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WARNING TO SAFETY SHY BOSSES AS NEW LAW BRINGS TOUGHER CONSEQUENCES

Tougher penalties for safety shy bosses have been welcomed by lawyers acting for injured workers.

A new Health and Safety Offences Act will raise the maximum penalties that can be levied against negligent bosses from £5,000 to £20,000, as well as broadening the range of offences for which an individual can be imprisoned.

Denise Kitchener, chief executive of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) said any moves to make company directors take health and safety seriously were a good thing, but placing a statutory legal obligation on individual directors to ensure their workplace is safe in the first place would help reduce deaths and injuries.

"We live in a day and age in which profit still comes before safety for many employers," she said, "and the people who suffer are the workers who are injured as a result of this unacceptable mentality. While increased penalties will hit rogue employers' pockets – and hopefully make them think twice before skimping on safety – strict laws surrounding directors' duties would be an even stronger deterrent."

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Note to editors:

- The Health and Safety (Offences) Act 2008 received Royal Assent on 16 October, 2008
- APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) is a not-for-profit organisation, whose members are dedicated to campaigning for improvements in the law to help people who are injured or become ill through no fault of their own
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