

Risks

issue no 186 – 11 December 2004



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

CONTENTS

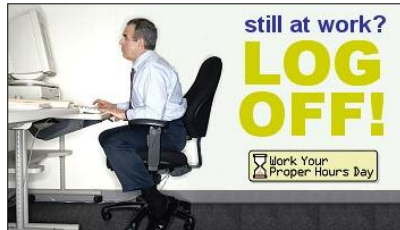
- [Action: February 25 is 'work your proper hours' day in 2005](#)
- [Union news: TUC believes in a xmas party sanity clause](#) * ["Ear-splitting" music is deafening bar and club workers](#) * [Language barriers mean new dangers at work](#) * [Latex allergy nurse gets £1/3 million payout](#) * [TUC and rail unions lobby on the Rail Bill](#) * [Crashes reinforce case for rail crossing action](#) * [Tube workers ballot for action to head off dangerous hours](#)
- [Other news: Workers can't be victims of the war on red tape](#) * [Chancellor announces new work rehab measures](#) * [Government backs GP-based work health advisers](#) * [Record sickness among demoralised civil servants](#) * [UK benzene limit leaves workers at risk](#) * [Lead exposure link to cataracts](#) * [New bill hopes to make safety a boardroom priority](#) * [Haulage boss jailed after fatal crash](#)
- [International news: Australia: Workers die in official bid to rub out unions](#) * [Finland: Older workers helped to stay on the job](#) * [Global: Cabin crew want recognition of safety role](#) * [USA: Trench warfare is killing workers](#)
- [Resources: ILO encyclopaedia now free online](#) * [Promoting better jobs for workers with disabilities](#)
- [Events and courses: TUC courses for safety reps](#)

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

ACTION

February 25 is 'work your proper hours' day in 2005



Here's one for your diary. Friday, February 25 is the day in 2005 when the TUC estimates that people who do unpaid overtime will stop working for free and start to get paid. The TUC is urging people who do unpaid overtime to 'work your

proper hours' on that day, taking a proper lunch-break, and arriving and leaving work on time. This should remind Britain's employers just how much they depend on the goodwill and voluntary extra work of their staff, the TUC says. Indeed the TUC is urging Britain's bosses to take their staff out for lunch, coffee or a cocktail on 'work your proper hours day' to say thank you for their hard work and commitment. "This will be an annual event," said TUC head of campaigns, Nigel Stanley. "Every so often even people who love their jobs and are happy to put in extra hours want to be told they are not taken for granted. And if it makes people and employers think a bit harder about organising a better work-life balance, so much the better."

- [TUC Work your proper hours day 2005 early warning](#). Have a look at the [2004 Work your proper hours day](#) webpages on TUC Worksmart.
- [TUC Changing Times webpages](#) and [Hazards get-a-life webpages](#).

UNION NEWS

TUC believes in a xmas party sanity clause



As the office party season approaches the TUC has joined forces with accident prevention group RoSPA to wish for a safe Christmas. Their checklist aims to keep the hospital out of hospitality and ensure employees only hear jingle bells and not alarm bells this Christmas. It's always safer to book your office bash at a hotel, bar or restaurant, where facilities are designed for people having a good time. But if like many employers you end up hosting a Christmas do at work, there workers

need to apply a seasonal sanity clause. The RoSPA/TUC checklist includes suggestions on how to avoid injuries, breakages, food poisoning and safety no-no's like candles, flaming puddings and smoking. Frances O'Grady, TUC deputy general secretary, said: "There won't be much Christmas cheer in your workplace if your winter wonderland turns out to be a danger zone. Some simple precautions can make sure your party goes off with a bang, instead of a crash." The report says it might be best to leave out the mistletoe - and not just because the berries are poisonous. Sexual harassment at parties as not "a bit of fun", it is a serious workplace disciplinary issue.

