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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

189

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 representatives 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 representatives 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 representatives 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 Head Office, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1RX.

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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 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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

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TUC Safety Reps Survey 2008

Further to LTB 342/08 issued on 2nd May this is to remind safety reps to complete the TUC safety reps survey questionnaire form.

This is the 7th TUC Safety Reps' Survey and it's designed to provide the TUC, CWU and individual unions with information about safety reps, what their experiences are, about any successes safety reps have had in improving health and safety standards, and what safety reps' needs are. We need this information so that the TUC and unions can do more to help safety reps, and so that safety reps' views and experiences are better reflected in public policy debates and the work of the Health and Safety Executive. The TUC will publish the results, and use them to campaign for better safety standards at work (including more rights for safety reps).

Your response is crucial to ensuring that this survey provides the information we seek.

Please answer as many questions as you can – but if they seem irrelevant to your experiences, ignore them. The survey questionnaire can be completed in paper form and posted or completed on line.

Many thanks for completing this questionnaire. Please complete it as soon as you can (by **1 July 2008** at the latest).

Online survey link: www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/tuc-14486-f0.cfm/formbuilder/71/p/1

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

192

HSE Prosecutes Forklift Truck Driver

Safety representatives with forklift truck driver members may wish to note the following HSE prosecution as a reminder to members to pay utmost attention to safety and safe working at all times.

Gerald David Wyatt, a forklift truck driver working at Eardisley Sawmills, Herefordshire was prosecuted by HSE (Health & Safety Executive) following serious injuries caused to a colleague on 17th January 2007.

Mr Wyatt subsequently pleaded guilty on Monday 7th April 2008 to failing to take reasonable care for the health and safety of other persons under Section 7 of the Health

and Safety at Work Act 1974 so Worcester Crown Court imposed a fine of £1,750.

The court heard that Wyatt was driving a rough-terrain forklift truck while the forks were loaded with a stack of 12 modular sheds. As he moved forwards the load significantly obscured his vision and a fellow employee was struck by the load causing a fractured pelvis, cuts and bruises.

HSE's investigating inspector Anne Robinson said: "It's important that individuals are aware that they, as well as their employer, have duties under the law to take reasonable care of the health and safety of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work. Mr Wyatt's employer had employed an in-house forklift truck trainer and Mr Wyatt had received regular refresher training and re-testing. In this case his forward visibility was significantly obscured by the load and he could not see his colleague. The injuries inflicted could have been significantly worse, or even fatal. Operators of lift trucks must ensure that they operate them in accordance with the training they have been given to prevent such tragedies."

HSE statistics highlight workplace transport as the second biggest cause of work-related deaths, after falls from height. Every year, around 70 people are killed in transport-related accidents in the workplace and around eight of those involve forklift trucks. Of 2,249 reported accidents in one year, involving forklift trucks, 626 caused major injuries, including amputations and broken bones.

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

193

Be "Tick Aware" Advises the Health Protection Agency

The Health Protection Agency, health authorities across the UK and the Tick-Borne Disease (TBD) charities are urging people to be aware of the risk of tick bites. We are supporting the campaign to raise awareness and understanding of the diseases that can be caught from the bite of an infected tick – primarily Lyme disease here in the UK and Tick Borne Encephalitis in Europe.

The Tick Awareness campaign aims to raise awareness of tick-borne diseases both at home and abroad. Ticks are second only to mosquitoes for carrying disease to humans. Changes in farming practices and global warming and climate change mean that there are now more ticks in the countryside in many parts of the UK and Europe.

Diseases are contracted from the bite of infected ticks and reports show there has

been a significant rise in the number of people infected by ticks carrying Lyme disease with the number of people being infected increasing year on year. Tick-borne diseases are endemic in 27 countries in mainland Europe, including many holiday destinations for outdoor tourism.

Travellers, holidaymakers and those visiting rural areas for work or leisure are at risk from tick bites, but also when spending time in public spaces including beer gardens, picnic spots and parks and gardens. High risk groups are those participating in camping, hiking/trekking, cycling, climbing and other outdoor activities and pursuits.

So if you are visiting any area where there are ticks make sure you know about bite prevention, how to look out for the early symptoms and remember to seek advice.

