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T&G Health and Safety News

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'SAFER WORKPLACE' POSTER back page

No 7 Spring 2006

NEWS

Asbestos Regulations

The Health and Safety Commission has been consulting on new Asbestos at Work Regulations to implement the EU Asbestos Worker

with asbestos. The T&G strongly opposes any deregulation and wrote to protest to the Chair of the Health and Safety Commission, Bill Callaghan, as well as responding to the consultation.



HSC Consultation: Improving worker involvement – improving health and safety – closing date 8 September 2006

The HSC issued a consultation document in April which looks at a number of ways of improving worker involvement and consultation practices. This includes discussions on legislation, official guidance and “encouragement” to follow best practice. Turn over for more information and what you can do.

Protection Directive. There is much to welcome in the draft regulations including a single (lower) exposure limit for all types of asbestos, one set of regulations and a single code of practice and other useful developments including tightening up on training requirements.

But, regrettably, the HSE also wants to de-license work with textured coatings (eg “Artex”). The T&G believes that there should be absolutely no reduction in protection for those working with asbestos, which is present in millions of workplaces and dwellings. This move also only sends out completely the wrong message about asbestos as being “safe” when the lives of thousands of people have been cut tragically short by working

New T&G Health and Safety briefings

- Union Inspection Notices.
- Obstructive Sleep Apnoea – information for all drivers Available from Health and Safety Unit and on T&G Extranet. Contact Susan Murray 0207 611 2596

T&G Extranet

The T&G extranet is an essential resource for all T&G activists. A wide range of documents and

Message from the General Secretary

Tony Woodley

For over 30 years T&G safety reps have exercised legal rights to improve health and safety in the workplace. A safe and healthy workplace is not just a legal right. It is about working together and participating and is central to T&G organising. Research has shown that unionised workplaces are safer. A new poster **Union Workplaces... Safer Workplaces** for display on your workplace noticeboard is on the back page.

This issue of Health and Safety News focuses on a new Health and Safety Executive consultation on worker involvement in health and safety which makes some proposals to extend safety reps' rights. This is a welcome development though the proposals do not go far enough. So it is important that we respond as fully as possible to this and your input is vital.

related information is available and added to on a regular basis including bargaining briefs, guidelines, membership forms in foreign languages, T&G news, journals, campaign materials etc.

What's more there's a health and safety section where safety reps can download supporting information, posters, the safety reps handbook as well as many other files. To get access to this resource

simply email your name, trade group and T&G membership number to extranet@tgwu.org.uk and your name will be added to the list. (Note: passwords are issued on a monthly basis)

unionised) – on risk assessments

- Respond to representations made by safety representatives – and representatives of employee safety

policies you are proud of/you believe work or examples of bad practice which illustrate how improvements can and should be made. You can make your comments as long or short as you like.

- Write your own response – either yourself, or through your branch, or both

Write to:
Zoe Woodrow, Worker Involvement Programme, Health and Safety Executive
5th Floor, North Wing, Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HS
Tel: 0207 717 6240
Fax 0207 717 6394
Email workerinvolvement@hse.gsi.gov.uk

Special feature

Improving worker involvement – improving health and safety. A new consultation from the Health and Safety Executive/Health and Safety Commission

Introduction

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is consulting on how they can increase worker involvement in workplace health and safety. They recognise – and research has shown – that where unions are recognised, safety representatives help to make safer and healthier workplaces.

Consultation Document

The HSE has issued a full consultation document (No 207) and a summary document. You can obtain copies of both from Susan Murray smurray@tgwu.org.uk 0207 611 2596 or from the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/docs/cd207.htm>

Why a special feature in T&G Health and Safety News?

We need to support strengthening the law, and strong, authoritative guidance.

We also need to respond as broadly and strongly as possible to this consultation.

This is an opportunity to tell the HSE where the current legislation is not working in relation to consultation and worker engagement, as well as share good practice. Your ideas, contributions and comments are encouraged so the T&G response is as full and representative as possible. And you can of course write in yourself and through your branch.

So T&G Health and Safety news is

- Alerting you to this important development
- Asking for your views
- Asking you to share your own experiences of consultation and involvement on health and safety at work, both good and bad, to ensure that the T&G response fully reflects members' views
- Encouraging you to write your own response, either individually or through your branch or both.

What does the consultation document say?

Briefly, the HSE is looking at three ways of increasing worker involvement

- Producing guidance on good practice
- Encouraging good practice
- Legislating to set standards

We need not confine ourselves strictly to the questions that are being asked. In particular what other problems are you facing in relation to consultation on health and safety at work, and what other improvements can be made? Your experiences are vital.

1. Guidance

The HSE wants to know how the guidance they produce can be improved upon to improve worker involvement and engagement.

What are your views on HSE guidance and how can it be improved or extended?.

2. Encouraging Good Practice

The HSE is also looking at ways of encouraging all employers to adopt best practice. They are also interested in whether the Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2005 will improve health and safety. So any examples you have of this or good practice generally would be useful.

3. Legislation

The HSE are proposing to change the law so that employers would have specific duties to

- Consult safety representatives – and representatives of employee safety (non-

Are there any changes we should be pressing for? For example we will want to argue for creating specific legal rights to appointing roving safety reps. What are your experiences?

Note: This is a very brief summary of the proposals and you are encouraged to read the consultation document.

What can you do next?

- Have a discussion at your branch
- Send in your comments to the T&G (Susan Murray). This can include any supporting information eg examples of

What is the timescale?

- **31 July 2006** Deadline to send in your comments to the T&G
Please write to: Susan Murray
Head of Health and Safety
Transport and General Workers' Union
128 Theobald's Road
London WC1H 0NF
Tel 0207 611 2596
email smurray@tgwu.org.uk
- **8 September 2006** Deadline for direct responses to the HSE

Where can I get more information?

T&G: Susan Murray – address above
HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/docs/cd207.htm> for electronic copies of the consultation document and summary document.
HSE books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 2WA
Tel 01787 881165
Fax 01787 313995 for printed copies.

Coming Soon

Summer issue of T&G Health and Safety News

We plan to focus on bullying at work. Please contact Susan Murray as soon as possible if you have ideas, views, good and bad experiences at work.

Hazards 2006: 14-16 July 2006

The 17th National Hazards Conference at Manchester University
Workers' Strategies for Healthy Workplaces
For more information contact Greater Manchester Hazards Centre
Hazards 2006 telephone line: 0161 636 7558
Email hazconf@gmhazard.org.uk
Website www.gmhazards.org.uk/hazards2006

TUC Biennial Safety Reps Survey

Please look out for this which will be circulated in June's branch mailing, in the Record and by email. Deadline 1 August 2006.

European Week for Safety and Health 23-27 October 2006

This year the focus will be on Young Workers. Various resources are being planned by the TUC and others and the Autumn H&S News will be produced to coincide with the week. More information will be available soon.
European Agency for Safety and Health materials for young people can be found at: http://europe.osha.eu.int/priority_groups/young_people

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Important. The information published in this newsletter is for guidance only and is not a full statement of the law.

For more information contact your T&G Regional Industrial Organiser or T&G Health and Safety Unit.