

GENERAL

- 231** Liaison Meetings with CWU Group MPs
- 232** Branch Magazine Competition
- 233** Union Skills I Course
- 234** Union Skills II Course
- 235** Union Skills III Course
- 236** Romec Union Skills II Course
- 237** Equality & Diversity Mandatory Training for Branch Officials – North East

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 238** Harassment Complaints Database: Union Policy
- 239** Mandatory Equality & Diversity Training
- 240** Equality Conference Audit

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 241** 'Driving for Work' – A New THINK! Road Safety Campaign – Don't Kill Yourself Driving for a Living
- 242** Mesothelioma Framework – NHS Care
- 243** Mesothelioma – Government Compensation Scheme
- 244** Companies Fined for Asbestos Crimes
- 245** Dockers Win Asbestos Case Appeal
- 246** Asbestos Deaths – Families Win Compensation
- 247** Two Companies Fined Following Overhead High Voltage Power Cables Electrocution
- 248** Tory Opposition Attempt to Scupper New CDM Regulations Fails
- 249** Large Rise in Construction Site Deaths Linked to Safety Cuts
- 250** Network Rail Fined £4m for Paddington Crash
- 251** Unions Press for Action on Buncefield Lessons

TELECOMS

- 252** Network & Vendor Management: Technical Services Efficiency Challenge 2007/08
- 253** One IT: EUT Organisational Review

POSTAL

No items this week

LETTERS TO BRANCHES

- 355** 19/04/07 Royal Mail Letters Pay 2007 – Dave Ward
- 356** 19/04/07 BT Attendance Procedure – Grace Mitchell
- 357** 19/04/07 Cobra – Changes to Contract of Employment – Brian Healy
- 358** 19/04/07 Justice For Agency Workers – New Early Day Motion – Sally Bridge
- 359** 19/04/07 The Institute of Employment Rights Conferences – Billy Hayes
- 360** 19/04/07 The Post Office Campaign – Billy Hayes
- 361** 20/04/07 G4S Pay Claim 2007 – Nigel Cotgrove
- 362** 20/04/07 TFSE SOC Elections 2007 – Andy Kerr

LETTERS TO BRANCHES

363	20/04/07	Mail Order Return (MORS) – Martin Collins
364	20/04/07	CWU & BT launch “Working with Dyslexia” Fact Sheet – Grace Mitchell
365	20/04/07	Retired Members’ Advisory Committee Minutes – Tony Kearns
366	23/04/07	Telereal Pay Review 2007 – Simon Sapper
367	23/04/07	CWU Annual Conference 2008 – Tony Kearns
368	24/04/07	ALGUST Transfer to CWU Completed – Billy Hayes
369	24/04/07	Justice for Agency Workers Campaign – DTI Consultation on Measures to Protect Vulnerable Agency Workers – TUC Questionnaire – Sally Bridge
370	24/04/07	Joint Statement Vehicle Services Pay Package – Ray Ellis
371	25/04/07	Mesothelioma Framework – Dave Joyce
372	25/04/07	ROMECC and CWU Recognition Agreement – Ray Ellis
373	25/04/07	Legal Services Department – Legal Advice – Annual Conference June 2007 – Tony Rupa
374	25/04/07	Post Office Campaign – Billy Hayes
375	25/04/07	Labour Party NEC – Dave Ward

GENERAL

231

Liaison Meetings with CWU Group MPs

The following meetings with CWU Group MPs have now been arranged and, for your information, listed below are the dates of the meetings and those nominated to attend:

8 May 2007

Andy Kerr, Graham Colk, Steve Jones and a representative from the London Regional Political Committee.

17 July 2007

PFMC Members to be nominated following Annual Conference, and a representative from the South West Regional Political Committee.

Billy Hayes
General Secretary

232

Branch Magazine Competition

The annual awards rewarding the very best CWU branch magazines are up for grabs once again – and the competition will reach its climax next month at Annual Conference.

To enter, all you have to do is decide which edition of the magazine was your best of the last twelve months and send three copies to: **Marcia Murray**, CWU Communications Department, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London, SW19 1RX.

Deadline for entries is **Friday May 18**, so don't delay – not least because as in previous years substantial prizes are at stake. Communications Department.

233

Union Skills I Course

The Communication Workers Union has organised a Union Skills I course, to be held at the union's Education & Training Centre at Alvescot Lodge. All courses held at Alvescot

Lodge are accredited with the National Open College Network. This is a fully integrated course.

The course will be held from **30th July – 3rd August 2007** and the closing date for nominations is **14th June 2007**.

The Linked Education Programme is designed to encourage members to become more active in the union. It is open to all members of the CWU, but is particularly aimed at new activists.

We particularly encourage branches to nominate women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and young members who are often under-represented on the CWU Education and Training Programme.

All members of the union who wish to have a working knowledge of the wider trade union and labour movement would benefit from attending the Linked Education Programme.

The courses are called ‘Linked Education’ because the programme comprises three distinct but connected courses, each of one week duration. It begins with the Union Skills I, followed by the Union Skills II and concludes with Union Skills III. The three parts of the course are completely self contained, but there are real educational benefits in completing all three parts of the programme in a year or eighteen months. Union Skills courses attract special leave with pay.

