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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

398

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.

399

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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

400

HSE Safety Alert – Scalding Risk from Domestic Hot Water Systems

The following alert will be of interest to all members but in particular our members working in facilities maintenance engineering.

The HSE is issuing this safety alert to individual homeowners, tenants, landlords and the plumbing industry. This is to raise awareness of a rare but potentially serious scalding risk from domestic hot water systems which include a fixed all-electric or part-electric immersion heater in conjunction with a plastic cold water storage cistern or 'tank' located in the roof space.

The alert follows two strikingly similar fatal incidents in the last four years where a large volume of near boiling water poured through bedroom ceilings onto occupants sleeping below.

Particular consideration should be given to systems over 10 years old and systems where homeowners and landlords may have other reason to suspect the adequacy of the initial installation or any subsequent work.

An overheating immersion cylinder will normally show obvious warning signs. Serious incidents like these are therefore likely to be extremely rare. However, there are a number of steps that can be taken to reduce the risk:

1. Occupants should be aware of warning signs (such as excessive noise from the hot water cylinder) indicating possible thermostat failure and overheating of the water in the cylinder; see Annex A below.
2. Storage cisterns should be installed on an adequate supporting base. The incidents that prompted this alert occurred primarily because the plastic storage cisterns were not supported across their entire area. In other words, the base of the cistern protruded over the edge of the base support board. See Annex A for further information.
3. A safety cut-out feature, independent of the immersion heater thermostat, can be fitted to limit the temperature of the stored water, should the thermostat fail. See Annex A for further information.

NB: The risk is greatest when cisterns are

located above bedrooms. This is most likely in houses built between 1945 and 1975. Very often these homes have or used to have a back boiler. If the cylinder is located in a bedroom it is probable that the cistern may be directly above it. Whenever a galvanised (metal) cistern is replaced by a plastic one, the thermostat to the immersion heater should be examined and preferably replaced by one with a safety cut-out. See Annex A for further information.

Annex A

1. Typical warning signs include:

- Excessively hot water coming out of the hot water taps;
- Excessive noise or 'bubbling' from the hot water cylinder;
- Hot water coming out of certain cold water taps (some storage cisterns also feed cold water taps in the bathroom);
- Steam/moisture in the roof space.

In such circumstances the householder or tenant should switch off the immersion heater system. Tenants should alert their landlord. Advice from a competent person such as a qualified plumber should be sought if necessary.

2. British Standard BS4213:2004 'Cisterns for domestic use – Cold water storage and combined feed and expansion (thermoplastic) cisterns up to 500 l – Specification' quotes 15mm or greater thickness marine plywood as a typically suitable material for a base support board and states that:

'the base of the cistern should be fully supported over its whole area by a durable, rigid, flat and level platform...'

Replacing a base support is not a straightforward task and should be done by a competent person such as a qualified plumber.

3. Various safety cut-out devices are available which may be single-use (i.e. must be replaced after they have been activated) or manually resettable.

For many systems a simple option would be to replace the existing thermostat with a 'dual rod' thermostat, where the independent safety cut-out is integrated into the overall thermostat unit. Advice should be sought from a competent person such as a plumber or electrician if necessary.

Since 01/04/2004, the fitting of such a feature has been recommended in relation to any repair, replacement or installation work on

domestic immersion heaters (British Standard BS EN 60335-2-73:2003 'Household and similar electrical appliances – Safety: Particular requirements for fixed immersion heaters' refers).

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

401

Turner & Newell (T&N) – Asbestos Victims Compensation

Hundreds of trade union members and their families will at long last receive settlements over the next few months from the notorious asbestos manufacturer Turner & Newell (T&N), which had factories in Rochdale, Washington, Widnes and Trafford Park.

Unite (Amicus section) have been fighting members' cases from across the country and after years of legal red tape and wrangling they will now finally start receiving compensation from the defunct asbestos company more than six years after the claims were first lodged.

The union and their solicitors were also able to broker a deal that allowed members to receive payments without incurring penalties from the government's Compensation Recovery Unit (CRU).

