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## 1. Fire regulations day of action checklist

UCU Health and Safety News has previously carried details of the important new Fire Safety Order which comes into force on October 1<sup>st</sup>. We have now written to the employers' organisations in both further education and higher education reminding them of the new requirements and advising them that UCU safety reps will be checking that the new statutory arrangements are safely in place: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051541.htm>. Please note the new Fire Safety Order does **NOT** apply to Scotland or Northern Ireland, though similar arrangements may eventually be in place.

### Action:

We now attach again the UCU health and safety reps checklist

[http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/a/2/ucu\\_firecheck\\_1.pdf](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/a/2/ucu_firecheck_1.pdf) or

[http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/5/3/ucu\\_firecheck\\_1.doc](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/5/3/ucu_firecheck_1.doc) and a cover note

[http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/d/m/firesafe\\_proforma\\_1.pdf](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/d/m/firesafe_proforma_1.pdf) or

[http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/s/k/firesafe\\_proforma\\_1.doc](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/s/k/firesafe_proforma_1.doc)

which we suggest you use.

You may wish to forward the letter to employers to your local employer as well.

## 2. UCU responds to HSE consultation

UCU has made a substantial detailed response to an important HSE consultation on the current Government proposals to clarify a couple of employer duties in relation to safety reps functions, with some more general comments on the current health and safety strategy being followed by the HSE. You can download the response at

[http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/1/s/hseconsult06\\_1.pdf](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/1/s/hseconsult06_1.pdf) or

[http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/i/l/hseconsult06\\_1.doc](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/i/l/hseconsult06_1.doc).

UCU – as well as other unions including that representing HSE Inspectors – has been very critical of the Government's attempt to "lighten the regulatory load" and to place more emphasis on persuasion and education, rather than enforcement inspections. One of the consequences has been a significant cut in the number of health and safety inspections and inspectors.

### Action:

If you have any comments on our response please let us know. We are considering how we can link with other unions in a more concerted effort to reverse the current shift away from "Regulation" on health and safety and any comments will help inform that work.

### 3. UCU National Stress Conference – November 23<sup>rd</sup>

UCU is organising a major national conference on tackling stress in further and higher education. It will take place in London on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. It will be co-sponsored by the Colleges and Universities Support Network, and will include speakers on the causes of the high stress levels in both sectors, and plenary and workshop discussions on how to tackle it. Full details will be announced in the next few days.

**Action:**

**Watch out for the formal announcement and get your application in early. Places will be limited so be ready to book early.**

### 4. Stress Survey

UCU has just begun a major survey of members across FE and HE on stress. The survey will be used to highlight the scale and causes of stress and will inform our bargaining priorities. The initial headline results will be available in late autumn with a full report in the New Year. The members surveyed have been written to individually. The cover note can be downloaded here

[http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/q/t/workstress\\_lett\\_1.pdf](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/q/t/workstress_lett_1.pdf) or  
[http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/a/m/workstress\\_lett\\_1.doc](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/a/m/workstress_lett_1.doc)

### 5. Safety Reps Course

UCU's health and safety courses for the autumn are now recruiting. Full details can be found at <http://www.natfhe.org.uk/?id=tool0001> together with details of how to join.

**Action:**

**If you are a safety rep and have not been on a course please please ensure you do.**

### 6. UCU West and South West Regional Health and Safety Conference: Saturday 11 November 2006

This Health & Safety Conference is taking place at City of Bristol College and is open not only to existing Branch Officers and particularly Health and Safety representatives but also branch members who may have an interest in the topics or would like to consider become a H&S rep.

The conference will look at UCU's national plans for expanding its work and effectiveness on health and safety, and have specialist sessions on stress and understanding the framework for dealing with it, look at how local H&S representatives can become more effective and trained.

The conference speakers will include **John Bamford** who is UCU's Health and Safety Consultant and **Roger Kline** National Head of Equality and Employment Rights who has responsibility for Health & Safety issues.

**Venue:** Rooms 5W17 & 19 at the College Green site of City of Bristol College

**Time:** 10.30am to 15.45pm

**Parking:** Facilities close by - details on request

**Travel expenses will be met and lunch will be provided.**

**Action:**

**If you'd like to find out more please contact June Green at [jgreen@ucu.org.uk](mailto:jgreen@ucu.org.uk) at the UCU Exeter office. We want all regions to organise a similar conference over the next year.**

## 7. Hazards Bulletin

The July-September edition of *Hazards* magazine is now out. This is a trade union workplace safety journal which should be essential reading for safety reps. Visit their web site at: [www.hazards.org](http://www.hazards.org) for more details.