All courses at Alvescot are residential. The cost of tuition, food and accommodation will be met from the General Fund. Branches requiring financial assistance from the General Fund to enable them to send students to the course must submit the request with the nomination, to enable the Trustees to consider the request in time.

The Education Centre can offer child-minding facilities for a maximum of three under school age children at any one time. If any applicant from your branch would like

child-minding facilities, can you please advise the age and sex of the child on the application form. Further information on the child-minding arrangements will then be sent to successful applicants.

Those nominees who are committee members, branch representatives or branch officers are entitled to leave with pay. Nominations should be made on the form for Education Courses, and returned to Alvescot Lodge by the closing date shown. If you nominate more than one member (a maximum of two please), indicate the order of preference if necessary and please apply for only one course at a time. If a member is refused a place, due to oversubscription, then indicate this on a subsequent application for another date. Application forms should be addressed to: **Trish Lavelle**, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: **01993 843373**; Fax: **01993 840960**; email: **mtodd@cwu.org**

234

Union Skills II Course

The Communication Workers Union has organised a Union Skills II Course, to be held at the union's Education & Training Centre at Alvescot Lodge. All courses held at Alvescot Lodge are accredited with the National Open College Network. This is a fully integrated course.

The course will be held from **6 – 10 August 2007** and the closing date for nominations is **21st June 2007**.

Only members who have attended a Union Skills I or an Induction Course are eligible for nomination. Preference, will of course, be given to those students who have been refused a previous Union Skills II Course, so this must be shown on the application form.

Application forms should be addressed to:

Trish Lavelle, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: **01993 843373**; Fax: **01993 840960**; email: **mtodd@cwu.org**

235 Union Skills III Course

The Communication Workers Union has organised a Union Skills III Course, to be held at the union's Education & Training Centre at Alvescot Lodge. All courses held at Alvescot Lodge are accredited with the National Open College Network. This is a fully integrated course.

The course will be held from **13 – 17 August 2007** and the closing date for nominations is **28th June 2007**.

Only members who have attended a Union Skills I/Induction and a Union Skills II Course are eligible for nomination.

Application forms should be addressed to: **Trish Lavelle**, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: **01993 843373**; Fax: **01993 840960**; email: **mtodd@cwu.org**

236 Romec Union Skills II Course

The Communication Workers Union has organised a Romec Union Skills I Course, to be held at the union's Education & Training Centre at Alvescot Lodge. All courses held at Alvescot Lodge are accredited with the National Open College Network. This is a fully integrated course.

The course will be held from **20 – 24 August 2007** and the closing date for nominations is **5th July 2007**.

The Linked Education Programme is designed to encourage members to become more active in the union. It is open to all Romec members of the CWU.

Application forms should be addressed to: **Trish Lavelle**, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: **01993 843373**; Fax: **01993 840960**; email: **mtodd@cwu.org**

237 Equality & Diversity Mandatory Training for Branch Officials – North East

In line with Conference policy, we now require branches to submit applications for the following mandatory Equality & Diversity courses. These courses are being held in the North East Region:

Thursday 24th May – Darlington
Tuesday 19th June – York

Further dates and venues for other regions will be published in due course.

Nominations should be made on an application form for union courses and returned as soon as possible to: **Trish Lavelle**, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: **01993 843373**; Fax: **01993 840960**; email: **mtodd@cwu.org**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

238 Harassment Complaints Database: Union Policy

Branches are again reminded of the need to fill in the Harassment Complaints Database (HCD) Forms, as illustrated in LTB 450/04.

Please ensure that all reps have a copy of LTB 450/04 as it contains useful guidance as well as the form itself. Branches may also find LTB 289/04 useful which contains information on the Harassment Helpline and the Harassment Advice Network as well as the HCD. The completion of the HCD forms is part of our agreement with the Equal Opportunities Commission and is, therefore, CWU policy (the full agreement can be found in LTB 292/04).

The Equal Opportunities Commission has raised concerns with us regarding the completion rate, which we need to address, otherwise we will fall foul of the agreement. Therefore, please ensure that any complaint raised with branch reps by members that involves possible harassment should be notified to HQ via these forms.

We appreciate that this will add to an already busy work schedule for those reps that have the responsibility for completing them, but there is no scope for non-compliance. We must accept that this will become an accepted culture in terms of harassment reporting.

The data that will come through to HQ will be vital in enabling us to analyse and identify any obvious patterns where problems exist.

We extend our appreciation to all those branches already complying with the policy and look forward to the co-operation of all branches in this matter.

Any enquiries regarding this paragraph please contact **Michèle Emerson** at CWU HQ.

239 Mandatory Equality & Diversity Training

Branch secretaries are requested to ensure that any person in their branch who has CWU rep responsibilities and has not yet completed their mandatory Equality & Diversity training are enrolled in the courses that are planned throughout the regions in the forthcoming months.

All reps must do the training – this includes divisional reps, area reps, unit reps and branch officers. For clarification on dates please contact either your regional secretary.

