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## GENERAL

598

**Postal Agreements & Procedures Course – Preston**

The Communication Workers Union has organised a Postal Agreements & Procedures course to be held in Preston.

The course will be held from **11 – 15 February 2008**.

Special leave with pay applies. For Postal branches, please refer to LTB No. 096/07, issued 5th February 2007.

It aims to give more in-depth training on the main agreements that you will use in your day to day work as a CWU representative, including:

- conduct & attendance
- grievance procedures
- managing the surplus framework
- manpower resourcing

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.

Nominations should be made on an application form for education 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

599

**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.

600

**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

601

**'Work While You're Sick' Report Published by Chartered Management Institute (CMI)**

A recent report on the "work while you're sick" attitude is hitting UK organisations. Pressure to stagger into work when sick is hurting workers and damaging productivity, commitment levels and motivation, according to research from the Chartered Management Institute (CMI).

Its 'Quality of Working Life' report reveals that 17 per cent of managers believe their health is deteriorating and more than four in 10 (42 per cent) claim illness rates in their organisation have gone up over the last 12 months. But the study of 1,511 managers found 1 in 3 believe a culture of not taking time off work for sickness exists in their organisation.

Only 53 per cent of employees feel they

would be treated sympathetically if they were ill. The impact of this culture is seen through declining performance, waning enthusiasm and increasing levels of suspicion. Only 36 per cent of respondents claim to be operating 'at or near peak productivity'. With 67 per cent claiming their productivity was reduced by ill-health, there is a clear indication of the extent to which health and productivity are linked.

The Quality of Working Life" (Published October 2007) Authors: Professor Les Worrall and Professor Cary Cooper. ISBN: 0-85946-406-7. Price: £75/£30 for members of the Chartered Management Institute. 020 7421 2721.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

602

**Defective Tyres – One of the Top Five Road Safety Dangers**

According to a report from Hertfordshire police, defective tyres are one of the top five causes of death and injury on Hertfordshire roads. The report from the police mirrors the concerns expressed by "TyreSafe" (Tyre Safety campaign organisation) and is supported by government figures which show that under-inflated and defective tyres are responsible for a third of all road crashes resulting in injury.

Hertfordshire Constabulary has made this information available to mark the start of a road safety campaign in the county prior to Xmas 2007 following on from the successful Tyre Safety Month arranged by TyreSafe in October. During the campaign Hertfordshire police will be urging drivers and motorcyclists to ensure that they check the condition of their tyres to help keep safe on the roads this winter.

Research by Hertfordshire police has indicated that in their county this time of the year is traditionally the worst of the year for serious road collisions and the force has identified the top factors:

- speed
- drink driving
- illness
- fatigue
- distraction
- not wearing seat belts
- tyres.

Hertfordshire Constabulary's strategic road policing division stated that people might find it surprising that tyres play such a significant part of road safety, and it's hoped that our campaign will encourage them to make checking their tyres an essential part of their vehicle maintenance routine.

The TyreSafe website [www.tyresafe.org](http://www.tyresafe.org) contains a variety of tyre safety information and tips to help keep motorists safe on the

road. Research by TyreSafe shows that 12% of cars and vans on the road have at least one defective tyre, a further 12% of cars and vans have a tyre at below 2mm, whilst not illegal, in need of replacement.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

### 603

#### **Managing The Causes of Work-Related Stress (HSE Step-by-Step Guide Using the Management Standards – Health and Safety Guidance HSG218)**

HSE revised guidance 'Managing the causes of work-related stress – A step-by-step approach using the Management Standards' – (HSG218 ISBN 9780717662739) is now available from HSE Books priced £10.95. This edition updates and replaces the existing publication 'A manager's guide to improving and maintaining employee health and well-being' and includes a CDROM containing further revised tools and guidance.

Work-related stress is a major cause of occupational ill health, poor productivity and human error. This can result in increased sickness absence, high staff turnover and poor performance in your organisation and a possible increase in accidents due to human error.

HSE's Management Standards will help employers, employees and their Safety Representatives manage the issue sensibly and minimise the impact of work-related stress on businesses and also help you improve how your organisation performs. The Management Standards represent a set of conditions that reflect high levels of health, well-being and organisational performance. Following the advice in this guide will help to identify the gap between current performance and these conditions. It will also help employers to develop their own solutions to close this gap. This advice is aimed at anyone with responsibility for co-ordinating the stress risk assessment, human resources managers, health and safety officers, trade union representatives or line managers. This publication is also provided with a CD Rom.

Managing the causes of work-related stress – A step-by-step guide using the Management Standards – health and safety guidance (HSG218). ISBN9780717662739. 100 pages. Price £10.95 from HSE Books. HSE Books 01787 881165.

