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Assault on health and safety will increase risk of injury

A two-pronged attack on health and safety by the Government will expose workers and members of the public to greater risk of injury, campaigners have warned.

In response to two consultations, the not-for-profit Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) has urged the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to reconsider proposals to exempt self-employed people from health and safety law and water down the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

“The main purpose of RIDDOR is to gather intelligence to allow for the investigation of serious incidents in the workplace,” said APIL president Karl Tonks.

“But if the obligation for businesses to report injuries is watered down, it will be more difficult for the HSE to detect dangerous practices and prevent needless injury.

“For instance if, as proposed, major injuries to the public - such as pedestrians injured near building sites - are no longer reported to the HSE, innocent people will be put at greater risk of harm as serious problems may not be addressed.

“What is needed is for policymakers to recognise that prevention of injuries or diseases is better than cure. Not only is it good for workers and members of the public, but it can be much cheaper for businesses than paying to put an injured person back on his feet.”

APIL also opposed the HSE’s proposals to make some self-employed people exempt from health and safety law.



“There’s no reason why the protection which is afforded to employees should not be afforded to self-employed people,” Karl went on.

“As the law stands, self-employed people are not expected to take any disproportionate steps to meet with health and safety regulations. So the notion that the law is some sort of burden is a myth.”

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Notes to editors:

- 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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