

briefingpages

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IMPROVING SAFETY REPS' RIGHTS - YOUR HELP NEEDED

The HSE is consulting on how to improve worker involvement in health and safety in the workplace. For Amicus and trade unions, this means more support and rights for safety reps. Responding to this consultation is your chance to get the HSE to improve worker involvement and improve safety reps' effectiveness. The more people that respond, the more likely the HSE will have to take notice of the things we say. The TUC has produced a briefing pack for safety reps on what the consultation means and how to respond, which can be found on our website.

Amicus safety reps can download the consultation response form with some of the TUC and Amicus suggested responses already filled in. Obviously if reps have something else to add or want to change any of the responses, they are free to do so - what we have done is provide a suggested basis for a response. There is also a brief document with some notes on other questions in the consultation document that need additional information from reps, should they wish to provide it. Safety reps that want to can download the form without pre-filled responses. Submissions can also be made online. All this information can be found on our website at www.amicustheunion.org/safetyrepsconsultation/. **Please note the closing date is 8 September.**

RESEARCH ON TEMPORARY WORKERS' HEALTH AND SAFETY - YOUR HELP NEEDED

Labour Research Department (LRD) is researching temporary workers' health and safety for the European Commission. This includes workers on fixed term contracts, as well as agency, casual and seasonal workers. LRD is seeking opinions from employers, unions, government agencies and experts. Your help is needed to ensure the research includes responses from safety reps, who are best placed to comment on temporary workers' health and safety.

The questionnaire can be found at www.amicustheunion.org/tempsafety/. Please complete it and return by email or post to **Paul Hampton**, Health and safety researcher, Labour Research Department, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF, 020 7902 9826, paulh@lrd.org.uk, who you can also contact for a paper copy if you do not have internet access.

LRD would also like details of any workplace contacts or union reps that are willing to discuss the research. Any opinions or help will be greatly appreciated. LRD guarantee anonymity in the final report, should any respondents require it. Responses are needed by 30 September 2006

NEW COSHH ESSENTIAL SHEETS FOR WELDING, CUTTING AND ALLIED TASKS

The HSE has produced new COSHH Essentials guidance on welding cutting and allied tasks. These can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/welding/guidance/index.htm

AMICUS NATIONAL SECTOR CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Attendees at the recent Amicus National Sector Conferences in Scarborough have asked for the health and safety presentations made during the week to be made available. These can be found at www.amicustheunion.org/sectorsafety2006/

HSE ENFORCEMENT RECORDS TO REMAIN PUBLIC, DANGEROUS EMPLOYERS BEWARE!

Readers of Hazards Magazine may remember reading earlier this year that the HSE had started to remove public records from its prosecutions and notices databases after 5 years, without having a good reason for doing so. This meant that it would only be possible to see how bad an employer's health and safety record is for the last 5 years, no matter how many workers they had killed or injured before this. In a climate where the HSE has been drastically reducing its enforcement action, this is letting rogue employers get away with murder and then letting them get away with being named and shamed for it after 5 years.

Following discussion between the new Chief Executive, Geoffrey Podger, and trade unions, the HSE has reversed this arbitrary cut off date, and the full databases will be restored over the next few weeks.

IS IT WORTH RISKING YOUR LIFE FOR A CUP OF TEA OR TO ANSWER YOUR MOBILE?

Continuing its Height Aware campaign, the HSE has warned that everyday actions like reaching for a mobile phone, or a cup of tea, could be risking the safety of trades people working at height, with falls from below head height injuring thousands every year at work.

A survey of 150 trade people, who were questioned on behalf of the HSE at a recent building exhibition, reveals that one in three admit to putting their safety at risk by answering their mobile phones while working below head height. The same proportion of people routinely overreach to avoid moving their ladders during low-level work, and one in seven of those surveyed even admit to reaching dangerously to pick up a cup of tea on the job. For more details see www.hse.gov.uk/falls/flashindex.htm.

GUIDANCE ON WORKING WITH MOBILE TECHNOLOGY, SUCH AS LAPTOPS, MOBILE PHONES, AND BLACKBERRIES

The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Occupational Health Helpline has produced comprehensive guidance on working with mobile technology. The Portable Office covers the health and safety risks, relevant legislation and advice on how employers can develop policies that will get the most out of their staff while protecting them from health and safety risks of incorrect or prolonged use. It can be downloaded from www.londonchamber.co.uk/docimages/1387.pdf.

