from 13,324 last year. It brought 982 prosecution cases which HSE says is "around the level of recent years" and up six per cent on last year - although last year was down 15 per cent on the year before. HSE made 206,000 regulatory contacts and investigated nearly 28,000 incidents and complaints. The average fine per offence prosecuted rose from £6,251 in 2002/03 to £9,858 in 2003/04. For the second year running, only 11 directors or managers were convicted of safety offences. The report names all those companies convicted in HSE prosecution cases over the past year. HSE says the web-based report makes it easier to see HSE's enforcement action in a wider context. As well as the kind of information contained in previous reports, it also includes examples of HSE working with employers to help control risks and video clips in which people recount their personal experiences of health and safety incidents.

- [HSE news release](#) and full [Offences and penalties report](#). Compare HSE's record for yourself - [visit the HSE statistics webpage](#) and [enforcement webpage](#).

TUC says smoking ban should protect all workers

The TUC has welcomed restrictions on smoking in workplaces in England announced this week in the government's Public Health White Paper, but says the measures should apply to all workers. TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The government's plans are a major advance but they simply do not go far enough. Banishing smoke from pubs, bars and restaurants serving prepared food is of course welcome, but the proposals will do nothing to protect the health of workers in the pubs and bars where smoking is to continue. Many pub and bar owners will just find ways of getting round the law." He added: "Thousands of pub and club workers will still have to choke on the deadly smoke that kills one of them a week and inflicts numerous others with emphysema, bronchitis, asthma or other smoke related illnesses. Protecting the health of bar workers should be as important

as protecting the health of office and factory workers. Under these proposals pub and bar workers will still be at risk, a risk that could have been avoided with a total ban on smoking in all workplaces." The British Medical Association and health campaigners echoed the TUC concerns. BMA chair James Johnson said it was a "wasted opportunity," adding: "It makes no sense to allow smoking in some pubs – what about the health and lives of employees who work in them?" ASH director Deborah Arnott described Dr Reid's proposal as "a ridiculous bodge." The ban will be implemented in stages, applying to government offices and the NHS by 2006, all workplaces - eliminating office smoking rooms - by 2007 and in pubs and restaurants serving food, 80-90 per cent of the total, by the end of 2008.

- [Department of Health news release](#). [TUC news release](#). [BMA news release](#). [ASH news release](#). [UNISON news release](#). [The Independent](#). [Reuters](#). [ITV News](#).
- [Choosing health: making healthier choices easier](#) – **Public Health White Paper**.

Prevention better than cure, say unions

Unions have welcomed the recognition given to improving workplace health in the government's Public Health White Paper. Under the new blueprint, employers will be encouraged to address work related ill-health and to promote healthy ways of living and family doctors are being told to encourage people back to work after a period of illness in a bid to end the "sicknote culture." TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson commented: "We welcome the acceptance that the Department of Health has a significant role in developing an occupational health framework. The TUC hopes that the government will use the White Paper to increase the coverage of occupational health and rehabilitation and provide the necessary resources." He added: "We are concerned however that most GPs have little knowledge of or training in occupational health and may, under pressure, inadvertently push workers back in working environments that could worsen their work-related ill-health." Robertson added that "many employers are putting little or no resources into tackling work related ill-health, which is a massive public health concern, so it may be pie-in-the-sky to expect them to voluntarily tackle lifestyle risks too." Grahame Pope of physios' union CSP said: "All workers should feel confident that their work environment is not harmful to their health," adding that for workers with musculoskeletal disorders "swift access to

physiotherapists, who can provide effective rehabilitation is imperative.”

- [Department of Health news release. The Independent.](#) [CSP news release.](#)
- [Choosing health: making healthier choices easier](#) – **Public Health White Paper (Chapter 7, Work and health [pdf]).**

New code to tackle widespread temp labour abuse

Research into gangmasters providing migrant workers to leading UK supermarket suppliers has found that every one of the companies inspected was breaking the law. The study, conducted by four government departments, unions and business under the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), found bonded labour, excessive hours, unacceptable accommodation, tax and pay rip-offs, and working conditions threatening to life or limb among many breaches of legislation. The findings came ahead of this week’s publication of a new Code of Practice designed to help ensure labour providers obey the law and respect the rights of the workers they hire. The Code, published by the Ethical Trading Initiative's Temporary Labour Working Group (TLWG), sets out standards labour providers must meet legally, as well as good practice. It is backed by Defra, the Transport and General Workers’ Union (TGWU) and the National Farmers Union. A new Gangmasters Licensing Act comes into force next year, making it illegal for labour providers to operate without licences, and it will be an offence for anyone to use an unlicensed gangmaster. Jack Dromey, TGWU deputy general secretary and a TLWG member, said: “it is not acceptable that some cowboy operators force their workforce to exist in some twilight world where the law is ignored. Together, the Code and new legislation should mean that operating in the shadows becomes less attractive – and certainly less lucrative – for those who evade the law and exploit their workers.”