- [TUC news release. TUC Worksmart party planners guide. Send a seasonal TUC e-card. BBC News Online. Sky News. The Sun.](#)

"Ear-splitting" music is deafening bar and club workers

The UK's 568,000 bar, pub and club workers are being subjected to music so loud that they could lose or permanently damage their hearing, according to a report published by deaf people's advocacy charity RNID and the TUC. "Noise overload" shows that music played in UK nightclubs is so loud that in some cases it's like working next to an airplane taking off. The report argues that not enough is being done to protect the hearing of bar, club and pub workers from music played well above legal safe levels. It adds that local authorities are failing to enforce the noise at work regulations under which employers have a legal duty to protect their employees' hearing. Frances O'Grady, TUC deputy general secretary, said: "Ear-splitting noise levels are deafening and damaging the hearing of the UK's bars, clubs and pubs workers. Employers can take simple steps to reduce the damage being done to staff without turning clubs into libraries. But it is up to local authorities to monitor and enforce the rules put in place to protect employees from noise overload." RNID's Mark Hoda said: "Because noise damage is cumulative and the effects not immediate, employers often fail to enforce hearing protection for their staff. And yet, a simple measure of wearing quality earplugs would protect these workers from long-term irreparable hearing damage. With Christmas just around the corner, giving all bar staff quality earplugs would be the best present a bar or club owner could offer."

- [TUC news release. Noise overload, TUC/RNID report. TUC Worksmart guidance on noise and hearing loss.](#)

- [BBC News Online](#) and [follow up story](#). [ITV.com](#). [Sky News](#).
- **RNID's Information Line on 0808 808 0123 (freephone) or 0808 808 9000 (textphone) or [email](#).**
- [Don't lose the music campaign](#).

Language barriers mean new dangers at work

Concern that migrant workers could be missing out on crucial health and safety training because their employers are not providing safety material in any language other than English has prompted the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the TUC to publish a new safety guide translated into 19 different languages. 'Your health, your safety: A guide for workers' provides information about safety rights at work, the level of safety training that workers should expect from their employers, and who they should complain to if they believe their safety is being compromised by poor workplace practices. The new leaflets - published in Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Czech, Greek, Gujarati, Pashto, Portuguese, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Ukrainian and Welsh, as well as English - are an attempt to improve safety awareness across the whole UK workforce. TUC deputy general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "Workplace deaths in the UK are on the increase and there's a danger that we could soon start to see more fatalities and serious injuries at work as language barriers mean safety messages are going over workers' heads." Union learning reps from construction union UCATT have been helping migrant workers who speak only a few words of English improve their safety awareness by running basic language courses in a learning centre sited at the foot of the Canary Wharf Tower.

- [TUC news release](#). **Your health, your safety: A guide for workers, the HSE/TUC leaflet, is [available in all 20 languages on the TUC website](#). Also on the HSE website in English [[pdf](#)] and [other languages](#). HSC/E's Race equality action plan [[pdf](#)].**
- [More on the Canary Wharf Learning Centre](#).

Latex allergy nurse gets £1/3 million payout

A nurse who developed potentially life-threatening occupational asthma caused by latex exposure is to receive compensation totalling

£1/3 million. The move comes after six months of negotiations between her employer and her union UNISON. Alison Dugmore received £240,000 compensation from Cardiff county court in June this year, after she developed a life-threatening allergy to latex, working at two Swansea hospitals ([Risks 161](#)). In addition, as a punishment to Swansea NHS hospital trust for not settling the case when they had the opportunity, the judge awarded Ms Dugmore an extra £114,000 punitive interest. The trust took the case to the court of appeal in Swansea, but at the court door this week, the two parties reached a compromise settlement of £93,000 in interest payments. This means Ms Dugmore will receive a total payout of £330,000. UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis said: "It sends out a clear message to employers that they should make offers early or face paying not only damages for injury, but punitive interest on top." He added: "They dragged their heels, despite UNISON making a reasonable offer to settle the claim early. It is only right and proper that she should get punitive interest for the stress and strain this has put on Ms Dugmore and her family."