The training has been running now for over three years and there are still a substantial number of reps who have not completed the training. Your co-operation in this matter is greatly appreciated.
Equal Opportunities Department.

240 Equality Conference Audit

Branches will be aware that those of you who have not sent a delegate to any of the CWU Equality Conferences over a three-year period have been written to asking for an explanation as to why this is the case.

The department thanks the many branch secretaries who have responded positively outlining plans to make progress in these areas. Those branch secretaries who have not replied to the letter will shortly be receiving a letter from the general secretary and we advise you all to get your replies in as soon as possible.

For your information the LGBT and Disability Conferences have been very well attended but there were still a considerable number of CWU branches who did not attend.

The Women's Conference and Black Workers' Conference have been advertised via LTBs and the *Voice* and we hope to see an marked increase in branches attending these conferences too.
Equal Opportunities Department.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

241 'Driving for Work' – A New THINK! Road Safety Campaign – Don't Kill Yourself Driving for a Living

A new THINK! road safety campaign to tackle stress and distractions among the UK's three million-strong army of van drivers has being launched in a bid to reduce road deaths and casualties, Road Safety Minister Dr Stephen Ladyman announced the initiative saying that the Government is warning that stress and distractions could be placing working drivers at serious risk.

The Road Safety Minister added that pressures, tough deadlines can push you over the speed limit, and distractions like the boss calling you on your mobile can take your attention off the road. Simple measures which anyone can adopt will make a real difference, and that's what our new campaign is about.' The minister added: 'Government research shows that around 200 fatalities and serious injuries involving somebody at work occur on our roads every week. Our message to drivers is that good driving is also safe driving, and employers must take responsibility for managing the safety of their staff when out on the road.' The Government says its 'THINK! Driving for Work' campaign will focus on removing many of the hazards van drivers face, such as stress, fatigue and answering mobile phones whilst driving. Drivers and their bosses

will also be encouraged to plan journeys better in a bid to reduce speeding. The Government is also rolling-out the 'Driving for Work Business Champions' initiative. Run by road safety charity RoadSafe, the programme aims to spread advice and good practice and will encourage business leaders to communicate directly with other employers about the benefits of managing work-related road safety.

Government research shows that around 200 fatalities and serious injuries involving somebody at work occur on our roads every week. The message to drivers is that good driving is also safe driving, and employers must take responsibility for managing the safety of their staff when out on the road.

The THINK! Driving for Work campaign will focus on removing many of the hazards van drivers' face, such as answering mobile phones whilst driving, stress and fatigue – meanwhile drivers and their bosses will be encouraged to plan journeys better in a bid to reduce speeding.

Over the past 10 years the number of vans in the UK has increased by around one third – the campaign illustrates the vital contribution van drivers make and the dramatic impact of a road safety accident.

Alongside this, and last week's introduction of tough new penalties for using a mobile illegally at the wheel, the Government is launching its first THINK! mobile phones TV campaign to educate people about the dangers of driving and talking on the phone. And for the first time, all callers ringing drivers on their mobiles will be urged to take the initiative and phone back later in a ground-breaking new THINK! mobile phones TV campaign – "If they're driving, kill the conversation". In a new approach, the campaign makes it clear that it is not just the responsibility of drivers to consider the consequence of using a mobile at the wheel – people making calls also need to realise that they are putting the recipient's life at risk. The message is clear; your call can wait until it's safe for the person you are calling to talk.

The THINK! Driving for Work campaign will target drivers with messages throughout their working day through targeted radio advertisements, press partnerships, and ambient advertisements in service station washrooms and on cafe sandwich bags.

In addition the Department is also rolling-out the Driving for Work Business Champions initiative. Run by road safety charity RoadSafe, the programme aims to spread advice and good practice and will encourage business leaders to communicate directly with fellow employers about the benefits of managing work-related road safety.

1. The first phase of the THINK! Driving for Work campaign targeting van drivers was launched in March. The national campaign uses a mix of radio advertising and sponsorship,

ambient advertising, partnership marketing, PR and posters. This approach centres round the key activities of a van driver's day and engages directly with them at times when they are best placed to act upon our messages. The overarching message for the campaign is 'Around 200 road deaths and serious injuries each week involve someone at work. THINK!

2. The THINK! Driving for Work campaign priorities will be speed due to time pressure, distractions (mobile phone use while driving, drinking, reading maps whilst driving), and journey planning.

3. The THINK! mobile phones TV campaign follows on from DfT's recent campaign highlighting the increase in penalties for drivers caught using their mobile phones whilst driving.

4. On 27 February the penalty for using a hand-held mobile phone while driving increased to £60 and three penalty points. The new TV advert aims to remind people that it is illegal to use a hand-held phone at the wheel and of potential the consequences of doing so. It can be viewed online at <http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk>.

5. The Department has opened a new website dedicated to advice and good practice for employers on managing driving for work. The content has been developed from a research project being run by TRL Ltd for the Department which is aimed at identifying how to present advice and support to employers, and to make the case for them to invest in work-related road safety. The link for the website is <http://www.dft.gov.uk/drivingforwork>.