Experts have warned that climate change in Europe means that many areas will have higher than average temperatures and more rain, conditions favourable for disease-carrying ticks and as a consequence the risk of getting an infectious tick bite will rise in many areas.

During spring and summer people want to get outside to enjoy the weather and countryside and others have to work there. If you're visiting forested, woodland, heathland or moorland areas or even some suburban parklands the Health Protection Agency, Public Health Services for Wales and Scotland and Tick-Borne Disease (TBDs) charities like Lyme-Disease Action are urging people to be aware of the risk of tick bites.

Reports show there has been a significant rise in the number of people infected by ticks carrying Lyme disease with the number of people being infected increasing year on year. A significant number were acquired in the course of activity holidays, including walking, camping, trekking and mountain-biking etc. Peak times for tick bites are late spring, early summer and autumn.

Areas where infection has been acquired in the UK include popular holiday destinations such as Exmoor, the New Forest, the South Downs, Wiltshire and Berkshire, Thetford Forest, the Lake District, the Yorkshire Moors and the Scottish Highlands (These are not the only areas in the UK). Infections have also been acquired overseas – in the United States, France, Germany, Austria, Scandinavia, and Eastern Europe.

The most common symptom is a slowly expanding rash which spreads out from a tick bite, usually after about five to fourteen days. It is not usually significantly painful or itchy and may gradually enlarge over many weeks if not treated with antibiotics, but will eventually disappear without treatment. Other symptoms, including tiredness, headaches, aches and pains in muscles and joints may also be present.

If the infection is untreated the bugs may spread in the bloodstream and to other parts of the body, including the nervous system,

joints and other organs, and some patients may develop complications caused by tissue damage.

Ticks are very small (about the size of a poppy seed), and can easily be overlooked, so it is important to be aware of the risk of tick bite. Check for attached ticks regularly and remove them promptly to reduce the risk of infection. Areas inhabited by deer are particularly suitable habitats for ticks. The main feeding hosts are small mammals such as rabbits, field mice and voles, and birds including blackbirds and pheasants.

To minimise the risk of being bitten by an infected tick Dr Robert Smith advises people to:

- Wear appropriate clothing in tick-infested areas (long sleeved shirt and long trousers tucked into socks). Light coloured fabrics are useful, as it is easier to see ticks against a light background
- Check that ticks are not brought home on clothes
- Consider using insect repellents, e.g. Deet-containing preparations
- Inspect skin frequently and remove any attached ticks
- At the end of the day, check again for ticks, especially in skin folds
- Make sure that children's head and neck areas, including scalps, are properly checked.
- Check that pets do not bring unfed ticks into the home on their fur.

You can remove ticks by gently gripping them as close to the skin as possible, preferably using fine-toothed tweezers or similar implements, and pulling steadily away from the skin. Some veterinary surgeries and pet supply shops sell inexpensive tick removal devices, which are useful for people frequently exposed to ticks.

Covering the tick with creams or volatile oils or using lighted cigarette ends or match heads are not recommended.

The Health, Safety & Environment Department will be publishing detailed information and guidance via a Letter to Branches plus circulating leaflets published by the "Lyme-Disease Action" Charity. The following links are useful sources of information:

www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk
www.bada-uk.org
www.tick-victims.info
www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/zooses/lyme_borreliosis/default.htm

194

CWU Welcomes "Workers' Memorial Day" Debate in the Scottish Parliament Recognising International Workers' Memorial Day and Called for the Formal Recognition of Workers' Memorial Day

The following communication has been sent to

the Scottish Parliament:

Elaine Smith MSP (Coatbridge and Chryston)
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Elaine,

CWU Welcomes "Workers Memorial Day" Debate in the Scottish Parliament recognising International Workers' Memorial Day and called for the formal recognition of Workers' Memorial Day.

With 31 people dying at work in Scotland last year (2006/07) and nearly 200,000 people suffering from an illness they believed was caused or made worse by their current or past work, the CWU Health, Safety and Environment Department welcomed your motion and the member's debate which took place in the Scottish Parliament on 1st May when your motion "Remember the Dead, Fight for the Living" was debated and unanimously supported by Labour and SNP Members present.