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All enquiries concerning the above should

be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

### 604

#### **New Government Plan to Tackle Stress-Related Sick Notes**

The Government has announced a new plan to tackle stress-related sick notes, trebling the number of employment advisors in GP surgeries and piloting a new £8 million advice and support service for smaller businesses.

The programme will form part of a new approach to help people with stress and other mental health conditions find and keep work, and underpin the development of the UK's first national strategy for mental health and work, led by the National Director for Health and Work, Dame Carol Black.

According to Government sources:

- there are approximately one million people claiming incapacity benefits because of a mental health problem, amounting to around 40% of the incapacity benefits caseload – an increase of 12 percentage points since 1997
- over one quarter of new incapacity benefits claimants cite a mental health problem as their primary reason for claiming benefit
- a total of 30% of GP appointments are used to discuss mental health problems.

The Government plans key changes to the process for issuing medical certificates, and these are currently being developed with employers, doctors and their representative bodies.

Ministers want sick notes to reflect an emphasis on "capacity" rather than "incapacity" and to encourage GPs to provide more helpful advice to patients and their employers about their fitness for work, especially for those with mental health conditions.

In addition, an advice and support service for employers, especially smaller businesses, will be piloted to help them to manage and support people with mental health conditions to remain in, or return to, work.

There will also be a major expansion of the Government's pilots, placing Jobcentre Plus advisors in GP surgeries to treble the capacity. The enlarged pilots will have a particular focus on supporting people with mental health conditions and will feature educational programmes for GPs on health and work issues, focusing specifically on mental health and employment.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

### 605

#### **New Initiative Tackles Foreign Left-Hand Drive Truck "Side-Swiping" Road Accidents**

The Department for Transport has announced that a new trial to tackle "side-swiping"

incidents, i.e. when a truck changes lane and strikes a vehicle travelling alongside, involving left-hand drive trucks, has shown a 59% reduction in accidents.

The scheme has been based on the distribution of "Fresnel lenses" to drivers, and as a result of its success, work is now underway to roll out the plan across the country.

"Fresnel lenses" are small sheets of flexible plastic – about 21 cm x 30 cm x 1 mm thick – with a moulded optical lens that self-adhere to flat glass.

The lenses, which were funded by the Highways Agency, are supplied in an envelope printed with instructions in five languages.

Around 40,000 of the window-mounted lenses were distributed to left-hand drive trucks entering the UK across the Dover Straits.

The trial showed a reduction in side-swipe incidents in the south east from roughly 26 incidents per week to 11 per week – an overall reduction of 59%.

The Highways Agency will now distribute a further 90,000 lenses, targeting major ports in both England and France.

When announcing the initiative, the Road Safety Minister Jim Fitzpatrick emphasised the important that all truckers, whether from Britain or overseas, are able use our roads safely. He stated that many drivers here don't realise that left-hand drive lorries can't easily see a car overtaking them on the right, such as on a motorway. This has resulted in more than 400 side-swipe incidents in 2006 alone. As well as being dangerous, these incidents cause delays and congestion.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

### 606

#### **Sample Risk Assessments for Small Businesses**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published on its website a selection of sample approaches to risk assessments for a range of types of small businesses.

The aim is to offer guidance on what a risk assessment might look like, with the emphasis on clarifying that a risk assessment should be about identifying practical actions that protect people from harm and injury, not a bureaucratic experience.

A wide variety of sample risk assessments are included, e.g. for a contract bricklayers, an estate agency, a motor vehicle repair shop, a newsagent and a butcher.

The HSE says that businesses involved in the same activities as those covered in the examples will find much of the detail directly relevant and may also choose to adopt a bullet point approach, as featured in the examples.

However, the HSE emphasises the danger of simply copying the information across as the examples do not provide a short cut to actually undertaking a risk assessment for the individual business.

The HSE is keen to stress that all businesses have their unique features and a particular example may cover some hazards which are not present but omit others which are.

Therefore, all businesses will need to take their own steps to carrying out an individual risk assessment. Even where the hazards are the same, the control measures adopted may differ from those in the examples, so as to meet the particular conditions of the particular workplace.

The risk assessments can be accessed at [www.hse.gov.uk/risk/examples.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/examples.htm).

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

## 607

### Fire Safer Cigarettes to be made Standard

Fire safer cigarettes look set to be stocked in UK shops following strong Government support for new EU cigarette laws.

The legislation will set a standard for the manufacture of new style cigarettes that will extinguish quickly if they are dropped or left unattended.

Cigarettes burn at hundreds of degrees Celsius and as currently manufactured, they will usually continue to burn down to the filter.