Any enquiries should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting **reference No. EX13**.

242

Mesothelioma Framework – NHS Care

The Government has launched a new framework for improving the care of people with the asbestos cancer Mesothelioma.

On **Action Mesothelioma Day, 27 February**, Health Minister Rosie Winterton announced the new 'National Mesothelioma Framework', providing advice to the NHS on how to organise services for Mesothelioma patients in order to improve quality of care building on the structures already in place for lung cancer patients.

The Government hopes that the NHS will adopt the recommendations set out in the framework to ensure better care for Mesothelioma patients and their families.

The Minister's statement said: 'Mesothelioma can be a challenging condition for the NHS to diagnose and manage, especially as the number of cases varies around the country so that, in some areas, it is a rare condition.' She added: 'It is important that we work to improve quality of care to a uniformly high level across the country. With a potential peak of cases

less than ten years away, we have a window of opportunity now to ensure that the NHS has done all it can to provide a high quality service for all Mesothelioma patients.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting **reference No. P8**.

243

Mesothelioma – Government Compensation Scheme

A further important Government announcement was made last month when the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, John Hutton, set out the Government's proposals, which would introduce major changes to government-awarded compensation for Mesothelioma.

Parts of the proposed changes are to abolish the occupational link, which will give the right for everyone with Mesothelioma to claim under the Pneumoconiosis (Workers' Compensation) Act 1979. The TUC and all major unions including the CWU are welcoming new Government proposals for streamlining compensation for Mesothelioma victims, that will speed up the payment of compensation to the people suffering from Mesothelioma.

People who have worked with asbestos and who, as a result, are suffering from Mesothelioma do not have time on their side so the Government has done the right thing in ensuring that the victims of this terrible disease get quicker access to justice and compensation.

Although it can take up to 40 years after asbestos exposure for Mesothelioma to develop, once it has got a hold on a victim's lungs, death comes quickly. Mesothelioma victims will be relieved to learn that they will not have to wait long for compensation, and that their families will be provided for after their deaths.

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

244

Companies Fined for Asbestos Crimes

Two Lancashire companies have been fined a total of £25,000 and ordered to pay total costs of £11,788 after pleading guilty at Blackpool Magistrates Court to criminal charges brought by the HSE after employees were exposed to asbestos during refurbishment work.

After pleading guilty to safety charges, In The Pink Leisure Ltd was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £4,753 costs and contractor Eclipse Developments Ltd was fined £15,000 and ordered to pay £6,535 costs. The cases arose from an HSE visit – made in April 2005 following a complaint – to the site of a new night club operated by In The Pink Leisure Ltd. HSE lead construction inspector for Lancashire Mark Cottrill said 'a substantial amount of asbestos insulating board and flock asbestos was disturbed while the refurbishment was being carried out.'

As a result the site was shut while a licensed asbestos contractor carried out an environmental clean and the removal of the remaining asbestos. 'Both companies had had previous advice in relation to asbestos on the site following a visit from HSE in January 2002, when a full survey was carried out and an amount of asbestos removed,' said the HSE inspector, adding that no-one had referred back to the existing survey which identified asbestos on the premises.

'The prosecution was taken because of this failure and the consequent exposure of up to a dozen employees working in the construction being exposed to asbestos containing materials,' he said

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

245

Dockers Win Asbestos Case Appeal

Hundreds of former dock workers can sue the Government for compensation for asbestos-related illnesses, thanks to a recent court victory. The Court of Appeal upheld a High Court test case decision last year that the Government is liable to compensate former Dock Workers.

The test case was brought on behalf of Robert Thompson, a 65-year-old former Docker with asbestos-related disease, and Winifred Rice, whose Docker husband Edward died in 2000 of Mesothelioma, aged 67. Lawyers for the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) took the case to the Court of Appeal in an attempt to reverse the high court ruling. A successful appeal would have blocked the dockers' compensation claims.

The appeal decision will allow hundreds to be compensated by the Government instead of them hunting in vain for liable dock employers that no longer exist. Kevin Johnson, a partner at law firm John Pickering and Partners who acted for Mr Thompson and Mrs Rice, said it is right that the DTI, the Government Department acting on behalf of former Dock Labour boards, has been made to take responsibility. 'The Court of Appeal has given former Dock workers and their families the lifeline to financial security that they so badly needed,' he said. 'By the time these men become ill through asbestos, they can not trace and pursue many of the private Dock companies that employed them. But the Dock labour boards knew they were exposing the men to harm by allowing them to work unprotected.'

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

246

Asbestos Deaths – Families Win Compensation

Workers are continuing to be killed by asbestos exposures – but employers continue to take deadly risks putting a new generation in danger.

A widow from Chorley, Lancashire, has

received £295,000 in compensation after her husband, who was exposed to asbestos as a 15-year-old apprentice engineer for British Rail, died of the asbestos cancer Mesothelioma. She said: 'I took on the case after his death and the union and union's solicitors were very supportive. I am glad it has come to a close now. No amount of money can bring him back, but it means things will be a little easier.'