Transco Larkhall and Stockline Glasgow are two stark reminders of why we need better safety at work and penalties that fit the crime for such culpable offenders, the bosses of these firms. We commend you, your MSP colleagues and the Scottish Government. We thank you for raising the matter in the Scottish Parliament and request that you continue the call for formal recognition of WMD.

Yours sincerely

Dave Joyce
Communication Workers Union
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

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

195

HSE Chair Welcomes Publication of the 'Working for a Healthier Tomorrow' Report

In response to the "Working for a Healthier Tomorrow" report, the first ever review into the health of the working age population, published by the national director for Health and Work, Dame Carol Black, Judith Hackitt, chair of the Health and Safety Executive welcomed the report and stated that: "The Health and Safety Executive looks forward to playing its part in preparing the Government's response.

The Health and Safety Executive has been involved in the evidence gathering stages of the process and see this report as another key step in continuing to raise the importance of the subjects of health and work."

Judith Hackitt added that: "The challenge now lies in not only deciding what should be done in response but who is best placed to

deliver on the various elements. HSE will be keen to underline the role it plays in prevention of injury and ill health due to work."

Dame Carol Black's report stems from the wider health work and well-being strategy, focusing on the needs of the working age population. Health, work and well-being is a cross departmental partnership between the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department of Health, the Health and Safety Executive, the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government.

The programme aims to help reduce health inequalities and social exclusion by demonstrating clearly that work helps people maintain and possibly improve their overall personal health and well-being.

Any enquiries should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Department **quoting reference No. EX1**.

196

HSE Supports Workers Memorial Day and Highlights Migrant Workers

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recognised the importance of International Workers' Memorial Day 2008.

In a statement Trevor Johnson, Principal HSE Inspector said: "On Monday 28 April, International Workers' Memorial Day was marked with the theme "remember the dead: fight for the living". The HSE this year supported the aims of the day by enhancing its multi-lingual migrant worker website to provide guidance for workers from overseas and their employers."

All workers have the right to work safely and without risk to their health. It is of utmost importance that health and safety processes are in place to protect workers' lives. The HSE website is a valuable tool for overseas workers and their employers and will help them to understand their roles and responsibilities under British health and safety law."

Migrant workers are employed in a wide range of industries, some of them high risk, and may encounter unfamiliar risks in their work. The working environment and workplace health and safety culture may be very different from those in their country of origin. These factors, particularly where there are also language difficulties, may lead to migrant workers being put at increased risk of accidents or ill-health.

The pages for workers have been translated into several languages, and are also available in English. Advice, guidance and sources of further information and help are accessible through page navigation and links to other relevant government and non-governmental agencies.

The HSE webpages on migrant worker health and safety can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/migrantworkers

Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment
Department.

197

HSE Warning Issued that Failure to Meet Responsibilities When Dealing with Asbestos Will be Penalised

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has issued a warning reminding building managers and the building trade that failure to carry out checks and surveys for asbestos prior to commencing building works in property uplifts, refurbishments and alterations etc is unacceptable.

This warning follows the successful prosecution by HSE of a building surveyor who failed to meet his legal duties and carry out an asbestos survey during a refurbishment in Birmingham.

Raymond Joseph Boyle of Bray, County Wicklow, Ireland, was convicted of a breach of The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 by undertaking demolition work that exposed people to asbestos. He was fined £4,000 in total and ordered to pay costs of £4,016 at Birmingham Magistrates Court.

A HSE spokesperson, HSE inspector Karl Raw said: "This successful prosecution is a timely reminder that even with simple refurbishments there are legal duties needed to protect workers and others from the threat of asbestos. As a building surveyor with many years experience Mr Boyle should have been aware of his duty to manage the asbestos risk in a non-domestic property."

The prosecution was brought under The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 which states: "In order to enable him to manage the risk from asbestos in non-domestic premises, the dutyholder shall ensure that a suitable and sufficient assessment is carried out as to whether asbestos is or is liable to be present in the premises." Mr Boyle failed to carry out a proper assessment to identify the location and controlled removal of asbestos containing materials before allowing demolition work to commence which in effect led to the release of deadly asbestos fibres, exposing people to asbestos.

Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

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UK Lyme and Tick Borne Diseases Conference – July 18th 2008

The 7th UK Lyme and Tick Borne Diseases Conference will be on **Friday 18th July 2008**. The conference will be based at John Foster Hall, Leicester University, Manor Road, LE2 2LG. There will be a reception and conference dinner on the Thursday evening.

John Foster Hall is a new purpose built conference facility, set in 40 acres of landscaped grounds, including the botanical gardens, creating a green and relaxing setting for the conference.

2008 speakers

Dr. Robert Bransfield: An overview of

neuropsychiatric Lyme disease.

Dr. David Owen: Lyme disease – An elusive diagnosis.

Dr. Klaus Eisendle: Tissue testing – Focus floating microscopy as a diagnostic tool for cutaneous borreliosis.

Dr. Sarah Randolph: How tick ecology determines risk.

Dr. Sarah Chissell: Pregnancy in Lyme.

Who should attend

- GPs, occupational health physicians and other clinicians who need to know more about Lyme disease and want the opportunity of questioning professionals experienced in the diagnosis and care of Lyme disease patients
- Social care and mental health staff who may have heard of the mental health problems caused by syphilis, but be unaware of Lyme disease
- Clinicians and nurses caring for and advising pregnant women who may need a greater awareness of the issues for mother and baby
- Health & safety personnel who need to be informed about risks to outdoor workers.

Booking

Cost: £150 including literature, buffet lunch, coffee and tea.

All enquiries: ConferenceTeam@LymeDiseaseAction.org.uk

See website for booking details: www.LymeDiseaseAction.org.uk/conference.htm

The LDA's last three conferences have all been fully booked, so booking early is advised, especially if accommodation is required.

Lyme Disease Action, Registered Charity Number 1100448, Registered Company Number 4839410.

Any enquiries should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting **reference No. E1**.

199

Walkers at Risk of a Tick Menace in the Undergrowth (Reproduced News-Blog Article)

Visitors to the countryside are being warned of an increased risk of contracting Lyme disease, amid a sharp rise in the tick population.

With the warm spring bringing out walkers, cyclists and riders, the Health Protection Agency is advising people to take precautions against tick bites particularly when visiting woods, heaths and moorland – and even suburban parks.

In England and Wales the number of diagnoses of Lyme disease rose to 684 last year. In Scotland reported cases have risen tenfold in a decade, last year doubling to 177.

The disease starts with an expanding, "bull's-eye" rash and flu-like symptoms that are treated with antibiotics. If early warning

signs go undetected, the bacteria may cause complications such as arthritis, meningitis, paralysis of facial muscles, depression and memory problems.

Britain's milder winters, and wetter, warmer weather generally, provide an ideal breeding-ground for the tiny, spiderlike ticks – which have also had a devastating impact on grouse numbers. Last December was the warmest in Britain for 18 years and 2006 the warmest year on record.

The sheep tick, can live on most warm-blooded mammals, and attaches itself to humans by burying a probe into the skin to suck blood.

Ticks begin life as black insect-like parasites the size of a pinhead, but swell to the size of a pea after gorging on blood, before turning grey and dropping off their host.

Their bite is painless, and they are so small that one might not know they are there. The insects cannot fly, but wait in grass, heather, bracken and trees for a host to brush past.

It is not known definitively how many ticks carry Lyme disease, Lyme borreliosis, but some experts estimate that it could be as high as one in three. Oxford University's zoology department is charting hotspots.

John Cowden, an epidemiologist at Health Protection Scotland, said that there could be even more cases of Lyme disease than was known. "It could be down to milder weather, global warming, or the fact that more people are out walking.

"There is not a lot we can do other than advise people to be careful. We cannot get Lyme disease out of the environment. It is quite simply up to individuals to avoid catching it."

Infestations used to be confined to late spring and summer, but the parasites are now continually active in some areas.

It is widely held that a tick must be attached for a number of hours to pass on Lyme disease, so removing it quickly is crucial. The disease then has a three-week incubation period.

Wearing long-sleeved tops and trousers, and shoes rather than open sandals, can help to prevent bites.