- [ETI news release](#) including links for full documents. [Defra news release](#) and [information on the Code of Practice. The Guardian.](#)

You are not mad – it was the job that did it

The largest ever review of the link between work stress and strain injuries has shown that physical and mental stress is hurting us, and

employers aren't do enough to let workers take proper control over their jobs. The HSE-backed research by Surrey University's Dr Jason Devereux took over three years to complete and involved 8,000 workers in 20 companies across 11 industrial sectors nationwide. He says contrary to the popular belief held by some managers, the study confirmed "that factors such as age, gender, neuroticism or a negative mood had little or no part to play in the development of musculoskeletal disorders." However, the study did show that both physical and psychological aspects of work were directly involved in the development of these disorders. According to Dr Devereux, a work systems design expert, workplace stress and strain problems are signs of an imbalance between people and processes in work organisations. He says the answer is for employers to recognise the need for communication, organisational trust and employee participation in strategic management decisions and operations. "Organisations must focus on people and have systems in place to react to the effects and causes of excessive physical and mental stressors," he said. "Work organisations need to focus on going beyond compliance." TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson commented: "Unions have always recognised that stress causes strains and strains cause stress. Employers should do us all a favour and recognise that unions have the job know-how and workforce trust to identify and resolve workplace risks."

- [Surrey University news release and study information](#). **The role of work stress and psychological factors in the development of musculoskeletal disorders, HSE Research Report RR 273.**
- **Related information:** [HSE case studies on sickness absence and return to work from musculoskeletal disorders](#).

Staring at computers may cause glaucoma

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) line that VDU work does not cause long-term eye problems could be wrong. Spending hours staring at a computer screen may raise the risk of glaucoma, a progressive eye disease that can lead to blindness, a new study in the December issue of the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* suggests. This sits uneasily with current HSE advice. Its *Working with VDUs* leaflet, revised last year, notes: "Extensive research has found no evidence that VDUs can cause disease or permanent damage to eyes. But long spells of VDU work can lead to tired eyes and discomfort."

The new findings of long-term risks comes in a study of 10,000 workers in Japan, average age 43. It found a statistical link between heavy computer use and eye problems seen as predictors of glaucoma risk. The problems were more common among staff with existing vision defects such as short- or long-sight. "Computer stress is reaching higher levels than have ever been experienced before," the team from the Toho University School of Medicine in Tokyo said. "In the next decade, therefore, it might be important for public health professionals to show more concern about myopia [short-sightedness] and visual field abnormalities in heavy computer users." The investigation found that 522, or 5.1 per cent, of the workers had "visual field abnormalities", a possible precursor to the full-blown condition, which normally affects 0.74 per cent of the population. Further tests on the 522 subjects found that 165 (32 per cent) had suspected glaucoma. David Wright, chief executive of the International Glaucoma Association, commented: "There may be a risk in heavy use of computer equipment."

- **Masayuki Tatemichi and others. Possible association between heavy computer users and glaucomatous visual field abnormalities: a cross sectional study in Japanese workers, *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, volume 58, pages 1021-1027, December 2004 [[abstract](#)].**
- [International Glaucoma Association news release](#). [The Independent](#). [Reuters Health](#). [BBC News Online](#).
- **HSE leaflet, Working with VDUs [[pdf](#)]. Hazards [Computer Vision Syndrome](#) guide.**

High stress doubles risk of painful periods

High levels of stress double the risk of painful periods, according to new research. Dysmenorrhoea, or painful periods, is one of the most common gynaecological problems among women of childbearing age. A US research team, reporting in the December issue of the journal *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, assessed the role of perceived stress on the rate of painful periods. The 388 newly married women included in the study, all textile workers in China, kept daily diaries charting their stress levels for up to 12 months or until pregnancy occurred. A high proportion of the study group worked shifts and were exposed to varying levels of noise and dust. Although the overall proportion of women reporting high stress was low, the rate

of dysmenorrhoea among women reporting high stress was 44 per cent compared with 22 per cent for those reporting low stress. The authors note they "did not have detailed information on stress exposure at work versus stress at home; we could not, therefore, fully assess the separate effects of the stress source." They note however: "Stress reduction programmes aimed at reducing both personal and job related stress by enhancing control and social support may help to reduce the occurrence of dysmenorrhoea in textile workers." The report adds: "Stress reduction programmes aimed at reproductive age women, especially those with a history of dysmenorrhoea, may be considered as possible preventive strategies to reduce the occurrence of dysmenorrhoea as well as the resulted absenteeism and reduced work productivity."