A dropped or poorly extinguished cigarette can start a devastating fire, and smoking materials, predominantly cigarettes, are the single biggest cause of both fires and fire deaths.

Fire safer cigarettes are produced differently. Bands of thicker paper placed down the length of the cigarette act as "speed bumps" and will extinguish the cigarette if it is not being smoked, therefore providing greater, although not total, protection against accidental fires.

The new style cigarettes are known as reduced or lower ignition propensity cigarettes.

The EU Commission announcement has been welcomed by the Fire Minister, Parmjit Dhanda, who said, "We have been pushing for a long time fire safer cigarettes to be the norm across the European Union and this should now become reality, so this is excellent news. But setting a European standard can be quite a long process, which is why the Government is also to consult on fire safer cigarettes being introduced as soon as possible in the UK."

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

## 608

### Health and Safety Concerns for Migrant Workers

The new report commissioned by Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) has been published and the main conclusion is that a single pan-industry body should be set up to support the health and safety of migrant construction workers employed in London and the South East. (The Report is entitled "The health, safety and welfare of migrant construction workers in

the South East").

ICE interviewed migrant workers, employers, trade unions, safety reps and health and safety officials to gauge opinions on work conditions across the industry.

The ICE report also concluded that there is a strong argument for supporting the needs of migrant workers to ultimately protect their safety. ICE has called for a coordinated approach across the construction industry to prevent migrant workers from falling foul of workplace danger.

Workers expressed concern that no single agency or body appeared to be taking the lead on migrant worker issues.

Some migrant workers interviewed felt they had a general lack of awareness of the long-term health impacts of construction work.

Many did not perceive that they had any responsibility for managing their own health and safety nor did they understand their rights and responsibilities under current legislation.

In terms of employment in the South East, the total construction industry labour requirement is expected to rise from 2.4 million in 2005 to over 2.8 million by 2011. This will create demand for over 87,000 employees annually to replace those leaving the industry, positions that will be filled in part by migrant workers.

Some workers reported earning six times what they could in their own countries due to current and predicted labour resource demand within the construction industry.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

## 609

### Christmas Drink Driving Warning Issued

The Department for Transport (DfT) has issued a warning to remind drivers of the serious consequences of drink-driving this Christmas.

The warning was emphasised by the Road Safety Minister Jim Fitzpatrick who went out with Sussex Police in Crawley on November 2007 to see for himself how police are getting drink drivers off the road this Christmas.

The Minister pointed out that even the smallest sign can give drink drivers away to the highly trained officers. Being caught has serious consequences – a criminal record, minimum one year driving ban and large fine.

last year, 540 people died as a result of drink driving. In London last year, more than 200 people were hurt in drink drive-related accidents at weekends, with over one-third of these injured between 10pm and 3am.

To remind drivers, and young men in particular, of the dangers, the DfT has launched its annual THINK! Campaign as the festive season begins.

As well as new radio and Internet adverts, the THINK! Christmas drink drive campaign will include this summer's new Moment of Doubt TV advert, cinema and in-pub advertising and partnership marketing.

The campaign will also be featured on the roads, with reminders to drivers that they have too much to lose from having even one alcoholic drink. Shoppers, commuters and party goers in major cities will also be targeted by advertising.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

## 610

### Chancellor Launches Health and Safety Review

The Chancellor, Alistair Darling, has launched a major review of business health and safety laws. The review, announced in a speech at the annual conference of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) on 27 November 2007, will ask employers, workers and experts for their views on how the health and safety system can be revamped, focusing on small and low risk businesses.

A source at the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) said that many small employers have limited resources, find it difficult to work out what broad health and safety duties mean for their workplace and are unsure of when to take advice, and from whom.

The review by the BERR will look at how government can make it easier for these businesses to follow health and safety laws and prevent their workers getting ill or injured. It will also examine how to improve public confidence in the health and safety system.

The launch of the review coincided with the publication of the 2007 Simplification Plan by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Health and Safety Commission (HSC), which points out that the HSE has reduced the number of forms by 50%.

Welcoming the announcement of the review, Better Regulation Minister Pat McFadden said, "I am fully aware of some of the considerable challenges that small firms face in protecting their workers from injuries and ill-health. Government must work smarter to make it easier for employers to follow the rules, as this will benefit everyone and contribute to making our society safer."

The closing date for responses to the review is **31 January 2008**. A series of events will be held around the country to allow people the opportunity to give their views in person. Further information on the health and safety review can be found at <http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation>.

The HSE's 2007 Simplification Plan can be accessed at [www.hse.gov.uk/simplification/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/simplification/index.htm).

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

## 611

### Landlord Fined for Letting Customers Smoke

In the first prosecution of its kind in England, a pub landlord has been fined £500 and ordered to pay £2000 in prosecution costs after he admitted flouting the smoking ban in public places in England.