Another ex-railway worker, Frederick Allen, has been awarded damages of £128,500 after being diagnosed with Mesothelioma. The 70-year-old's former employers, British Rail and Swindon Pressings, agreed to settle the case before it went to trial. Mr Allen, of Wootton Bassett, was represented by Brigitte Chandler of Charles Lucas & Marshall. She said: 'Due to Mr Allen's illness we had to progress this claim very quickly. We were able to obtain early judgment against the defendants who finally agreed to settle the night before the trial, when the damages would have been assessed.'

Former workers at a North Shields firm, Smiths Ship repairers, based in North Shields, may have to wait for years for compensation for asbestos-related conditions because the firm and its insurers are in liquidation. Normally under these circumstances the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) would meet the liabilities of the employer, but says it will not payout until the receivers have confirmed there are no other assets available for the company to meet the asbestos claims.

The unions are also concerned that workers continue to be placed at risk by asbestos cowboys. The warning came after North East Environmental Ltd, based in North Tyneside was fined £4,600 at North Shields Magistrates Courts for not holding a licence for the removal of asbestos. Unscrupulous companies think they can avoid the red tape and extra costs by not applying for a licence to remove asbestos when one is needed.

Union members have been warned to protect themselves by ensuring their employers do comply with the law and additionally are disposing of asbestos correctly. They should report any incidents of law-breaking and the incorrect disposal of asbestos to their union Health and Safety Representative.

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

247

Two Companies Fined Following Overhead High Voltage Power Cables Electrocution

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has reminded businesses of the need to take precautions at all times when working below overhead power lines.

The warning came last week after a Southport company and a self-employed Kirkby man were fined a total of £12,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,245 after pleading guilty to three criminal charges brought by the HSE following the electrocution of 48-year-old

Robert Davies. He was electrocuted at the Guys Industrial Estate in Burscough, Lancashire on 19 August 2005 when a vehicle mounted crane came into contact with overhead electricity cables during the repositioning of portable buildings. HSE Inspector Michael Clarke, who investigated the incident, said: 'Operators of vehicle mounted cranes must not take chances when required to work near overhead high voltage cables. They must make sure that the cables are not live or where that is not possible take extra precautions to prevent contact with the cables. Furthermore, occupiers of sites with overhead high voltage electricity cables must take appropriate measures to control lifting activities and prevent inadvertent contact with such cables. The tragic death of Mr Davies was avoidable.'

Mr Davies' employer Guy Leasing Ltd of Kensington Road in Southport pleaded guilty to a criminal safety offence and was fined £8,000. Self-employed James Walsh of Aspen Close pleaded guilty to two criminal charges and was fined a total of £4,000.

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

248

Tory Opposition Attempt to Scupper New CDM Regulations Fails

Despite Tory Leader David Cameron spearheading an assault on new health and safety regulations, designed to enhance worker protection and encourage practical solutions to good health and safety management, the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM 2007) came into force on 6 April 2007. Cameron's assault took the form of an Early Day Motion calling for the new Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 2007 to be annulled.

The timing of the Tory attack on safety could not have been any worse, with the whole world watching the UK, as construction work is about to begin for the 2012 Olympic Games. The Health and Safety Management team for the Olympic Games construction project have already put together proposals that are in line with the new regulations. These regulations were only signed by the Minister for Health and Safety on 7 February and laid in Parliament on 15 February with a view to implementation on 6 April.

The support for this new law is well renowned, and comes from organisations such as the Health and Safety Executive, Department of Trade and Industry, trade unions and most of the construction business community, CBI and Cabinet Office. These regulations were approved unanimously by the Health and Safety Commission, which represents both large and small employers, trade unions, safety professionals and Local Authorities.

The TUC and all trade unions including CWU supports the new CDM Regs (although the unions would have preferred them to go further) which were agreed and passed. The

new regulations are a good example of how legislation can be simplified without removing or reducing the levels of protection and therefore the opposition from the Tory Party is incredible and that they are asking for the annulment of the new regulations which have overwhelming support.

All interested parties had plenty of opportunity to sift through the finer details and respond to the legislation during the due process of consultation with all stakeholders, for these particular regulations.

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

249

Large Rise in Construction Site Deaths Linked to Safety Cuts

A dramatic rise in deaths in the construction industry must shame the Government into reversing cuts in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the unions UCATT, PCS and Prospect have said. Latest figures reveal that 74 people have died on building sites already this year, an increase of 14 per cent on the 2005/06 figure. The unions say the figure for 2006/07 could rise – the reporting year only ends on 31 March.

Alan Ritchie, General Secretary of Construction Union UCATT, said: 'The lives of building workers cannot be reduced to a financial cost. The Government must reverse these cuts and put extra resources into ensuring that this inherently dangerous industry is made safer.' The unions say the watchdog is already suffering the combined effects of up to 350 job cuts announced last year and year-and-year real terms budget cuts since 2002. Further cuts are expected as the Organisation's parent body, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), will be forced to make cuts of 5 per cent from its spending in each of the next three years.