- **L Wang and others. Stress and dysmenorrhea: a population-based prospective study, [Occupational and Environmental Medicine](#), vol.61, pages 1021-1026, December 2004 [[abstract](#)]. [WebMD](#). [Iafrica.com](#).**

Police culture bad for officers' health

The long hours macho culture in the Police Service is forcing officers to push themselves too hard and is undermining health and safety, according to the Police Federation of England and Wales. Paul Lewis, secretary of the federation's health and safety committee, said there is a pressure on officers to get the job done "at all costs," but said this should not be at the expense of people's lives. Lewis told *Police Review* magazine that management and officers should receive training to give them a better appreciation of the important role health and safety can play in introducing controls and measures that would complement the job. He said controls would allow policing "to be carried out more effectively and efficiently with the risks reduced to as low a level as possible. That would help eradicate the macho culture." The federation has written to the Health and Safety Executive and the Association of Chief Police Officers outlining its concerns about the culture in the service and the level of health and safety training.

- [Personnel Today](#).

INTERNATIONAL

China: Overwork kills another factory worker

A female worker has died of suspected overwork in a garment factory. On 11 October this year, the factory switched to 12 hour day and night shifts in a bid to meet a rush order. Workers were required to change shift rosters every two weeks, and were allowed only one day off during the change over. Hundreds of workers resigned after the changes were introduced, with the others facing more work and more hazardous working practices, with several industrial accidents reported. A lawyer in Nanjing, where the factory is based, said it violated labour laws, with some employees working twice the permitted monthly hours. Death from overwork is a recognised phenomenon in China, known as "gualaosi". A series of deaths have been reported in the press. On 28 July, a male worker in a hot toy factory in Dongguan died from overwork; on 1 April, a female worker in Shenzhen died after working overtime continuously for two weeks; and on 8 July 2003, a female worker in an electronics factory in Guangzhou died after working double shifts for six consecutive days.

- [Asian Labour Update.Hazards guide to deaths from overwork.](#)

Europe: Consultation on Euro strain injuries action

Europe's workers and employers are being asked what action they think is needed to address musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). The European Commission says these ailments, which include back pain and repetitive strain injury, "are the biggest health and safety problem facing European workers today." The Commission says that whilst such disorders are in principle covered by general European Union health and safety legislation, most of this is over a decade old and does not apply specifically to work-related MSDs. Commenting on the consultation, TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson said: "While we would welcome new cross Europeans regulations, the reality is that even those countries that have passed specific regulations to deal with MSDs, such as the UK, still have a growing epidemic of back pain and RSI, because the regulations are not enforced." He added that the TUC "will be asking the Commission to investigate the failure of European countries to enforce the current Framework directive," the general safety law that applies to all EU countries. "Within the UK we know that many employers do not do adequate risk assessments for workstations or manual handling, and that is the main reason that the numbers of those affected is continuing to rise."

- [Europa news release](#) and full consultation paper [[pdf](#)].

India: Bhopal faces risk of poisoning

Thousands of Indians around Bhopal remain at risk of poisoning 20 years after a major disaster in the city. A BBC investigation has found 4,000 people died after an explosion and toxic gas leak at the pesticide factory owned by US company Union Carbide in 1984. Campaigners say the total death toll, with many still suffering serious ill-effects, could already have topped 20,000. Drinking water samples obtained by the BBC had levels of contamination 500 times higher than the maximum limits recommended by the World Health Organisation. Union Carbide denies there is a problem, but the BBC investigation concluded there are still thousands of tons of toxic waste on the abandoned and dilapidated site, lying in piles exposed to the weather. "We found pools of mercury lying on the ground, skips full of poisonous material and in some sheds, chemical waste in bags that was still highly dangerous," it reports. Worldwide protests are planned for 3 December, the 20th anniversary of the disaster. Former Union Carbide boss Warren Anderson, now retired in Long Island, New York, remains a fugitive from homicide charges in India ([Risks 179](#)).