Ramblers Scotland said that the risk of contracting the disease was small. Helen Todd, of the organisation, said: "Lyme disease is serious, but I am a walker and in the past ten years I have had about four ticks." Known Lyme disease areas are the Highlands, the Yorkshire Moors, the Lake District, Thetford Forest, the New Forest, Berkshire, Wiltshire, the South Downs and Exmoor.

You should never do anything to irritate a tick in order to get a tick to "back out". That will all but insure infection if the tick carries any disease causing the tick to regurgitate blood, and therefore whatever microbes are in its body, back into the host before it backs out. Removal of the body with tweezers is the only safe method. It is not necessary to get the head of the tick since it does not contain any

microbes such as the bacterium that carries Lyme disease. Those microbes are only in the body fluids of the tick. It is important to use a disinfectant after removing the tick body. The head will end up working its way out in much the same as a splinter.

Any enquiries should be addressed **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting **reference No. E1**.

EVENTS BULLETIN

Tuesday 3rd June 2008: Glasgow & District Amalgamated Branch Retired Members Section. Meeting will be held at 11am at CWURooms, 2B Craigpark, Glasgow G31 2NA. For more information contact **Jimmy Stewart** on **0141 5560097**.

Sunday 8th June 2008: CWU Conference Northern Charity Night. At Arena Convention Centre, Kings Waterfront, Liverpool. Tickets are £5.00 with all proceeds going to CWU Humanitarian Aid to help them purchase cots and bedding for orphaned babies in Bulgaria. So please support this great cause and have a fun evening in the process. For more information contact **Carl Webb** on **07850 019 602** or **Paul Clays** on **07801 557 472**.

Sunday 8th June – Friday 13th June 2008: CWU Annual Conference. Liverpool.

Monday 16 June 2008: TUC Climate Change Conference: A Just Transition – Trade Unions & Climate Change. 09:30 to 16:30 to be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LS. The TUC has played a leading role to date in working with affiliates globally, through the ITUC, to support a new treaty. This event will provide a timely opportunity for the TUC to engage in public debate with key affiliates in the trade union movement, and other key stakeholders in Government and business and NGOs, to develop and promote TUC policy, reputation and support for an effective climate change strategy. Keynote speakers amongst others will include Rt Hon Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for the Environment and Frances O'Grady, TUC General Secretary. To register for this free event, please complete the flyer www.tuc.org.uk/extras/climatechange08.pdf and return to **Emma Richards**, TUC, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS or email erichards@tuc.org.uk

Saturday 21st June 2008: National March Against Fascism and Racism – Stop the Fascist BNP. Assemble: 12 noon, Tooley Street, London SE1 (behind Greater London Assembly building, near Tower Bridge, nearest underground station London Bridge). March to Trafalgar Square, W1. March and carnival parade against fascism and racism including floats with top artists performing, marching &

samba bands and trade union & student union banners. Called by Unite Against Fascism and Love Music Hate Racism, supported by trade unions and other organisations. In the wake of the election of the fascist British National Party's Richard Barnbrook to the Greater London Assembly (GLA), and of other new BNP councillors in other parts of the country, we will show once again that anti-fascists are the majority. Please come along and bring you friends and family, union banners welcome. For further information or to get involved or put on a float call **Unite Against Fascism** on **020 7833 4916** email unite@ucu.org.uk web www.uaf.org.uk or **Love Music Hate Racism** on **020 7801 2781** email info@lovemusichateracism.com web www.lovemusichateracism.com

Thursday 3 July 2008 – Friday 4 July inclusive: TUC LGBT Conference. Will be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. The TUC LGBT Conference 2008 takes place at Congress House. It is one of the largest annual gatherings of LGBT activists and workers. Unions will be invited to submit motions for debate, and send delegations, early in 2008. The TUC welcomes visitors from relevant organisations to the event. For more information contact **Peter Purton**, **020 7467 1271**, ppurton@tuc.org.uk

Friday 18 July 2008 – Sunday 20 July inclusive: Tolpuddle 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 contact **South West TUC: 0117 947 0521**, southwest@tuc.org.uk

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

Marcia Murray
CWU Communication Department
150 The Broadway
Wimbledon SW19 1RX
Tel: **020 8971 7497**
Email: mmurray@cwu.org

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.