Many of the trade union members involved, now suffering from asbestosis and mesothelioma were employed by Turner & Newell and worked with asbestos every day for years and were never told about the dangers. Survivors are now terminally ill, have breathing difficulties and cannot walk due to their condition. Sadly many members died while waiting for their compensation claims to be settled but finally their families are now receiving their compensation.

All claims against the company, which provided employment for thousands of families, mainly in the North of England, were frozen in 2001 after T&N and its parent company Federal Mogul went into administration. Since then the claimants and their families have been waiting for administrators to reach agreement with Federal Mogul's creditors and insurers.

In October last year the High Court of Justice approved a deal which allowed the claimants to receive a share of their entitled awards.

"Unite" and Thompsons Solicitors, the lawyers for Unite's members, are handling hundreds of claims against T&N from across the UK. Thompsons have been engaged in one of the longest running and most difficult battles to obtain compensation for people who are suffering or have died from asbestos-related diseases but the union stood by the victims seeing the battle through from start to finish.

Turner & Newell have left a terrible legacy in the UK such as the highly contaminated asbestos ridden site former T&N site in Spodden Valley, Rochdale. It was the world's largest asbestos textile factory where asbestos was processed for over 100 years. Thousands of tonnes of asbestos dust was dumped on the

site including down an old disused coalmine. Exposed asbestos waste can be seen dumped and strewn around the site today.

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

402

HSE – Large Organisations Partnership Pilot (LOPP) – Safety Improvement Plan

Royal Mail Group along with the CWU are now signed-up to participate in the HSE's Large Organisations Partnership Pilot (LOPP), which is a new initiative and will see the implementation of a nationwide Health and Safety Improvement Plan dealing with safety improvement and targets for reducing accidents and ill health days lost.

The project's objectives in Royal Mail involves the development and implementation of local Improvement and Engagement Plans which have been agreed at national level by the HSE with Royal Mail and the CWU. Safety representatives from the CWU will liaise with local HSE and LA Inspectors as their knowledge of local factors will help ensure that interactions are properly targeted, and that LOPP addresses the issues that concern the workforce. Feedback received from safety representatives enables LOPP to monitor implementation and performance of the safety improvement plans thereby maximising impact. LOPP will involve further nation-wide inspections of Delivery Offices and other units by Health and Safety Executive and Local Authority Safety Inspectors to check on progress by Royal Mail management.

The 10 areas selected for Local Action Plans are:

- 1) Devon & Cornwall (EX, PL, TQ, TR)
- 2) Chester North Wales/Mid Shropshire (CH, LD, LL, SY, TF)
- 3) Home Counties West (HA, NW, SL, UB)
- 4) Essex (CM, CO, SS, IG, RM)
- 5) London East & North (E, N)
- 6) North West Midlands (DY, ST, WS, WV)
- 7) Central & South Midlands (CV, LE, NN)
- 8) South & East Yorkshire (DN, HU, LN, S)
- 9) Cheshire & Merseyside (CW, L, WA)
- 10) East of Scotland (DD, EH, FK, KY, PH, TD)

Paragraph 3.7 of the LOPP Engagement Plan specifically refers to the involvement and important role of safety representatives underpinning their role within health and safety compliance and safety representatives will be involved in Local Area LOPP Action Plans to be set out and involving HSE, Local Authorities, Royal Mail and CWU Area Safety Reps. Area Safety Reps in the above areas are advised to make a co-ordinated approach to the HSE lead in the area to ensure involvement in local deployment and joint working groups to discuss the Local Action Plans.

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

403

"Lighten the Load" European Health & Safety Campaign

As reported in LTB 534/07 issued on 18 June 2007, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work along with the UK's Health and Safety Executive have launched a European wide campaign on musculoskeletal injuries called "Lighten The Load" on 4 June in Brussels, during the week of CWU Conference and those present at conference will recall the CWU commitment given to support the "Lighten the load" campaign, along with the HSE's "Better Backs" initiative, to tackle Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSDs) in the workplace, culminating in the **European Week for Safety and Health at Work from 22 to 26 October 2007**.

The campaign is being backed by the European Parliament and Commission along with the UK Government, the HSE and all European states. The campaign designed to raise awareness of risks, to promote good practice solutions and help make Europe a safer and healthier place to work.