- [UNISON news release. BBC News Online.](#)
- [Latex Allergy Support Group.](#)

TUC and rail unions lobby on the Rail Bill

The TUC and rail unions ASLEF, RMT and TSSA have outlined the changes they will be seeking to the government's Rail Bill. The move came after a House of Commons debate this week on the planned legislation. The TUC and the rail unions will be campaigning for measures including renationalisation of the rail system. They also want a reversal of the decision to transfer the Health and Safety Executive's rail safety functions to the Office of Rail Regulation, a move unions says would subordinate safety to commercial considerations ([Risks 165](#)). This risk was also identified by Lord Cullen in his enquiry the Ladbroke Grove rail crash. TUC deputy general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "We believe that the changes we are seeking would make all the government's aims easier to achieve and bring us closer to ending once and for all the fragmented nightmare of privatisation." ASLEF acting general secretary Keith Norman said: "We need a renewed culture of safety and public service with the railways the centrepiece of a new strategy of affordable, safe and reliable mass travel." The Paddington Survivors Group said this week that safety recommendations made in the Cullen report had not been "adequately fulfilled" over five years after the crash at Ladbroke Grove which killed

31 passengers.

- [TUC news release](#). [ASLEF news release](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Sky News](#).

Crashes reinforce case for rail crossing action

Rail union ASLEF has repeated its call for improved safety measures at level crossings. The union was speaking out this week after a Central Trains service hit a van on a level crossing in Lincolnshire, killing the two van occupants. ASLEF acting general secretary Keith Norman said: "This latest incident adds urgency to our call for additional active safety measures at level crossings to ensure that either automatic or driver operated braking is triggered if obstacles remain on the line. These measures are needed not only on high speed lines where - as the Ufton Nervet disaster showed - there is the potential for great loss of life and damage but also on slower lines" ([Risks 183](#)). In the Lincolnshire incident, police say a single carriage passenger train hit the van on an unmanned crossing near Sleaford, at about 1.30pm on Monday. The two occupants of the van died. Three passengers on the train, a guard and the train driver have been taken to hospital suffering from shock. On Wednesday, a train hit a lorry on a level crossing near Porthmadog, Wales. Ten rail passengers were treated for shock and the lorry driver suffered a head wound. There were 24 incidents of collisions between vehicles and trains at level crossings in the UK in 2003. The previous year there had been 16, and there were 17 in 2001 and 17 in 2000.

- [ASLEF news release](#). [BBC News Online on the Lincolnshire and Porthmadog crashes](#). [Sky News](#).

Tube workers ballot for action to head off dangerous hours

The biggest union on London Underground (LUL) is to ballot more than 330 signallers and line controllers for strike action. The move comes after six months of negotiations failed to resolve a four year dispute over a pay deal the company wants to link to job cuts, longer shifts and fewer breaks. Pat Sikorski, RMT assistant general secretary, said: "Twelve hours is simply too long for anyone to be in charge of a signal box or control panel, but that is what the company wants. Safety critical staff need sufficient guaranteed rest time between shifts, but LUL also wants to cut minimum rest time from 12 to 11 hours and to vary shift start times by up to four hours at short notice." RMT general

secretary Bob Crow said: "These talks were supposed to be about improving conditions, not worsening them."

- [RMT news release](#).

