



Unions Talking Health and Safety

Newsletter for Health and Safety Reps

August 2007

Our new H&S Organiser meets a real H&S rep !



RMTU H&S rep Gary Innes and our new H&S Organiser Rosaleen Loughman

Welcome to Rosaleen Loughman our new Health and Safety Organiser. Rosaleen has a background in H&S management and environmental science having worked for eight years at University College Dublin.

Rosaleen met with Gary Innes, a H&S rep at Tranz Metro and RMTU member, to discuss his experiences as a H&S rep.

"It was really great to meet with Gary and to hear the feedback about the difference that health and safety reps can make in their workplace, through the promotion of good H&S practices," says Rosaleen.

"I'm particularly impressed with the training programme and the confidence it gives to H&S reps to influence H&S management and to promote the culture of H&S in the workplace," says Rosaleen.

Gary has been H&S rep for over four years with Tranz Metro. He is looking forward to Stage Three training and has seen the positive benefits that have enabled him to influence the work practices within his organisation.

"Good communication is a vital factor in good H&S management," says Gary. Some of the challenges facing Gary are complacency about safety measures and language barriers with an increasingly diverse workforce.

It was great for our new organiser to be able to meet such a well-organised H&S rep and someone who cares about his mates. Thanks for dropping by Gary, from the H&S Team at the CTU!



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Are you a union member?

Have you suffered an injury that affects your ability to work?

Do you need help to access ACC?

Our advocates can work with you to:

- Find the best way to resolve any problem in accessing your ACC entitlement
- Help to prepare for meetings with ACC or an accredited employer
- Support you at meetings or mediation
- Identify other resources available to you

www.union.org.nz/workplaceinjuryadvocacyservice



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Hazards in the workplace need to be managed to makes changes in behaviour

Opinion

Fritz Drissner is the Health and Safety Co-ordinator for the EPMU (Engineers Printer and Manufacturing Union)

As part of their role Health and safety Representatives are often asked to help change worker behaviour or help to change the safety culture. This is because employers often tell us that accidents are caused by workers not wearing PPE (personal protective equipment) or not following procedures.

This is very problematic for H&S because this approach assumes that the behaviour caused the incident while we know it is always the hazards that are the cause of harm.

The HSE act states that employers are required to control hazards by eliminating or isolating in the first instance. Where these solutions are chosen worker behaviour is less of an issue, but with the focus on behaviour the hierarchy of control gets abandoned.

Companies often implement behaviour based programmes and there are international programmes focusing on behaviour as the cause for accidents. Workers are often invited to participate and check each other's behaviour. When a worker gets injured often it is seen as his/her fault.

Fear and intimidation descend upon a workplace with a behaviour-based safety program in place. Workers avoid inquiries into their behaviour by ceasing to report accidents and injuries. When injuries aren't reported, hazards don't get identified or corrected.

Safety incentive programmes are often part of this approach. The employer shouts a barbeque after so many days without a lost time injury. This gives workers the message that they have a choice to get injured and if they choose not to get injured they get a reward.

Often they choose not to report the injury or incident instead. It gets more problematic if the manager gets a bonus payment on low injury rates and he/she is also the case manager under the Partnership Programme.

These programmes stop workers from reporting symptoms, injuries and illnesses which can leave workers' health and safety problems untreated and underlying hazards uncorrected.

If you have any ideas or opinions about health and safety contact our Communications Officer Renee Habluetzel at reneeh@nctu.org.nz or phone 04 385 1334 x824



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Stage Three launch Wellington



Steve Christensen, Works Infrastructure, Shelley Hughes, NZEI and Carol Beaumont, CTU secretary



Health and safety reps, Mike and Graeme



Minister for Labour and ACC, Ruth Dyson talks with Paul Winter, CEO from EMA.

Mayor Kerry Prendergast hosted a celebration for the launch of Stage Three training on the 8th August in Wellington.

