

THREE YEAR REPRIEVE FOR NEGLIGENT DIRECTORS TOO LONG, SAY LAWYERS

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Company bosses who push employees' safety to the bottom of the corporate agenda have a further three year reprieve before the Government considers whether to tighten the law surrounding directors' duties.

Lawyers acting for workers injured through negligence say a three year timescale to review whether duties relating to health and safety should be enshrined in law is simply too long, if the number of deaths and serious injuries are to be reduced.

Responding to a report by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on the work of the Health and Safety Executive, Amanda Stevens, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL), said a review of directors' duties must occur sooner.

"The Government has actually said in its report that it is not convinced the voluntary approach to health and safety is effective, yet a three year wait before a review takes place has still been suggested. It is too long – 241 people were killed at work last year and if this number is to be reduced then we need a review much sooner," she said.

"But there is much in the report which is to be welcomed," said Amanda, "and we feel the DWP has made some really important points about the need for more front-line inspections, and for the HSE to receive adequate funding."

APIL also said it fully supported the DWP's call for employer's liability insurance premiums to be linked with health and safety practices.

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Note to editors:

APIL's announcement is based on the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee report: "The role of the Health and Safety Commission and the Health and Safety Executive in regulating workplace health and safety", which can be found here:
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmworpen/246/24602.htm>

- APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) was established in 1990 by a group of lawyers working on behalf of personal injury victims and now has more than 5,000 members. APIL campaigns for improvements in the law to help people who are injured or become ill through no fault of their own.

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Photographs are available on request

Further information can also be found at the organisation's website- www.apil.org.uk