

October 2018

Welcome to the latest edition of the energy health and safety bulletin, which is issued to all health and safety representatives in the ESI sector. In this edition:

- Prospect launches campaign to help you WorkSafe
- Final Reminder: Prospect energy health and safety seminar, 30 October
- New Prospect checklist for World Mental Health Day
- How well does your employer support staff going through the menopause?
- RIDDOR deregulation reduced HSE's oversight of health risks
- Inspection webinar for health and safety reps is now online



PROSPECT LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO HELP YOU WORKSAFE

Are you aware of the health and safety risks in your workplace? Do you know what action to take when an issue crops up? WorkSafe, Prospect's new health and safety campaign for the energy sector, is now live.

WorkSafe provides members with a new webpage which rounds up guidance on the most pressing issues in the industry, including driving, stress, Personal Protective Equipment, lone working, rest breaks and hazards.

We've also created a series of eye-catching posters for reps looking to raise awareness of health and safety issues in the workplace.

[Visit the WorkSafe webpage and download the poster pack](#)

FINAL REMINDER: PROSPECT HEALTH AND SAFETY SEMINAR, 30 OCTOBER

This is your final reminder that Prospect will hold a health and safety seminar on 30 October 2018 on the topic of human and organisational factors, the 2018 theme of Powering Improvement.

Confirmed speakers include Ken Morton, an HSE inspector who carried out an investigation into the management of competency in the industry; Aaron Curtis, a Prospect H&S rep in the Air Traffic Control Officers' branch, who is an expert on the role of the rep in just culture; and Richard Gough, head of health, safety and environment at Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks.

If you or your colleagues are interested in attending, please [drop me an email](#).

To find out more about the event, [download the calling notice](#).

NEW PROSPECT CHECKLIST FOR WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Tomorrow is World Mental Health Day, which takes place every 10 October to raise awareness and mobilise support for people with mental ill health.

Work that is well designed, well organised and well managed is good for our health. However, poor quality work is physically and psychologically harmful. Someone is made ill by work-related stress every two minutes, and rates are rising. It makes hundreds of thousands of people ill each year – more than any other workplace health issue.

Prospect has produced a new 10-point checklist to help reps assess how well their employer is supporting employees' mental health – from assessing work factors that cause mental ill health to helping employees who have developed conditions.

[Download the checklist](#)

DOES YOUR EMPLOYER SUPPORT STAFF GOING THROUGH THE MENOPAUSE?

Around one in three women in the UK are currently either going through, or have reached, the menopause. As women make up around half the workers in the UK, and retirement/pension ages have increased, this will affect workplaces everywhere.

World Menopause Day is on 18 October. For far too long the menopause has been seen as a private issue for women and something that is not openly spoken about generally – and much less so in the workplace.

Prospect believes it is time this changed. Employers and union reps have an important role in starting the conversation and raising awareness. To help with this, we've produced a 10-point checklist of simple adjustments that employers can make to help women going through the menopause.

[Download the checklist](#)

RIDDOR DEREGULATION REDUCED HSE'S OVERSIGHT

Deregulation of disease reporting requirements five years ago reduced the HSE's enforcement intelligence, which could leave workers at "risk of potentially life-threatening illnesses", according to the regulator's own review of the reforms.

The amended Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) came into force on 1 October 2013, shrinking the number of occupational diseases that employers are legally required to report to the HSE from 47 to just seven.

However, HSE now says that the law will have to be changed to increase the number of reportable diseases to widen "the scope for research and the evidence base to improve worker health". It has not said when the changes will be made, but there will be a public consultation on the proposals.

The deregulation was introduced following two reviews of health and safety law carried out by Lord Young and Professor Ragnar Löfstedt, in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

Löfstedt endorsed Young's earlier call for wholesale review of then-existing reporting regulations, RIDDOR 1995, saying that the aim should be to "reduce the ambiguity over the reporting requirements for businesses".

In response, the HSE proposed removing the requirement to report occupational diseases altogether, other than those caused by exposure to biological agents. However, this was dropped following opposition from other health and safety regulators and trade unions, including Prospect.

At the time, Prospect warned about the potentially damaging signal given to employers if the HSE removed occupational health reporting requirements.

A drastically slimmed down list of diseases was included in the 2013 regulations. The only reportable conditions are currently: carpal tunnel syndrome; cramp in the hand or forearm; occupational dermatitis; hand arm vibration syndrome; occupational asthma; tendonitis; and diseases caused by exposures to carcinogens, mutagens or biological agents.

But papers submitted to HSE's last board meeting on 12 September revealed that its post-implementation review of RIDDOR 2013 found that scaling down the number of reportable diseases has had a detrimental effect.

"RIDDOR 2013 significantly reduced the number of occupational diseases required to be reported and in doing so, excluded a small number of work-related diseases... that are of specific interest to HSE from a regulatory and scientific perspective," the board paper states.

It highlights five diseases it may add to the regulations when RIDDOR is updated, all of which were reportable until the regulations were updated five years ago. They are:

- pneumoconiosis (a group of lung diseases including asbestosis and silicosis);
- extrinsic allergic alveolitis (a group of lung diseases that can develop after exposure to bacteria, fungi, animal proteins, plants and chemicals);
- decompression illness (a condition caused by poorly managed ascent during diving);
- pulmonary barotrauma (damage to the lung from pressure changes, another issue in diving); and
- poisoning due to certain chemical exposures.

The paper continues: "With the long term focus on work-related ill health, the exclusion of these diseases reduces the scope for research and the evidence base to improve worker health. Without investigation and enforcement where appropriate, workers could be left at risk of potentially life-threatening illnesses due to workplace exposures."

INSPECTION WEBINAR FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY REPS IS NOW ONLINE

For those who couldn't make the TUC webinar on carrying out workplace inspections on 3 October, you can now watch it on YouTube. The TUC's health and safety expert, Hugh Robertson, gave an in-depth look at how to carry out inspections, what the focus should be, whether your inspection procedures are working and how to improve them.

[Watch the webinar](#)