Over 80 people attended including CTU affiliates, ACC staff, Business NZ and the Employers and Manufacturer's Association, several Members of Parliament and lots of health and safety reps of course!

Speakers included Jan White, ACC Chief Executive, Ruth Dyson Minister for Labour and ACC, Paul MacKay from Business NZ, and Ross Wilson from CTU.

It was fantastic to hear how successful we have been in training over 17,000 H&S reps and to have the opportunity to celebrate it with everyone.

It's great to see health and safety getting the profile it deserves.



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DoL's report for the year makes terrible reading for workers in agriculture and construction

The Department of Labour's recently released statistics for the period June 2006 to June 2007 show that there were 54 deaths and that the majority were traumatic injuries caused by crushing, most involving vehicles.

The DoL's report does not include maritime, aviation or road deaths as they are reported by the Maritime Safety Authority, Civil Aviation Authority and the Land Transport Safety Authority respectively. The only reason deaths involving vehicles are included in these statistics is that they did not happen on public roads.

While the number of deaths in the workplace continue to decline, by far the highest deaths occurred in the agriculture and construction sector with over 32 deaths occurring. Construction and agriculture are also industries with a high level of self employment, but by far the highest rate of deaths are employees.

"The report shows that some industries have not embraced a health and safety culture at work", says Hazel Armstrong Professional Training Advisor for the Worksafereps Training Programme.

"We need to have a systematic approach to health and safety in the workplace, if H&S reps were involved in investigating these incidents with the DoL we may be able to begin to make an impact on these terrible figures", says Hazel Armstrong.

The majority of health and safety reps receive their training through the ACC/CTU WorkSafe Reps training programme. Number of reps registering for training are lower in the agricultural and construction sectors.

"Health and safety reps have an important role in the workplace and this needs to be recognised", says Hazel.

H&S reps receive training to undertake incident investigations and also have the legal right to issue a hazard notice if they believe people are at risk of being harmed in the workplace.

Research into summer fatalities released

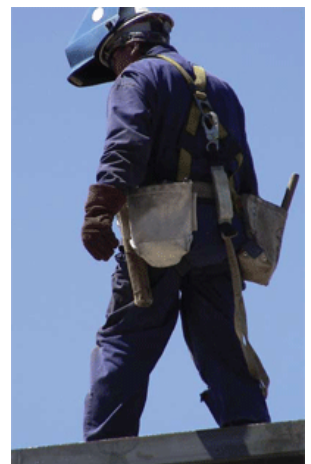
Males, working in the agriculture industry, aged between 55 and 64, are most likely to have a fatal accident in their workplace during the summer-time.

This research grew out of the appalling statistics of the past few years during the summer months. The research also shows that workplace fatalities occur more often at certain times of the day, in certain areas of the country, and are more likely to involve a vehicle than not.



Go to

www.dol.govt.nz and enter a search for workplace fatalities for the document





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What's on the Website ?

The Department of Labour has developed a resource that anyone interested in health and safety can use to assess the noise level in their environment, A powerpoint presentation is available to download and notes as well as fact sheets about noise-induced hearing loss.



www.dol.govt.nz

www.learningreps.org.nz



For more information about learning reps contact learningreps@nzctu.org.nz

The Learning Reps project is making big leaps in its development and is winning awards for its approach to adult education. George Laird the educator on the Learning Reps project will be doing Stage One training health and safety soon.

"I am keen to build on the understanding of the H&S reps role so that learning reps will be able to assist in making H&S information more worker friendly," says George. "We need to encourage the uptake of H&S training at more than just compliance level to make a real difference for workers," says George.

The Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand believes that employers need to do more to support workers and create mentally healthy workplaces.

You can read the research paper Workplace Stress - Working Well and Reducing Stress in the Workplace on their website.



www.mindnet.org.nz

Enrol, check or update

Click here

www.elections.org.nz

Don't forget to vote in your local body elections.

Health and safety is one of the biggest concerns that your local council has to deal with on a daily basis.