In support of the campaign and recognising that lifting and handling is the main cause of injuries in Royal Mail, the Health and Safety Department has launched this new "Lighten the Load" – New CWU Safe Working on Delivery Guide Booklet" as our contribution to the EU campaign to help reduce musculoskeletal accidents and injuries in Royal Mail along with the other main hazards on delivery.

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are the most common work-related health problem in Europe, affecting millions of workers. Across the EU, 25% of workers report suffering from backache and 23% report muscular pains.

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are impairments of the bodily structures such as muscles, joints, tendons, ligaments and nerves, or localised blood circulation systems that are caused or aggravated primarily by the performance of work and by the effects of the immediate environment where the work is carried out. MSDs are caused mainly by manual handling, frequent bending and twisting, heavy physical work and whole-body vibration.

The risk of MSDs can increase with the pace of work, low job satisfaction, high job demands and job stress. There is also a strong interrelation between nervous and muscular systems: MSDs affect other aspects of workers' health, and other health conditions can trigger MSDs. MSDs are the biggest cause of absence from work in practically all EU Member States.

European Health & Safety Week 22 to 26 October 2007

The EU, European wide "Lighten the Load" campaign on musculoskeletal injuries will culminate in the European Health & Safety Week from 22 to 26 October 2007. This year the HSC/HSE will support the TUC and Trade Unions National Inspection Day during 2007

European Week for Safety and Health at Work and have agreed to produce two leaflets aimed at Safety Representatives.

Comprehensive information packs will again be available this year and once the Health, Safety & Environment Department has details on availability, this will be reported to branches with packs distributed in due course.

Any enquiries should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting **reference No. C26**.

404 HSE 'Lightens the Load' to Support European Health & Safety Week

Further to LTB 534/07 dated 18 June, this is to remind branches and Regional Health and Safety Forums that this year's European H&S Week is set to 'lighten the load' as it focuses on musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) and manual handling which remain the most common cause of occupational ill health with a total of 190,000 new cases reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) last year. HSE will support the 'lighten the load' campaign by boosting its training initiative for safety representatives.

Marking HSE's support to the campaign at an event in Westminster, Health and Safety Minister Lord McKenzie of Luton said, "MSDs have been a priority for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and government for the last decade. They remain a common cause of sickness absence with 1.02 million cases in 2005/06 that resulted in 9.45 million work days lost. This means that each person suffering took an estimated 17.3 days off work equating to an annual loss of 0.41 days per worker.

Providing in-depth practical training for safety representatives and focusing on the importance of worker involvement is vital in driving down MSDs. All workers have a right to work in places where all significant risks to their health or safety are properly controlled."

Over the next few months HSE will work in close partnership with the Trade Union Congress (TUC) to boost its current training programme for safety representatives. The training programme provides practical checklists and support material to facilitate risk assessments.

Geoffrey Podger, Chief Executive, HSE said, "HSE is committed to raising awareness and reducing the incidence of work related MSD cases. We will continue to work with employers and workers and their representatives, who are often best placed to spot issues. When employers and employees work together on health and safety issues, there can be real improvements." HSE also launched the UK campaign web page.

1. European Health and Safety Week (aka 'Euroweek') is a yearly campaign run by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

2. Each year a different theme relating to health and safety at work is chosen for a European-wide campaign to raise awareness and provide information.
3. Recently HSE commissioned Loughborough University to carry out research to assess if some employers were sending staff on manual handling training courses as a substitute for risk assessment and control, effectively pushing all the responsibility for preventing injury onto the workers. The research report is due to be published late summer 2007.
4. In the UK, HSE has worked with a number of stakeholders on previous European Week campaigns including IOSH, the TUC, the Learning and Learning and Skills Council, EEF and the British Safety Council. For European Week 2007, HSE is working with the EEF on the launch of the UK campaign and the TUC on providing training courses on MSDS for safety representatives.
5. The first European Week was held in 1996 and has since grown into one of the UK's biggest workplace health and safety initiatives.
6. Further details and action packs for European Week will be available from HSE's website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/euroweek/index.htm>.

Any enquiries should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting **reference No. N4**.

TELECOMS

405 BT Wholesale: Networks Business Support Programme

Since the initial report on Branch Officials' Bulletin No.19, paragraph 308, further discussions have taken place on the Business Support Programme.