## 8. European Health and Safety Week

This year's European H&S Week will focus on Young Workers. The week will run from 23rd October. The 25th will be National Inspection Day. It is supported by the TUC and the HSE.

It would be good to see our Branches and Associations involved with college-based activity during the week. UCU members are ideally placed to introduce young people to work-related health & safety issues across the board - not just in "traditional H&S" areas like engineering, but more general issues about the working environment like stress, bullying, the management of health & safety, trade union involvement, etc. It's also a great chance to raise the UCU profile with members and with students, and perhaps even start to make some positive impact on relations with the employers, where these are not so good.

### Action:

Why not use the Wednesday of European Health and Safety Week (25th October) to carry out local inspections as it is National Inspection Day? There are a range of materials on the TUC website including a guide to inspections.

There are also a range of forms for use in inspections on the HSE Safety Reps pages: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/workers/safetyreps/index.htm>

TUC web pages with external links can be accessed at [http://www.tuc.org.uk/h\\_and\\_s/index.cfm?mins=345](http://www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/index.cfm?mins=345)

European Agency materials for young people can be found at: [http://europe.osha.eu.int/priority\\_groups/young\\_people](http://europe.osha.eu.int/priority_groups/young_people)

## 9. Employers passing the buck?

UCU's Health and Safety Advice line has had two recent phone calls about employers causing considerable anxiety amongst staff by, out of the blue, announcing that in future, they will be held responsible if a student injures themselves in a class, or if they lend anything to colleague that then causes them (the colleague) injury, and they might well find themselves being sued! One person has reported that staff members have wondered if they should take out personal liability insurance.

Just to be clear. The **EMPLOYER** has the legal duty under the Health & Safety at Work Act to take care of everyone's health and safety - this applies to both staff and students.

### Action:

If you had a similar experience and/or need advice on this issue please let John Bamford on our Advice Line know about any other employers who are going down this road.

## 10. 24/7 Annual Survey

UCU has been asked to circulate details of the 2006 '24-7' Work-life Balance Survey. This is an annual survey jointly run by the Work Life Balance Centre in Leicestershire, the Centre of Industrial Relations Keele University and Coventry University. The survey is an internet based

questionnaire which will run from 28th September to November 15th 2006.  
The findings for this year's survey will be reported in February 2007.  
The survey website is: <http://www.24-7survey.co.uk/>

The survey asks workers to highlight the problems they encounter with their 'work-life' balance.  
An analysis of last year's report can be found at: <http://uin.org.uk/content/view/70/66/>

Sections include:

1. Personal data
2. Job details and employer policies related to work-life balance
3. Questions about an employee's health
4. The impact of work upon leisure time and issues that would improve the work life balance
5. Knowledge of and coverage by the Working Time and ICE Regulations

We have agreed to promote the survey and you are asked to circulate details further to members in your local branches and associations.

## Advice Line

UCU has set up a Health and safety Advice Line for safety reps and branch officers offering information about health and safety legal standards, and how they can be applied and advice on dealing with health and safety issues/problems.

The Health and Safety Advice Line is for branch officers and safety reps only, not for individual members. The advice line will be staffed on Fridays only. When you phone the advice line you will be asked to leave a message. You will then be contacted on the nearest Friday unless your query is urgent.

The **advice line number** is **0161 636 7558**      **Email** [healthandsafety@ucu.org.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@ucu.org.uk)

### Or by post to:

John Bamford, UCU Health and Safety Advice Line, Greater Manchester Hazards Centre, Unit 2.5  
Windrush Millennium Centre, 70 Alexandra Road, Manchester M16 7WD

## Previous issues of H&S News

Missed an issue of H&S News? You can download a copy of back issues at:  
<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1739> in word or PDF format

## How to subscribe

Finally, if you'd like to receive this monthly newsletter on a regular basis or have news for the next one, or ideas for the development of UCU's health and safety work please email [h&sadmin@ucu.org.uk](mailto:h&sadmin@ucu.org.uk)

## UCU's Health and Safety Team

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|------------------|---------------|
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