OTHER NEWS

Workers can't be victims of the war on red tape

A government plan to reel in red tape must not remove safety protections, campaigners have warned. They were responding after Gordon Brown announced "the regulatory focus should be on advice not inspection." The chancellor's statement came as he published the interim report into regulation by J Sainsbury chair Philip Hampton. Brendan Barber, TUC general secretary, said union leaders would be watching to ensure that a relaxation of regulation did not adversely affect employees. "No one can oppose smarter enforcement of regulations, but we will be vigilant that the review does not lead to weaker enforcement of vital protection for people at work," he said. A detailed criticism from the Centre for Corporate Accountability (CCA) said the Treasury-led Hampton review seemed not to have given adequate consideration to the national and international research on the effectiveness of inspections by enforcement officers on reducing injury rates and ensuring compliance. CCA director David Bergman said: "It is the CCA's view that the evidence shows that you cannot just exhort employers not to break the law, you also have to have some credible means of monitoring and enforcement." He added that the report shows "a real failure of understanding the special challenges of health and safety enforcement." Workplace health and safety is a life and death issue requiring proper enforcement, and the Health and Safety Executive already provides an unrivalled range of advice and support for employers.

- [Treasury news release](#). [Treasury webpage on the Hampton report](#), including links to report and details of a consultation on the interim report, to end on Friday 4 February 2004. [CCA news release](#) and initial response [[word](#)]. [The Guardian](#).

Chancellor announces new work rehab measures

The government is to introduce a range of measures which could help sick workers remain in their jobs or that could assist workers on

incapacity benefit back into work. The measures, announced in last week's pre-budget report from the chancellor Gordon Brown, were welcomed by TUC general secretary Brendan Barber. "The moves to help people on incapacity benefit into work rightly concentrate on the carrot not the stick, as some feared," he said. "One of the most positive announcements in the chancellor's pre-budget report was a substantial extension of the Pathways to Work scheme, which helps Incapacity Benefit claimants return to work. £220 million is to be invested in extending the scheme (which is being operated on a pilot basis ([Risks 185](#))) to a third of the country. This will mean that the 30 local authority districts with the highest levels of economic inactivity will now be covered by this innovative new scheme, which offers disabled people a £40 per week return to work credit and enhanced rehabilitation services."

- [DWP news release](#). [Treasury news release](#). [TUC news release](#).

Government backs GP-based work health advisers

The government has announced a new scheme to place employment advisers in GPs surgeries. The move, part of a package of rehabilitation measures announced in chancellor Gordon Brown's pre-budget report, was welcomed by workplace health experts from Sheffield Occupational Health Advisory Service (SOHAS), the organisation that pioneered GP-based occupational health advice services in the UK. "We are delighted to see employment health issues being given the recognition they deserve," said SOHAS's Simon Pickvance. "Those of us who work closely with employment health issues are very aware that suitable advice is not always available to people who most need it." He added that GPs see many patients with work-related health issues, and can assess whether they need extra support. Doctors' organisation BMA gave the new advisers a qualified welcome. Dr Hamish Meldrum, chair of the BMA's general practitioners committee, said: "GPs will welcome practical measures to help their patients back to work where appropriate. However, the proposed pilots for employment advisers in surgeries will need to demonstrate that the problems currently experienced by many practices – such as lack of staff, money and space – can be resolved. There can be many barriers preventing a speedy return to work including inflexibility in the workplace and inadequate occupational health advice, and these problems also have to be addressed if substantial progress is to be made."

- [SOHAS news release](#). [BMA news release](#). [DWP news release](#). [Treasury news release](#). [Sky News](#).

Record sickness among demoralised civil servants

Stress and anxiety is causing record numbers of civil servants at the Department for Work and Pensions to go sick, a National Audit Office report has found. Last year 110,000 of 142,000 staff in benefit offices, the Child Support Agency and pension centres were off ill for periods from one-day to months - leaving the offices 6,800 staff short on every working day of the year. The figures released by parliament's financial watchdog reveal a demoralised department where thousands of people say stress and anxiety is one of the main reasons they take long-term sick leave. Among the 15,114 who took a month or more off work, over a third, 5,512, cited stress, depression and anxiety as the main reason why they were ill. This was more than three times the number who were off work recovering from operations and six times the number off work because of accidents and injuries. DWP is facing swingeing job cuts - and studies in the civil service have shown job insecurity is a prime cause of stress, anxiety, depression and sickness absence among staff ([Risks 165](#)). The highest rates of sickness were among staff who had the lowest paid, most stressful or repetitive jobs, often working in call centres, on benefit office counters or recording data. The lowest rates were among the top executives, including managers responsible for the frequent reorganisation of benefit offices.