Mark Serwotka, General Secretary of PCS, one of the HSE unions, said the site deaths figure 'should be a wake up call to the Government who should be investing in safety rather than crude cost cutting.' He added: 'Cutting jobs and resources leads to fewer inspections which in turn results in tragic consequences.' Research shows that workplaces only receive an HSE inspection once every 13 years, the unions say, adding additional job losses are expected to further reduce the number of workplace inspections undertaken.

Prospect negotiator Mike MacDonald, speaking on behalf of 1,750 inspectors, scientists and other professionals in HSE, said: 'The Government's refusal to back the call for proper resources for inspection and accident investigation ignores the stack of evidence that enforcing the law is the most effective motivator for business to improve health and safety standards.' He added: 'In addition to the families devastated by the rise in construction site fatalities, there are numerous other lives wrecked by horrendous injuries at

work who will never get justice because the cutbacks have resulted in a restriction of the accident selection criteria used to prompt an investigation.

The CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department has given its full backing to "PROSPECT" the HSE Inspectors union and the Construction Unions and Construction Safety Campaign

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting **reference No. EX5**

250

Network Rail Fined £4m for Paddington Crash

Network Rail was fined £4m after a court found it responsible for a catalogue of failures that resulted in the Paddington rail crash, which left 31 people dead and 400 injured.

The company, which maintains Britain's railways, had admitted health and safety errors before the incident, in which a Thames Trains local service went through a red light and hit a London-bound First Great Western express train in 1999.

Arriving at the £4m figure, the judge at Blackfriars crown court, Mr Justice Bean, allowed a one-third discount on the fine because Network Rail pleaded guilty. But the company was ordered to pay £225,000 towards prosecution costs. In his judgment, he said that the accident had been the result of 'incompetent management and inadequate process'. In court, Mr Justice Bean said: 'The fine must be a constant and lasting reminder to the management of the company and to others involved in the railways of the paramount importance of safety and to prompt attention to any identifiable risk. It must mark the seriousness of the risk involved in the breach of duty, a seriousness underlined by the disastrous consequences, but added it must also reflect the guilty plea.

The judge also said he recognised that 'in reality, every pound they are fined will be one pound that cannot be spent on railway safety'. Thames Trains has already been fined £2m for the inadequate training of its driver, Michael Hodder, 31, who had only been qualified for 13 days and died in the crash. Officials from Railtrack, which was replaced by Network Rail, were warned at least five years before the collision that a set of signals was badly laid out and was so difficult for drivers to interpret that a serious incident was likely to happen.

Unions have described the £4m imposed on Network Rail after its safety blunders contributed to the 1999 Paddington rail crash as 'an insult', with the penalty for crimes committed by a now defunct private company Railtrack being paid from the public purse. ASLEF General Secretary Keith Norman called for the fines imposed on Network Rail to be taken from the bonuses of Senior Managers. 'If the Managers are not fined personally, it

means the fines will be paid by the public,' he said. 'This would be a terrible injustice to passengers who would end up having to pay for being killed, maimed and injured.' RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said: 'The Railtrack Executives whose negligence led to the Ladbroke Grove crash walked quietly away a long time ago. Until we have an effective corporate manslaughter law that puts bosses whose negligence leads to unnecessary death and injury in the dock and facing the prospect of prison, justice will not be done, no matter how big the fines.' Gerry Doherty, TSSA General Secretary, said: 'This tragic case revealed that Railtrack put profits before safety when it was running the railways. Now there is clear evidence that Network Rail is putting performance before safety when it comes to operating a safe railway'. STUC Safety Officer Ian Tasker said the penalty was 'an insult', adding: 'On this occasion it is disappointing that this fine will have to be paid out of the public purse for an accident that happened when the rail infrastructure was operated by privately owned Railtrack.' Safety professionals' organisation IOSH said that the sentence did not go far enough. Lisa Fowlie, president of IOSH, said: 'A conviction for corporate manslaughter, involving a severe fine, enforced remedial safety measures and the stigma of associated negative publicity would have sent a clear message to current managers and directors to ensure that they put health and safety at the top of the agenda.'

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

251

Unions Press for Action on Buncefield Lessons

Unions have welcomed a report identifying many safety improvements that need to be made at UK oil storage sites. The Buncefield Major Incident Investigation Board's report into the December 2005 explosion, published last week, highlights the need for many safety improvements, particularly relating to training, fatigue, shifts and working hours.

Amicus said that it expects all companies that own or operate fuel storage sites in the UK, or are part of the fuel storage sector, to implement all the recommendations in full. Union officials will be seeking meetings with companies in the sector to ensure the recommendations are acted upon and there is full involvement and consultation of the workforce in ensuring that high standards of health and safety are met and maintained.

Amicus National Officer Linda McCulloch said: 'The lessons of the Buncefield explosion and the 2005 Texas City explosion must be learnt. Amicus is dedicated to ensuring the lessons are not simply talked about, but are put into practice.' She added: 'We want firm assurances concerning the safe operation of major fuel and chemical sites and the protection of workers on those sites. For us,

the minimum initial requirement is the full implementation of the recommendations arising from Texas City and Buncefield disaster.'