The Business Support Project is part of the initiative to deliver significant cost reduction as part of the 40% reduction in controllable costs over three years. The Project's objectives as presented are:

The Business Support project seeks to transform BTWNs business support services.

- The three core objectives are to:
 - improve the customer experience
 - maximise the capability of the organisation
 - contribute to the three year 40% cost reduction challenge
- The levels of customer experience improvement and savings will be determined by the findings of the project in each functional area
- Improved service and lower costs are

entirely consistent objectives, especially where BT Networks can create structural change to deliver increased capability, remove failure, clarify responsibility, reduce complexity and duplication, and improve 'right first time' and cycle time

- In addition the project will:
 - deliver the inefficiencies without exposing the business to undue risk
 - deliver the improvement objectives whilst maintaining the BT Wholesale Networks commitment to handle people issues fairly and in a transparent manner
 - This project will be a key enabler of the new Operate business.

This project is broken down into three phases and has the timeframes as follows:

- 1) Diagnose: **7 May - 4 June**
- 2) Design: **4 June - 9 July**
- 3) Execution and Implementation: **9 July - 6 August**

The following activities are within scope:

- Business Improvement
- Project Management
- Business Reporting and Analysis
- Buildings Related
- Administrative Support
- IT/Computing Support
- Operational Planning and Work Allocation
- Logistics and Vendor Activities
- Training

Management, in order to identify activity, processes and potential savings have locked down the number of posts/SIP, the overall total is 1,290.7 FTE of which 741.3 FTE are CWU represented grades.

Using the services of KPMG, initial findings reported to the Project Steering Group identified a number of inefficiency issues.

These ranged from the duplication of activities across the business unit and high levels of bespoke requirements/solutions; furthermore a clear lack of business benefit from many projects and initiatives. This was in addition to inefficient use of internal services such as One IT.

At the same time as work being carried out with regards to Project Precision, the findings of KPMG's investigation supported the view of the requirements to review the managerial spans and layers of organisation.

No work has been done and therefore presented to the union on the changes and the degree of savings that can be achieved. However, management stated that the transition approach to be taken in each function will be determined on the conclusions as to the future of the organisation/function. There are a range of options that were presented to the Project Steering Group and these are as follows:

- Lift and exit/redeploy (roles move out of Wholesale Networks or cease and redeploy)
- Re-create from within (roles broadly similar and some cease and redeploy)
- Dissolve and re-select (organisation and roles change, plus roles cease and redeploy)
- Lift and shift (same number of roles, alternate structure within Wholesale Networks)
- Do nothing (roles remain unaffected)

Management indicated that the “Dissolve and re-select” method is likely to be the major option applied as management changes the roles and BT Wholesale reduces spans and layers.

For CWU grades, the most likely methods will be either “Lift and shift” and “Recreate from within”. In the former method, there are no displacements and therefore no headcount changes and the affected people are in the same jobs and just moved into the new structure. In the latter method, it is where all or most of the jobs are filled from the existing population.

Some displacement of roles is anticipated and those displaced would move into career changers. As a means of selecting members, positive selection is the preferred method where skills “gaps” are not a significant issue and there is a requirement to deal with large volumes of selection in a short time frame.

With regards to management methodology, “Lift and exit” could also embrace a TUPE scenario, management have confirmed that no activities have been identified that recommend a TUPE solution.

Attached for the information of branches is a list of the in-scope activities and the employee transition options.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

406 21CN Noise Report

As reported to branches via reports by the Wholesale Executive team to the Network Briefing Forum, the Executive having detected a potential noise issue in 21C Equipment rooms have continued to pursue this with BT Wholesale management.

Attached for the information of branches is a copy of a recent slide presentation to the Executive team on the subject. Requests have been made of the vendors to look at noise reduction by re-engineering the fans. Noise generation levels are being monitored, particularly as the equipment demand increases. This issue will be subject to further reports to branches.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

EVENTS BULLETIN

Sunday 5 August 2007: Leeds Pride Event. 12.00 Nelson Mendala Gardens and

Lower Briggate, Leeds. Major march and rally commencing from Nelson Mendala Square (outside Leeds Civic Hall) and marching through Leeds to end at Lower Briggate. There will be a rally with speakers at midday and the march will include the Pink Bus, fire engine and ambulance. You are invited to bring along any union banners and to join in! When the march ends, there will be stalls and other events. For more information contact cbeastall@tuc.org.uk Yorkshire & the Humber TUC.