AMICUS GUIDE TO THE HSE'S STRESS MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

Amicus believes that every safety representative should encourage their employer to implement these standards in their organisation. Amicus reps have a major part to play in ensuring that the employer takes their responsibilities to tackle work-related stress seriously. Dealing with stress at work highlights the fact that health and safety is not divorced from the rest of a union's industrial activity. Unions and employers working together to invest in health and safety can result in a vast improvement in other aspects of industrial relations and a working environment in which stress is managed properly. Download the full version at www.amicustheunion.org/stress/

RADON GAS - A GUIDE FOR SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

Radon gas is probably one of the biggest killers of workers within those areas where there is high exposure. It can be a major cause of lung cancer if allowed to build up in workplaces. The TUC has produced a guide to radon gas for safety representatives at www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/tuc-11695-f0.cfm.

PARTLY UNMEASURED WORKING TIME

Parliament has approved regulations that remove the "partly unmeasured working time" exemption from the Working Time Regulations (WTR). Under section 20(2) of the original WTR, workers whose hours are predetermined (say, by their contract of employment), but who volunteer to do more hours, are not protected by the regulations during those extra hours, as these hours do not count towards the 48 hour weekly limit. This was part of a complaint Amicus made to the European Commission in 2000. The Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2006 remove this loophole. The Regulations can be found at www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20060099.htm.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POSTERS

Last issue we published details of 2 new posters for safety reps to display in workplaces. These are available for download at www.amicustheunion.org/safetyposters/ and printed copies are now available from your Amicus Regional Office.

HSE WARNS OF THE DANGERS OF MODIFYING PROTECTIVE GUARDING ON MACHINERY

The HSE has warned employers of the dangers of allowing people to adapt safety equipment on industrial machinery, after Michelin Tyres from Stoke-on-Trent was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay costs of £12,500 following an incident in which an employee caught his hand in work equipment and lost part of three fingers. A guard that was originally part of the equipment had been removed, which with other modifications allowed access to a moving part.

This is the second time Michelin has been prosecuted by HSE. The prosecution was specifically for breaching Regulation 11 of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER). This states:

Every employer shall ensure that measures are taken in accordance with paragraph (2) which are effective -

(a) to prevent access to any dangerous part of machinery or to any rotating stock-bar;

or

(b) to stop the movement of any dangerous part of machinery or rotating stock-bar before any part of a person enters a danger zone".

Machinery guards are there to protect workers, and should never be removed, as this and many other unfortunate events show. For more on PUWER see www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/puwerind.htm.

COMPANY FINED FOLLOWING INJURY AT WEMBLEY STADIUM

In another equipment-modification prosecution initiated by the HSE, Mr Ian Goom, trading as Aztec Screeding, was fined £3,000 and ordered to pay £3,028 costs after breaching The PUWER Regulations, by not ensuring measures had been taken to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery.

An employee, aged 18 at the time of the incident, was laying concrete flooring using a screed pump, a machine that first mixes the cement and then under high pressure pumps the cement through a pipe to the area being worked on. A safety grill, designed to prevent access to the mixing paddles inside the machine, had been removed and a safety interlock switch had been overridden. Whilst emptying a bag of cement into the mixing chamber of the pump the young employee's left hand was dragged into the machine. Three of his fingers were crushed requiring partial amputation down to his first knuckle.

The situation was compounded by the age of the employee. Young workers are at particular risk in hazardous occupations such as this, because of their lack of practical experience. These risks are well known and managers of young persons should take into account their inexperience and possible lack of awareness in assessing potential dangers using freely available HSE guidance. This year's European Safety Week has a theme of protecting young workers. More information on this in the next issue.

CHECK YOUR SCAFFOLDER TRAINING IS CISRS RECOGNISED

We have been alerted to a number of cases where, in pursuit of CISRS qualifications, scaffolder training procured by companies in good faith has not been recognised by CITB-ConstructionSkills as qualifying for issue of a CISRS (Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme) card.

These particular cases occurred in Scotland. A training provider provided on site training and issued trainees with an SVQ level 3 certificate, without completing the full training package. In this case the training provider had secured Scottish Enterprise funding to support the training. The trainer has now gone abroad.

Hopefully, this type of misconduct should be rare. Nonetheless, we strongly recommend that when your companies select scaffolder training providers and courses, they check with **CISRS** on **0870 417 72 23** or **call.centre@citb.co.uk**;

1. whether they recognise training from the provider concerned (a full list can be found at **www.citbconstructionskills.co.uk**.

and

2. if so, whether successful completion of the proposed course will qualify for issue of a CISRS card.