Ron Webb, TGWU National Secretary for Transport, said: 'The TGWU, representing many thousands of members who work in oil refineries and as oil tanker drivers, strongly welcomes this report, which makes a series of thorough and important recommendations for action. It is now absolutely critical that this report does not just gather dust, but it is implemented rigorously and with urgency. Health and Safety Regulation and Enforcement exists to avert disasters, small and large scale, and implementation needs to be fully resourced if the Government is serious about workers' health and safety.'

Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

TELECOMS

252

Network & Vendor Management: Technical Services Efficiency Challenge 2007/08

The Executive has been notified that as part of BT Wholesale's ongoing challenge to reduce operating costs, Network & Vendor Management have identified areas for efficiencies and savings.

As part of the overall Network and Vendor Management efficiency challenge for 2007/08 the Technical Services unit (NCH) is required to reduce its overall headcount by 34 posts. The NCH senior management team have considered a number of options. These have included:

- Stopping some Technical Services work functions
- Reducing the amount of work undertaken in Technical Services
- Absorbing work
- Rearrangement of some management teams.

The review of functions and work activity has identified a number of efficiencies which have realised a total of 34 FTE savings. Some of these savings have come from people taking the opportunity of the Newstart leaver package, or from people voluntarily leaving the business. The remainder of the savings have been achieved by a combination of the options listed above.

In response to the Executive's position on such matters, management have confirmed that where it is necessary to reduce the number of posts in a particular team a positive selection based on location, skills, experience, qualifications, competencies and other relevant criteria will be undertaken.

There are a total of 22 individuals (3 managers and 19 team members) in NCH who will be directly affected by the efficiency challenge in April 2007, a further 2 (managers)

in June 2007 and 5 (team members) by January 2008. These individuals will be considered for any suitable vacancies within Network and Vendor Management before moving to the Career Changers unit.

It is anticipated where it has not been possible to place people in current vacancies they will move to the Career Changers unit with those affected in April 2007 moving by end of April 2007.

A briefing will be issued week commencing 16 April 2007 to advise the Technical Services team of the efficiency challenge and headcount reductions. Individuals who will be directly affected by the efficiency challenge will be briefed on a 1:1 basis by their line managers commencing 19 April 2007.

In the meantime the comprehensive detail on the work not to be undertaken in the future is awaited.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

253

One IT: EUT Organisational Review

One IT management has reviewed the EUT organisation and have taken the decision to put in place what is an industry standard framework.

Once implemented, the primary difference will be that the structure will be based on functions i.e. Programmes, Design and Build, Technical Support and not technology such as Citrix and Data Platforms. Overall the intent is to improve visibility and accountability on budgets, programmes and resourcing.

Under these proposals there will be a basic lift and shift with no impact on numbers and grading.

Attached for the information of branches is a copy of an internal presentation.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

EVENTS BULLETIN

October 2006 – June 2007: London Socialist Film Co-op Film Season.

Screenings held on second Sunday of the month from October to June 10.30 for 11 am. Screenings showing at Renoir Cinema, Brunswick Square, London WC1. Nearest tube Russell Square. Tickets cost £7.00, concessions £5.00. Discount to annual members £1.00. Tickets on sale from 10.30 am on day of screening. To book in advance tel **020 7837 1177** (12 noon to 8.00 pm) or go to **www.curzoncinemas.com** or visit the Box Office (12 noon to 8 pm).

Saturday 28 April 2007: Workers' Memorial Day.

International commemoration of all workers who died at work, or through work-related illness. For more information visit **www.icftu.org/** or **www.hazards.org/**

Tuesday 1 May 2007: London May Day.

Assemble Clerkenwell Green, London EC1 – 12 noon – move off 13.00 to Trafalgar Square. The London May Day has been a unique bringing together of trade unionists, workers from the many international communities in London, pensioners, anti-globalisation organisations, students, political bodies and many others in a show of working class unity. The whole theme of May Day is unity and solidarity – across the city, across the country, across the world. Speakers include Tony Benn, Alison Shepherd (UNISON) TUC President, Jeremy Dear General Secretary NUJ, Megan Dobney Regional Secretary SERTUC and speakers from Migrant Workers Organisations. For more information visit **www.londonmayday.org**

Thursday 3rd May 2007: Retired Members' Advisory Committee. Meeting on the 1st floor CWFS room, **CWU HQ at 13.00hrs.**

Wednesday 9 May 2007: New Labour – 10 Years On.

To be held at Old Theatre, London School of Economics, Houghton Street – 18:30 to 20:00. Many children approaching adulthood today will not remember anything other than a Labour Government. So 10 years on from that sunny Friday morning, the new dawn of New Labour, what has been achieved and how has Britain changed? What does it mean to be New Labour today, ten years on, and what big ideas will dominate the next ten years? Speakers include former MP Oona King, will assess the legacy of New Labour's decade, and debate its future, Rt Hon. Lord Neil Kinnock, Professor Lord Anthony Giddens, Ed Miliband MP, Stephen Twigg, Progress Chair and Director of the Foreign Policy Centre. For more information contact **Progress** on **020 3008 8180** or email **office@progressives.org.uk**

Monday 21st May 2007: Eastern Regional Retired Members' Committee Meeting.

