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NEW RECRUITS SHOULD NOT HAVE TO FACE CONSTRUCTION DANGERS, WARN SAFETY LAWYERS

Youngsters considering a career in construction must be told they are entering one of the countries most dangerous industries, health and safety lawyers have warned.

As National Construction Week gets underway today (6 October) youngsters all over the country will be told about opportunities within one of Britain's biggest industries. But the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) says a shocking number of deaths and injuries means the construction industry is also Britain's most dangerous.

"The number of work-related deaths and injuries – particularly in construction - needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency," said APIL president Colin Ettinger. "National Construction Week is a drive to get young people interested in the industry, but over the last couple of years nearly 150 construction workers have been killed, not to mention thousands more who have been injured. We cannot blindly push our children towards a job in construction when year after year, it tops the work fatalities list."

APIL believes raising awareness of the industry's health and safety problems is all the more important during National Construction Week.

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“Encouraging youngsters to join the industry is all well and good, but the number of deaths and accidents is still too high even though it is lower now than it has ever been. One death is one too many and what we need is a safety culture, in which employers and workers put health and safety at the very top of their agenda,” says Colin.

“The Government, big company bosses, site managers and the workers themselves, all need to work together to improve safety. That way, people stand a chance of going to work and coming home again unharmed,” he said.

“We can start by informing future generations of construction workers about health and safety hazards and teaching them how to avoid past mistakes which have led to accidents.”

Potential safety hazards faced by construction workers include falls from height – which accounted for 29 per cent of work-related deaths in 2003/4. Asbestos, slips and trips and noise-induced deafness are also on the construction safety black-list.

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Note to editors: Note to editors: The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) has around 5,000 members worldwide including solicitors, barristers, academics and students, who are dedicated to providing a voice for injured people. Our main objective is to ensure access to justice for injured people and focus on prevention of avoidable injuries.

APIL recently launched a new website – consumersafetywatch.com - to alert the public to safety hazards such as accidents at work and product recalls. The aim of the site is to prevent accidents happening in the first place and, if things do wrong, visitors can gain access to details of qualified, experienced solicitors who are members of the College of Personal Injury Law (CPIL).

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