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HSE proposals 'put business profits before workers' safety'

Workers could be at risk of recurring injury in a proposed trade-off against business costs, a not-for-profit campaign group has warned.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has today (9 May) closed its consultation on proposals to amend the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) with the aim of employers only having to report more serious injuries which occur in the workplace.

"This step is a real worry because it could make employers more blasé about workers' safety," said David Bott, president of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL).

The proposals would allow an employer to report an injury which has resulted in a member of staff being absent from work for seven working days or more, rather than the current three.

APIL says this would put workers at risk of further injury because important lessons may no longer be learned about the mistakes which have caused an injury in the past.

If implemented, an employer is expected to save £7.91 for each report not submitted.

"The HSE has effectively proposed a trade-off between workers' safety and a saving for a business of £7.91 per report," said Mr Bott. "It is a pitiful sum when you set it against the value of preventing a serious injury.

"Valuable lessons can be learned by the mistakes of the past. Watering down the rules which help ensure workers' safety will only expose them to risk of further harm.

"The best way to cut costs is to cut the negligence which causes needless injury in the first place. If a company currently finds itself spending lots of time and money submitting RIDDOR reports, then



clearly that business may have serious health and safety issues which need to be addressed.”

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Notes to editors:

- The HSE's consultation closed on 9 May after the original 29 April deadline was extended.
- 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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