- [NAO news release](#), including links to the full report. [The Guardian](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Personnel Today](#).

UK benzene limit leaves workers at risk

Exposure to levels of benzene below that allowable in UK workplaces may pose a health risk, suggests new research. The study has shown that workers who inhaled less than one part per million (1ppm) had fewer white blood cells than those who were not exposed. The UK exposure standard for benzene is currently 1ppm averaged over a working day, suggesting UK workers could be facing potentially health damaging exposures even if workplace safety limits are not exceeded. The research, by US and Chinese scientists, is published in the journal *Science*. The researchers compared 250 workers exposed to benzene-laden glues in two shoe factories in China with 140 workers who sewed clothes in other Chinese factories, but who did not come into contact with the chemical. They measured benzene exposure by taking urine

and blood samples and testing air in the factories, as well as at each worker's home. As expected, workers exposed to benzene at levels of 1ppm and higher had fewer white blood cells, such as granulocytes and B cells, than did unexposed workers. But this also held true for the 109 workers exposed to less than 1ppm of benzene - even after controlling for smoking and other potential confounding factors. The researchers say that although these workers showed no signs of ill health, the findings suggest that low doses of benzene may have a damaging impact on bone marrow which could lead to health problems. White blood cells play a key role in the body's ability to fight off infection and disease.

- [Nature](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Reuters Health](#).
- **Q lan, L Zhang G Li and others. Hematotoxicity in workers exposed to low levels of benzene, *Science*, volume 306, issue 5702, pages 1774-1776, 3 December 2004.**

Lead exposure link to cataracts

Accumulated lead exposure may increase the risk of developing a cataract, research suggests. Scientists at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, USA, found people with the highest levels of lead in their bones were most likely to develop a cataract. The study is published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and is based on data from 642 male patients, of which 122 developed a cataract. The researchers found that men with the highest tibia lead level were 2.7 times more likely to develop a cataract than those who recorded the lowest level of lead in this bone. When other factors, such as smoking and diabetes were taken into consideration, the risk rose to 3.2 times that of those exposed to the lowest lead levels. Researcher Dr Debra Schaumberg said the results suggested that lead exposure contributed to 42 per cent of all cataracts. The report concludes: "This research suggests that reduction of lead exposure could help decrease the global burden of cataract." HSE figures show about 13,000 people in the UK work in jobs requiring health surveillance for lead exposure, although many more, such as plumbers and painters, will be exposed at work.

- [BBC News Online](#). [Reuters Health](#). [Planetark](#).
- **Debra A. Schaumberg and others. Accumulated lead exposure and risk of age-related cataract in men, *Journal of the American Medical Association*,**

volume 292, pages 2750-2754, 8 December 2004

[\[abstract\]](#).

- **HSE's Lead and you leaflet [\[pdf\]](#).**

New bill hopes to make safety a boardroom priority

Senior Labour backbenchers and former ministers are backing a private member's bill which would see company directors held to account for negligent health and safety practices that cause injuries or fatalities. The support comes as backing for Jarrow MP Stephen Hepburn - who came third in this session's private members ballot - who will now champion a Health and Safety (Directors Duties) Bill, which seeks to introduce positive health and safety obligations on company directors. Campaigners - including unions TGWU and UCATT who are backing the Bill ([Risks 185](#)) - believe that such a positive duty is the only way to reduce the workplace death and accident toll ([Risks 183](#)). The unions say the bill has cross-party support including backing from former ministers Nick Brown, Frank Dobson, Ross Cranston QC and Michael Meacher as well as Tory MP Tony Baldry and Lib Dem MP Dr Jenny Tonge. Tony Woodley, TGWU general secretary, said: "Giving directors' health and safety responsibility will not only make prosecution easier but actually play a role in preventing the causes of death and major injury." Alan Ritchie, UCATT general secretary, said "this bill will bring about an overnight change of culture in workplace health and safety, not only in construction but right across all industrial sectors." Campaigners say that the current system, based solely on fines, is failing victims.

