

Workplace safety at risk due to de-regulation of health and safety policies

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A report by the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University has found that workplace safety has been put at risk due to changes in health and safety policies over the past decade.

The report, 'Regulatory Surrender: death, injury and the non-enforcement of law', reveals that policy changes have affected the ability of the [Health & Safety](#) Executive (HSE) to enforce health and safety law. Researchers found that the number of inspections made of business premises has fallen by 69% and investigations of health and safety incidents has declined by 68%. The report also shows a 48% reduction in prosecutions of companies who have breached HSE regulations.

The Government has recently announced a wide-ranging review of health and safety laws in response to claims that UK industry had been 'saturated' by health and safety legislation under the Labour government. Researchers at Liverpool, however, have found that the HSE's power to inspect and enforce health and safety regulations has been reduced, resulting in increased numbers of employers at risk from accident or injury at work.

Dr David Whyte, Reader in Sociology at the University of Liverpool, said: "The idea that health and safety has 'gone mad' does not seem to hold true. The collapse in inspection, investigation and enforcement has dramatically reduced the chances of businesses being detected and prosecuted for committing safety offences. Most serious injuries now are not even investigated. For example, only a third of amputations are

now investigated by the Health and Safety Executive."

Professor Steve Tombs, at Liverpool John Moores University, said: "HSE's senior's management have effectively surrendered to the Government's lighter touch regulatory agenda. Not only is the agency now more vulnerable to further 'reviews' of regulation, but workers too are increasingly vulnerable - as managements are far less likely to respond to workers' demands to comply with the law in the absence of a credible enforcement threat."

Provided by University of Liverpool

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