To be held in Community, Swinton House, 324 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DD at 11am. For more information contact **Nobby Clark** on **07713 155575.**

Tuesday 22 May 2007: First 100 Days: Constitutional reform – Labour's unfinished business? 18:00 – 19:30

– Committee Room 11, House of Commons. Confirmed speaker: Jack Straw. Devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Human Rights Act and reform of the House of Lords are seen by some as New Labour's proudest achievements. But could they have gone further? Debate with Rt Hon Jack Straw MP, Leader of the House of Commons; Jonathan Freedland, The Guardian; Chris Leslie, Progress Vice Chair and Director of the New Local Government Network; Stephen Twigg (chair); and more speakers TBC. For more information contact **Tom Brooks Pollock** on **0203 008 8180** email: **tom@progressives.org.uk**

Saturday 2 June 2007: SERTUC

International Conference. Southern and Eastern Region TUC invite you to attend a free international conference at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LS. Lunch (Middle Eastern food) will be available at £5-£6. This event brings together high profile speakers from the international trade union movement, NGOs, academia and politics to discuss and debate a range of international issues and developments. Speakers include: Tony Benn, Frances O'Grady, Deputy General Secretary TUC, Barry Camfield, Assistant General Secretary TGWU, Keith Sonnet, Deputy General Secretary UNISON, John Henny QC, Institute of Employment Rights and many more. For more information contact **Darren Lewis, 020 7467 1220.**

Monday 4 June 2007: On Target?

Environment Policy and the Climate Change Bill. To be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LS. 09:30 to 15:30. A TUC one-day conference with David Miliband, Secretary of State for the Environment. With a sharpening political debate emerging, the TUC is organising a one-day conference, opened by David Miliband, to explore what the Bill means, how it will work, and what are the practical implications of low carbon economy for industry, employment, skills and transport. Download a booking form from <http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/ontarget.pdf>

Tuesday 19th June 2007: The RMT

Annual Garden Party. Takes place again this year at Maritime House, Clapham, London commencing at 7.00 p.m. Tickets are £17 each and include a free bar, buffet and music. Anyone wishing to attend this event should contact RMT direct to purchase tickets on **020 7387 4771** or [email info@rmt.org.uk](mailto:email_info@rmt.org.uk)

Saturday 30 June 2007: PCS/Words Short Story Competition 2007(closing date).

For the 3rd year PCS/WORDS Magazine is running a short story competition open to members of all UK trade unions. Prizes are: 1st £300, 2nd £200 and 3rd £100. All winning stories and commended entries will be published in WORDS Magazine and in an online anthology. Entry forms/guidelines are available on the WORDS website www.wordsmag.com (on the trade union pages) and you can download a poster from the PCS website – www.pcs.org.uk/learning

Friday 13th – Sunday 15th July 2007:

Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival. On February 24th, 1834, six farm labourers from the Dorset village of Tolpuddle were arrested on a charge of taking part in an 'illegal oath' ceremony. In the eyes of their masters, however, the real offence was that they had dared to form a trade union to defend their livelihood. For this they were sentenced to seven years' transportation to the penal colonies of Australia. The sentences provoked an immense outcry, leading to the first great mass trade union protest. The campaign won free pardons and the Martyrs' return to England. A historic episode in the struggle for trade unionists' rights in Great Britain. For more information visit www.tuc.org.uk/tolpuddle

Sunday 15 July 2007: Rise: London

United 2007. Clapham Common, London SW4 (subject to licence). 12pm – 8:30pm. Free event. The Mayor of London Ken Livingstone is backing Europe's largest anti-racist festival. The event is backed by the Trades Union Congress, National Assembly Against Racism and diverse community organisations. Rise: London United 2007 will feature a wide range of music, performance and other activities. Past performers include Graham Coxon, De La Soul,

Common, Buzzcocks, Roy Ayers, Sway and the Wailers, with stages featuring African, Asian and Cuban music, Dub and hip hop DJs, comedy acts and the annual Poetry Slam organised in conjunction with the Poetry Society. There will also be a children's play area, food and drink, exhibitions and arts and crafts. The Mayor said the venue for this year's event had extra significance in 2007 – the bicentenary year of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade: 'This year's Rise: London United is taking place in Clapham, which has strong historical links to the campaigners who helped bring in the legislation, which brought to an end the transatlantic slave trade in Britain.' More details will be announced shortly. Public information: www.risefestival.org or **020 7983 6554.**

Wednesday 18th July 2007: National

Pensioners Convention – Eastern Region Meeting. Will be held at Moreton Community Centre, Symonds Road, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk at 1pm. For more information contact **Nobby Clark** Eastern Region Retired Members Secretary on **07713 155575.**



If you have anything for the events bulletin page please send your contribution to:

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Details must arrive nine days before publication and must include a contact phone number, brief summary of the event, email and website address. Listings are free, but inclusion is not guaranteed.