

Unite Safety Representatives' Conference

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Gender Sensitive Health and Safety

Gender sensitive health and safety



- It's over 30 years since the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 became law.
- Those 30 years have seen significant changes to the UK labour market which we see on a daily basis

Gender sensitive health and safety



And a changing and diverse workforce

- Women are now about half the workforce
- Ethnic and religious diversity
- Temporary and agency workers
- Disability issues
- Migrant workers



MAKE SURE YOU'RE PROTECTED

CONTACT
YOUR HEALTH & SAFETY REP



Gender Sensitive Health and Safety



Sex or Gender?

Sex

Biological differences between men and women eg childbearing

Gender

Social differences between men and women eg childrearing

Past Achievements—Positive Future



Women's Health

1. Women's Health & Safety
2. Health & Safety for Pregnant Workers & New Mothers
3. Menopause
4. Domestic Violence
5. TUC Gender & Occupational Safety and Health

UNION



MEN'S HEALTH FACTSHEET: testicular and prostate cancer



Transport and General Workers' Union – the *fighting back* union

Revised June 2006

The T&G is campaigning for paid time off for men to have cancer screening, having already run similar campaigns for women on cervical and breast cancer screening. There is currently no national screening programme for either prostate or testicular cancer.

Ensuring good health and safety practice in the workplace is essential in the fight against any kind of occupational cancer or ill-health.

THIS FACTSHEET IS DESIGNED TO

- Highlight some relevant workplace health and safety issues
- Help members be more aware of their bodies – this helps to ensure that cancers are detected early and treated
- Give guidance on a negotiating and campaigning agenda

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY AND CANCER

HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES – BEWARE, THIS IS NOT A FULL LIST

- There is evidence that workers as diverse as farmers, rubber industry workers, and people doing sedentary work may be at greater risk of prostate cancer.
- Difficulty in getting access to toilet facilities may create a range of health problems – this particularly affects driver members.
- Shift working may be linked to breast cancer in women
- Workers in the rubber industry may be susceptible to bladder cancer.
- Exposure to certain radioactive substances for workers in the nuclear industry may increase the risk of prostate cancer.



So wherever we work, a safe and healthy workplace and environment will make a crucial difference. T&G safety representatives and shop stewards are in a unique position to press for improvements.

HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

It is known that some chemicals (whether single substances or mixtures) may cause cancer and/or may affect reproductive health. The Labour Research Department estimate that there are at least 200 chemicals for which there is published evidence of reproductive hazards (eg lead, anaesthetic gases, pesticides).

The Chemicals (Hazards Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations 2002

Require suppliers to identify the dangers of the chemicals they supply and give information about this to their customers – this must be done both on the label/packaging and on a Material Safety Data Sheet. This must include information about whether the chemical may cause cancer including the relevant "hst phrases" relating to health effects. Examples of these are: R45 may cause cancer; R60 may impair fertility; R62 possible risk of impaired fertility.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)

These impose a range of duties on employers to protect workers' health and safety from the presence of or use of hazardous chemical agents (as well as biological agents).

Gender Sensitive Health and Safety



Some Sex differences

Reproductive system and function

Hormones

Body shape and size - and not just about gender

Musculoskeletal characteristics

Thermal comfort

Gender Sensitive Health and Safety



Some Gender differences

Jobs and occupations

Job tasks

Working hours

“Double burden” of work and home

Societal roles

Why gender sensitive health and safety?



Occupational H&S and Gender

Gender neutral - no distinction between women and men - eg PPE

Gender stereotyping – false assumptions



Men. Women

Different. Equal

G  **S** **H**

TUC 

Eleven steps to Equality



1. Spot the difference
2. Spot the stereotype
3. Mind the gap
4. Involve women
5. Gender-sensitive risk assessment
6. General principles of prevention
7. Improve reporting
8. Improve research
9. Mainstream gender mainstream health
10. Take effective action
11. Ensure equal protection

TUC Gender and Occupational Safety and Health Working Group

“Gender Sensitivity” Checklist



How gender-sensitive is your workplace?



- Workplace agreements
- Union policy and organisation
- H&S Management
- Safety reps and equality reps
- Risk assessment and prevention
- Sickness absence management
- Reporting and monitoring
- Any other issues



Gender and Occupational Safety and Health

Recent Developments



The Gender Equality Duty Public Authorities