- [BBC News Online. More on the Bhopal Day of Action, 3 December 2004.](#)

USA: Asbestos industry the winner in the US election

Insurance companies have been cheered by the re-election of President Bush, a move many believe could lead to the introduction of a new compensation deal capping asbestos compensation liabilities. Julie Rochman, spokesperson for the American Insurance Association, said insurers would now reassess the political environment. With Republicans with stronger control over both Houses, asbestos stocks shot up after the election as traders anticipated a new push for reform. Writing in *The Guardian* about one of the more notorious asbestos firms, WR Grace, George Monbiot said: "On November 3, its shares rose by 14 per cent. By November 5 they were up 26 per cent: the highest they had ever been. It wasn't Bush's victory the stockbrokers were celebrating as much as the defeat of Tom Daschle, the leader of the Democrats in the US Senate." Daschle had been a prominent supporter of the successful union fight to block a deal that would have created a cash limited pot unions argued was too small to meet future

asbestos claims and would exclude some claimants entirely. Monbiot adds that in the UK "compensation culture" has become a "convenient bogeyman, because it allows big business to associate its victims - such as the 3,500 people who die every year in Britain as a result of exposure to asbestos - with scroungers and conmen. It also opens a new front in their perpetual war against regulation." He says a more honest approach would be "to stop big business exposing people to risk in the first place. But the state enforcement of health and safety laws is in the interests of neither businessmen nor lawyers; the money won't vote for it. Without regulation, compensation is often the only protection we have."

- [Planet Ark](#). [Bloomberg](#). [The Guardian](#). [Reuters](#).

USA: Insurers to blame for high insurance costs

Runaway workers' compensation insurance costs have been blamed repeatedly on "ambulance chasing" lawyers and "have-a-go" claimants. But insurance lawyer Scott Clearman may have stumbled upon the real reason. He discovered workers' compensation insurance rates in Texas were going up and remain some of the most expensive in the US because of collusion by insurance companies to artificially inflate the price. Clearman, an insurance lawyer with McClanahan and Clearman in Houston, sued 152 insurance companies under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, or RICO, on behalf of the Wall Street Deli in 1998, believing the shop was paying thousands more than it should have, based on the standard insurance rates for workers' comp. Rick Levy, legal director of the union umbrella group AFL-CIO in Texas, questions how it can be that since 2000, the number of claims in Texas has dropped by 23 per cent, the loss ratio has fallen by 47 per cent, yet premiums have risen 45 per cent. And last month New York attorney general Eliot Spitzer sued another company, Marsh and McLennan, for taking payoffs from insurance companies to fix rates.

- [Houston Chronicle](#).

RESOURCES

Work and health online gateway

The Sheffield Occupational Health Advisory Service (SOHAS) has developed an interactive and user-friendly occupational health website.

The aim of the Work and Health Information Gateway (WHIG), launched this week by high profile safety experts including TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson, is to raise awareness about work-related health issues and to help prevent workplace accidents and ill-health. Rowan Merewood, from SOHAS, says WHIG "will be a valuable national resource, containing a wealth of authoritative and up-to-date information about specific work and health issues, including musculoskeletal problems, hearing difficulties and work-related stress." Users can add their own resources - publications, documents, personal experiences, comments or contacts - to the site, a function WHIG hopes will ensure the resource becomes progressively more useful.

- [Work and health information gateway \(WHIG\)](#).

HSE launches new slips assessment tool

A new online Slips Assessment Tool (SAT) that evaluates potential risks to workers and others from floor slipping hazards in the workplace has been launched by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). It says SAT has been designed for those with responsibility for assessing slip hazards on smooth floors prone to contamination from substances such as water, food, oil and dust. Already being used successfully by HSE and local authority enforcement officers, it is now being made available to the wider health and safety community. Unlike conventional slip test methods, SAT prompts the operator to consider a wide range of contributory factors, including floor surface properties, cleaning regimes and recontamination rates. It says this will enable the user to determine the main causes of the slipping risk and to identify the most effective remedial action. This is not a tool to use for a casual check - more for serious, thorough risk evaluations.

- [HSE news release](#), [slips and trips webpages](#) and [SAT webpage](#).

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](#)

USEFUL LINKS

Visit the TUC http://www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/ website pages on health and safety. See what's on offer from [TUC Publications](#) and [What's On in health and safety](#).

Subscribe to [Hazards](#) magazine, supported by the TUC as a key source of information for union safety reps.

What's new in the [HSC/E](#) and the [European Agency](#).

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