A simple check could avoid much wasted time, trouble and uncertainty for both Amicus members, your workmates and your employers. For more information see **www.citb-constructionskills.co.uk**.

UPCOMING EVENTS

National Stress Awareness Day, Wednesday 1 November 2006

More details will be available soon, see **www.isma.org.uk/aware.htm** for updates.

European Safety Week, 23 - 27 October 2006

This year's campaign slogan is 'Safe Start' and is dedicated to the occupational safety and health of young people. Information for young people, employers, parents and supervisors of young people can be found at **www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/euroweek/** and **http://ew2006.osha.eu.int/** and there will be more information in the next issue.

National Inspection Day, Wednesday 25 October 2006

Every year this day falls on the Wednesday of European Safety Week. More details will follow in the next issue.

Members and reps unable to access any of the above electronically may contact Chris O'Leary in the Research Department on 020 7780 4006 or email chris.o'leary@amicustheunion.org to receive the information by email or post.

■ INFORMATION FOR NEGOTIATORS – JULY 2006

INFLATION

CPI annual inflation - the Government's target measure - rose to 2.5% in June up from 2.2% in May. It has not been higher since the start of the official series in 1997, and has only been equalled once before, in September 2005.

The largest upward effect came from gas and electricity bills which continued to increase by more than a year ago, reflecting the phasing in of recent tariff increases from major suppliers.

RPI inflation rose in June to 3.3% up from 3.0% in May. The main factors influencing it were similar to those affecting the CPI.

RPIX inflation - the all items RPI excluding mortgage interest payments - is 3.1% in June, up from 2.9% in May.

As an internationally comparable measure of inflation, the CPI shows that the UK inflation rate is slightly above the average for the European Union as a whole. The provisional inflation rate for the EU 25 in June was 2.4%, compared with the UK figure for the same month of 2.5%.

	RPI	RPIX	CPI
Jan 06	2.4	2.3	1.9
Feb 06	2.4	2.3	2.0
Mar 06	2.4	2.1	1.8
April 06	2.6	2.4	2.0
May 06	3.0	2.9	2.2
June 06	3.3	3.1	2.5
April 05	3.2	2.3	1.9
May 05	2.9	2.1	1.9
Jun 05	2.9	2.2	2.0
July 05	2.9	2.4	2.3
Aug 05	2.8	2.3	2.4
Sep 05	2.7	2.5	2.5
Oct 05	2.5	2.4	2.3
Nov 05	2.4	2.3	2.1
Dec 05	2.2	2.0	1.9

Labour Market

The employment rate for people of working age was 74.6% for the three months ending in May 2006. This is virtually unchanged over the quarter but down 0.2% over the year.

The number of people in employment for the three months ending in May 2006 was 28.90 million. This is an increase of 59,000 over the quarter and 223,000 over the year.

The unemployment rate was 5.4%. The number of unemployed people increased by 90,000 over the quarter and by 224,000 over the year, to reach 1.65 million.

The average number of job vacancies for the three months to June 2006 was 598,100. This was up 1,900 on the previous quarter but down 34,600 over the year.

The redundancy rate for the three months to May 2006 was 5.9 per 1,000 employees. This is up from 5.7 in the previous quarter.

Average Earnings

Average earnings excluding bonuses, or regular pay, rose by 3.8% in the year to May 2006, up from 3.7% April. Average earnings including bonuses rose by 4.1% in the year to May, down from 4.4% in April. The fall (in the including bonuses rate) is due to lower growth in private sector services sector and the public sector only partially offset by stronger growth in the manufacturing sector.

In the year to May, pay growth (excluding bonuses) in the private sector was 4.0%, compared with 3.0% for the public sector. Including bonus payments, private sector growth stood at 4.3% compared with 3.7% for the public sector.

FULL-TIME AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS BY OCCUPATION

	£pw
All workers	535.70
All Male	589.50
All Female	451.80
Managers	805.80
Professionals	733.10
Associate Professionals	567.80
Admin & Secretarial	365.10
Skilled/craft	447.80
Services	311.20
Sales	294.20
Operatives	409.80
Other manual jobs	325.40

Interest Rate

The Base Lending Rate continues to remain at 4.5% (the previous change in interest rates was a reduction of 0.25 percentage points in August 2005).

The next meeting the Monetary Policy Committee is on the 3rd August.

Economic Information on the Amicus website

For detailed information on the UK Economy including analysis of Labour Market Trends, Interest Rates & Economic Growth with an explanation of key economic terminology see www.amicustheunion.org/economy/.



