

May 2002

AP178

NEW CALL FOR SPECIAL BUREAU TO HANDLE MAJOR DISASTERS

Fresh calls for a new way of dealing with major accidents have followed last Friday's Potters Bar train crash.

The creation of an Accident and Disaster Investigation Bureau has been the subject of an ongoing campaign by the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) which seeks an end to the confusion surrounding the numerous investigations and enquiries which follow such disasters, causing great distress to injured people and grieving relatives.

"The aftermath of the Potters Bar crash already begins to bear all the hallmarks of previous disasters at Paddington, Southall, the Kings Cross fire and the sinking of the Marchioness riverboat," said APIL president Patrick Allen.

"There have already been calls for a public enquiry, and the Health and Safety Commission has been asked to report on the incident. In previous major incidents there has been a profusion of public enquiries, inquests, prosecutions and civil claims for damages," he explained.

"It all adds up to delay in uncovering the truth, delay in implementing safety improvements, increased anguish for the injured people involved and unacceptable duplication of resources."

APIL is currently working on the development of the concept of a bureau which would co-ordinate and take control of all post-accident enquiries, and ensure safety recommendations are implemented quickly. It would also be responsible for gathering information about safety systems in other countries which could be adapted to the UK.

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“We are currently devoting a considerable amount of our time to developing the details of this concept before we formally approach the Government with our plans,” said Patrick.
“We cannot make changes without the political will to adopt a radical approach to public safety and the time to make those changes has to be now.”

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Note to editors: For further information, please contact:

Lorraine Gwinnutt
Press & Parliamentary Manager
APIL
11 Castle Quay
Nottingham
NG7 1FW
Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 924 3485
email: lorraine@apil.com

or

Lisa Wardle
Press & PR Officer
APIL
Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 924 3485
email: lisa@apil.com