- **[TGWU news release](#). **What the Health and Safety (Directors Duties) Bill would look like [\[pdf\]](#).****
- **[TUC/Hazards deadly business campaign](#). [Centre for Corporate Accountability](#). [Simon Jones Memorial Campaign](#).**

Haulage boss jailed after fatal crash

A haulage boss who taught truckers how to cheat vehicle logs so they could travel "as far and as fast as they wanted" was given a seven year jail term this week after three men died when one of his drivers fell asleep at the wheel. Drivers at Keymark Services - where Melvyn Spree was director - regularly falsified records so that it would appear that they were complying with the law when they were actually working grossly excessive hours, Northampton crown court heard.

Spree also taught his 13 drivers to jam the tachograph recorders which measure a vehicle's speed and record when it has been driven. One driver, Steven Law, 37, was killed when he fell asleep at the wheel on the M1 near Northampton on February 27, 2002, during an 18-hour stint. Sentencing Spree, Judge Charles Wide QC said the scale of the fraud at the business was shocking. "Every driver was involved, encouraged by the incentive of a profit-sharing initiative," he said. Spree's business and domestic partner, Lorraine March, was also jailed after pleading guilty to conspiracy to defraud the vehicle inspectorate.

- [The Guardian](#). [BBC News Online](#).
- [Hazards guide on the dangers of long hours](#).

INTERNATIONAL

Australia: Workers die in official bid to rub out unions

A scathing official report into mine safety in West Australia has exposed the human cost of a drive by Australia's federal government to reduce union power by introducing individual contracts as an alternative to collective bargaining. The five month Ritter Inquiry, prompted by a spate of workplace deaths, found mining multinational BHP Billiton's aggressive use of individual contracts had compromised workplace safety. Barrister Mark Ritter, who led the inquiry, confirmed safety shortcomings had contributed to the loss of 20 lives in the past year. He described the push to switch workers to individual contracts at BHP Billiton's operations as "a factor which has impacted and continues to impact on the successful implementation of safety systems." Will Tracey, an organiser with the union federation ACTU, said: "Occupational health and safety (OHS) representatives are the bedrock of our system. But in its efforts to marginalise unions, BHP has effectively marginalised two thirds of elected OHS representatives" who were on individual contracts. He added: "What this report identifies is that when BHP devised its industrial strategy, based on individual contracts, it didn't take into account its disastrous effect on safety. The sad thing is that it has taken the lives of so many people to bring this to light." Not everyone is so concerned, however. After Ritter's damning report was tabled in the West Australian state parliament, BHP Billiton's share price soared.

- [Workers Online](#). [ABC News Online](#). [BHP Billiton news release](#).

Finland: Older workers helped to stay on the job

Finland, facing the possibility of an ageing workforce and labour shortages, has taken action to ensure older workers maintain their "work ability". Under a pilot scheme devised by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH), some workers in the town of Tervasaari have since 2000 been given extra training, moved to more appropriate jobs and treated as the wise elders of the company. "Naturally you do decline physically but a lot of cognitive functions improve with advancing age," said FIOH's Professor Juhani Ilmarinen. If employers do not understand that their workers are changing as they age and change the work accordingly, he said, then all they see is a decline in productivity. "We have been blaming the wrong source - the human beings - saying 'you are poor' although really it's the job that is poor," he said. Instead, the work ability programme aims to convince employers to tailor their work to individuals as they age - and also to improve those individuals' health and skills or knowledge needed for the job. Ari Reinikainen, a shop steward at the UPM-Kymmene paper mill in the town, said the ageing workers programme at the factory had been drawn up with full co-operation from the trades unions because everyone realised its importance.