What is the Amicus Pay and conditions database?

The database is an online resource maintained by the Labour Research Department (LRD). It contains details of more than **2,600 collective agreements** covering over nine million workers, with information on all sectors of the economy and all regions of the UK.

For each agreement, the database provides details of the **latest settlement** where available, plus **pay rates, working hours, holiday entitlement, regional allowances, maternity, paternity and adoption leave and pay, dependency leave and mileage allowances**. You can also search for references to particular aspects of agreements.

As an Amicus member, you have automatic access to the database.

Using the Amicus Pay and conditions database

You can gain access to the database by visiting either:

- ▶ www.amicustheunion.org (click on “Resources”, then “Amicus pay & conditions database”); or
- ▶ www.lrd.org.uk/payline

You'll be prompted to supply your username and password. These are (lower case, no spaces):

Amicus username: amicus	Amicus password: rd2002
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Once you've logged on, you can search the database by **industry, region, job, type of agreement** or various other criteria. We suggest that you start searching using fairly broad criteria, and then narrow your search down, rather than starting with a very specific search. To explore the range of industrial or occupational categories, click on the red text.

New features

We have recently added a number of new features to the service which we hope will make it easier to use and more helpful. These include:

- ▶ a new way of searching for **pay rates for specific jobs**. In the “Pay rates” screen, type in the job title you are looking for in the “Job title or description” box to find all the rates for this job.
- ▶ a new **Payline latest** front page, listing key recent developments.
- ▶ a new **Pay medians** report, enabling you to check increases in your industry or region.

We will be introducing **further improvements** in the future, so **keep checking** the site.

More information

For more information about the Amicus Pay and conditions database, call LRD on **020 7902 9811** or e-mail pay@lrd.org.uk. You can also write to us at **Pay and Conditions Department, LRD, FREEPOST, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8YX**, or fax us on **020 7902 9815**.

***LRD provides news and information for trade unionists:
www.lrd.org.uk***

The AmicusPayline database is maintained by the **Labour Research Department** (LRD) as an online resource for union negotiators.

Please return this form to **LRD, Freepost, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8YX**, or fax it to **020 7902 9815**. If you have a query, call **020 7902 9811** or email pay@lrd.org.uk

You may not know answers to all these questions, but please complete as many as you can. LRD also welcomes copies of agreements or policies on pay and conditions.

Name of employer Workplace, agreement or bargaining unit title			
Type of workers covered (e.g. "manual" or "non-manual")			
National or local agreement			
Union(s) recognised			
Level of recognition Please tick as appropriate	Full negotiating rights		
	Conditions of employment only		
	Representation only		
	No recognition, membership only		
Is it a recent recognition agreement? If yes, please supply the date it was signed			
Is the workplace covered by an " industry " or " sector " level agreement? (e.g. local authority NJC) If yes, please specify			
Public or private sector?			
Employer's main business or industry			
Main location(s) of workplace (e.g. Nottingham)			
Number of workers covered (approximately)			
Date current pay rates came into force			
Date of any future staged pay rise (if applicable, e.g. 2-year deal)			
Date next agreement due			
Outline of most recent pay settlement (e.g. "two year deal with 3% on basic rates, shift premia increased from 25% to 26%, paternity leave increased from 3 to 5 days")			
Current basic pay rates • please give full-time rates	Grade	Pay rates basic/min (& scale max if applicable)	Occupation(s)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weekly, annual, or hourly • if there are lots of grades, please give the main ones • you are welcome to provide additional information on pay rates if you wish 			
Any pay progression or service increments within grades?			
Are there any regular additions to basic pay rates? (e.g. allowances, shift premia)			
Are there any bonus or performance payments?			
Basic weekly hours (full-time)			
Annual leave (basic and, if applicable, service-related)			
Number of Statutory/public holidays (e.g. "8")			
Any other annual leave (e.g. "customary", "extra-statutory")			
Maternity pay & leave (please specify the amounts & the service requirement, if known)			
Paternity pay & leave (please specify the amounts & the service requirement, if known)			
Adoption pay & leave (please specify the amounts & the service requirement, if known)			
Any other parental or similar leave			
Any other special leave (e.g. bereavement)			
Any childcare provisions (e.g. nursery, vouchers)			
Name of person supplying this information			
Position in union			
Postal address			
Telephone			
Email (if any)			

Thank you for completing this form. Please return it to LRD at the address overleaf. Please note that data from *Payline* may also be published in LRD magazines and booklets.

www.lrd.org.uk

LRD provide news and information for trade unionists