Thursday 20 September 2007: What's on Offer? Engaging Black and Minority Ethnic Adult Learners in Museum and Gallery Education. The conference will take place as part of the national commemoration of the abolition of the slave trade (200 years) and will broadly focus on including non-traditional learning in education programmes delivered from museums, libraries and archives. For more information contact NIACE, Renaissance House, 20 Princess Road, West Leicester LE1 6TP. **Gurjit Kaur**, Tel: **0116 204 2833**, email: gurjit.kaur@niace.org.uk or visit www.niace.org.uk/

Sunday 23 September 2007: Labour Party Conference 2007. Bournemouth. Progress Rally. 18:00-20:00, Punshon Methodist Church, Exeter Road, Bournemouth BH2 5AJ (Just outside the secure zone). With: Rt Hon Ed Balls MP; Yvette Cooper MP; Rt Hon John Denham MP; Rt Hon David Miliband MP; Peter Mandelson; Stephen Twigg

Monday 24 September 2007: Labour Party Conference Bournemouth 2007 – Pricing People off the Road, or Pricing them on to Public Transport? 12:45-14:00, Trouville Hotel – Deauville Room, 5-7 Priory Rd Bournemouth, BH2 5DH. With: Gemma Decent, Associate Director, Ipsos-MORI Transport Unit; Stephen Joseph, Executive Director, Transport 2000; Graham Stringer MP, Transport Select Committee; and more speakers tbc. To register, please send your name and email address to **Tom Brooks Pollock**, on tom@progressives.org.uk or call **0203 008 8180**.

Monday 24 September 2007: Labour Party Conference 2007 Bournemouth. Is David Cameron Capturing the Political Zeitgeist? 18:00 – 19:30, Trouville Hotel – Granville Room, 5-7 Priory Rd Bournemouth, BH2 5DH. With: Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury; Kitty Usher MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury; Deborah Mattinson, Joint CEO, Opinion Leader Research; Stephen Twigg, Chair, Progress; and more speakers tbc.

Tuesday 25 September 2007: Labour Party Conference 2007 Bournemouth. Question Time. 18:00-19:30, Trouville Hotel – Deauville Room. With: Rt Hon James Purnell MP; Jonathan Freedland; Oona King and Billy Bragg. To register, please send your name

and email address to **Tom Brooks Pollock**, on tom@progressives.org.uk or call **0203 008 8180**.

Tuesday 25 September 2007: Labour Party Conference 2007 Bournemouth. Here to serve you? Will police reform work in the public interest? 12:45 to 14:00. Wessex Hotel – Forestdale Room, 11-13 West Cliff Rd, Bournemouth BH2 5EU. With the Government's plans for police reorganisation still shelved, this meeting will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different organisational models in combating anti-social behaviour, violent crime, terrorism and organised crime. And how can the Government win support for reform from police chiefs, rank and file officers, as well as the public? With: Jan Berry, Chair, Police Federation; Enver Solomon, Deputy Director, Centre for Crime and Justice, King's College; and more speakers to be confirmed. For more information see www.progressives.org.uk/Events/event.asp?e=854

Thursday 4 October 2007: Employment Law Update – Fairness at Work. 9.30 - 4.15pm at the UCU Conference Centre, Britannia Street, London WC1. This is the third IER annual conference organised in association with the TUC and Old Square Chambers. The conference is timed to coincide with the introduction of new legislation due to come in to force on 1st October. The aim is ensure trade union representatives are kept up to date and well informed about developments in employment law. Cost IER subscribers and members £75, Trade Unions £90 and Commercial £220. For more information contact the IER on **0151 702 6925** or email office@ier.org.uk

Monday 8th October 2007: Eastern Regional Retired Members' Committee Meeting. To be held in Community, Swinton House, 324 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8D at 11am. For more information contact **Nobby Clark** Eastern Region Retired Members Secretary on **07713 155575**.

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

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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.