Hamish Howitt, 55, the owner of the Happy Scots Bar, in Rigby Road, Blackpool, Lancashire, is the first publican in the country to be convicted of breaching the legislation, which came into effect on 1 July 2007. A number of on-the-spot £50 fixed penalty fines had been issued to customers on the premises.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

## TELECOMS

612

### **BT Operate: SMARTS Update**

Management has provided the union with a further update on the progress of the SMART project which has previously been comprehensively reported upon. There appears to be substantial technical issues that the parallel running has revealed.

Attached for the information of branches is a copy of the slides used in a presentation to the union nationally.

Brian Healy  
Assistant Secretary

613

### **Virgin Media: Grievance Policy**

Attached for the information of branches is a copy of the current Virgin Media Grievance Policy.

Brian Healy  
Assistant Secretary

614

### **BT Operate: Siebel Service Desk and Administration Changes**

Branches were advised in Branch Officials Bulletin No.35/2007, paragraph 478 that the union was pressing BT Operate on the issue of agency conversion for the management of the interface with HP. Management have now given approval for the advertising of the roles previously undertaken by the three agency staff. If these roles are not filled internally, BT Operate will look at agency conversions.

The three agency people involved to date lead on different aspects of the Siebel administration area that BT currently uses. BT currently supports five main Siebel systems: OneSiebel, Oneview, Openreach, i-View and Eco.

The three agency people lead on three of these areas for technical knowledge of Siebel and, in particular, knowledge of how

BT uses these systems from an end user and development aspect. One post leads on Openreach and not only deals with the more technical aspects of administration, but the present incumbent has vast knowledge and is used by the development team to resolve a lot of their issues. The second post carries out the same role for the Eco system as well as training for all the in life administrators. The last position is technical lead for i-View client Landscape and again the present incumbent has specialist knowledge of those areas. All three agency people are Siebel university trained in Siebel administration and have specialised in their particular system they support for a number of years.

Management will update the union on whether there have been any successful internal candidates or if they have moved to agency conversions.

Brian Healy  
Assistant Secretary

## EVENTS BULLETIN

**October 2007 – June 2008: The London Socialist Film Co-op.** There will be a number of films showing the second Sunday of every month. Film(s) includes La Última Cena/The Last Supper all showing Sunday 14 October 2007. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea is best known for his Memories of Underdevelopment. The Last Supper is unfairly neglected, made during the height of 'the cold war', showing a Cuba that was unknown and a history that was of little interest to audiences of that time. Discussion led by Michael Chanan, Professor of Film and Video at Roehampton University, London, Jacqui McKenzie, Caribbean Labour Solidarity, Dionne Walker and many more. For all enquiries and the full programme contact **020 7278 5764**.

**Monday 7th January 2008: Eastern Regional Retired Members' Committee AGM.** Will be held in Community, Swinton House, 324 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X at 11am. For more information contact **Nobby Clark**, Region Retired Members' Secretary on **07713 155575**.

**Thursday 17 January 2008: What a Future for Occupational Pensions?** 1.30 - 4.14. To be held at the UCU Conference Centre, Britannia Street, London WC1. An analysis of the annual reports for the top 100 UK companies and their boardroom pensions shows that while the average executive retires aged 60 on a final salary pension worth over £3 million a year, Britain's workers are expected to work till they drop. Speakers include Alan Maloney, National

Pensions Officer for PCS; Bryn Davies, Director for UPS Ltd and co-author of Pensions Promises and Employment Rights (IER, 200) and more. For more information contact the Institute of Employment Rights (IER).

**Wednesday 12 March 2008: International Women's Day Rally.** 17:30 to be held at the Winter Garden in Eastbourne. The TUC Women's Committee are hosting a rally to celebrate International Women's Day. All are welcome to attend – delegates and non-delegates and unions are invited to organise groups of workers to attend the event. National and international speakers from across the trade union movement and beyond will address the rally. For more information contact TUC Equality & Employment Rights Department: **020 7636 4030** or visit [www.tuc.org.uk/equality/index.cfm?mins=389&minors=383](http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/index.cfm?mins=389&minors=383)

**Wednesday 12 March 2008 – Friday 14 March inclusive: TUC Women's Conference.** To be held at the Floral Hall, Winter Garden, Eastbourne. Delegates will debate motions on a range of issues of importance to women in the UK and across the world. For more information contact TUC Equality & Employment Rights Department: 020 7636 4030 or visit [www.tuc.org.uk/equality/index.cfm?mins=389&minors=383](http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/index.cfm?mins=389&minors=383)

**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**

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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](mailto: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.*