- [BBC News Online. FIOH ageing and work webpages.](#)

Global: Cabin crew want recognition of safety role

Airline cabin crews worldwide are calling for a standard certificate that gives proper recognition of the vital safety and security skills their jobs demand. On 7 December the international trade union federation ITF launched the latest phase of its campaign for recognition, respect and proof of ability. ITF affiliated unions represent a quarter of a million cabin crew members in over 100 countries. General secretary David Cockroft explained the ITF's message: "It's not just safety belts that protect passengers. Crew members now manage hundreds of safety features on aircraft. In an accident it's the cabin crew who carry out the safety procedures, and have to manage any kind of terrorist or air rage incident alone. Security rules say the cockpit door must remain locked." The ITF's European wing ETF lobbied the European Union's Transport Council of Ministers before its meeting on 9 and 10 December, urging it to adopt a resolution establishing a common licence across the European Union. Unions across Europe staged their own campaign events in support of the move.

- [ITF news release](#) and [campaign webpage](#). [ETF news release \[pdf\]](#).

USA: Trench warfare is killing workers

Dozens of labourers die in the United States every year while working in trenches on construction sites, most unvisited under a threadbare system of official safety inspection. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) put the 2003 trench death toll at 53. Industry experts say the true number of annual deaths might be twice the officially reported total. They say the reason for the carnage is simple: too many employers, especially owners of small construction companies, ignore safety rules. "Very seldom does a properly protected trench cave in," said Jack Mickle, a professor emeritus of civil engineering at Iowa State University who helped write the federal trench safety regulations in the 1970s. "It's one of those things that people feel they can get away with." Employers who fail to protect trench workers face fines ranging from \$7,000 to \$78,000 (£3,620 to £40,340). The higher fines are levied against employers that blatantly disregard safety regulations. In September, an OSHA committee set up to investigate the trench deaths problem proposed that companies found with unsafe trenches be put on a sort of probation. The bosses would be required to tell OSHA about every job the company takes for at least a year.

- [Danbury News-Times](#).

RESOURCES

ILO encyclopaedia now free online

The International Labour Organisation's *Encyclopaedia of occupational health and safety* is now available free on the web. The encyclopaedia, which runs to four hefty volumes in print, covers: The body and health care; prevention, management and policy; tools and approaches; hazards; chemicals; industries and occupations; and indexes and guides. Also available on the web is the CISDOC bibliographic database of the ILO's International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS). CIS monitors occupational safety and health literature worldwide. Publications - print or electronic - are cited in CISDOC with summaries of their content. More than 62,000 references have been collected to date.

- [ILO encyclopaedia](#). [ILOCIS News](#).

Promoting better jobs for workers with disabilities

The European Agency for Health and Safety at Work has produced a factsheet on the workplace safety of people with disabilities. It looks at a key area concerning the employment of workers with disabilities - how to ensure safety and health, while avoiding discrimination. The Bilbao-based agency says its factsheet underlines the rights of people with disabilities to both a fair and safe workplace. It explains how a practical application of anti-discrimination legislation and health and safety legislation can benefit both the worker and employer. It adds that above all the factsheet provides user-friendly and practical guidance on how the responsibilities of equality legislation can tie in with health and safety responsibilities. This includes: Explaining how to incorporate the principal of adapting work and workplaces to people, to provide accessible and safe employment for disabled people; a guide to a disability-sensitive risk assessment; and a checklist on how to provide a safe workplace for disabled workers.

- [European Agency news release](#) and [disability and work web resources](#). **Factsheet number 53: [Ensuring the health and safety of workers with disabilities](#)**.

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](#)

COURSES FOR JANUARY TO MARCH 2005

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

USEFUL LINKS

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

Subscribe to [Hazards](#) magazine, supported by the TUC as a key

source of information for union safety reps.

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

[HSE Books](#), PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA. Tel:

01787 881165; fax: 01787 313995.