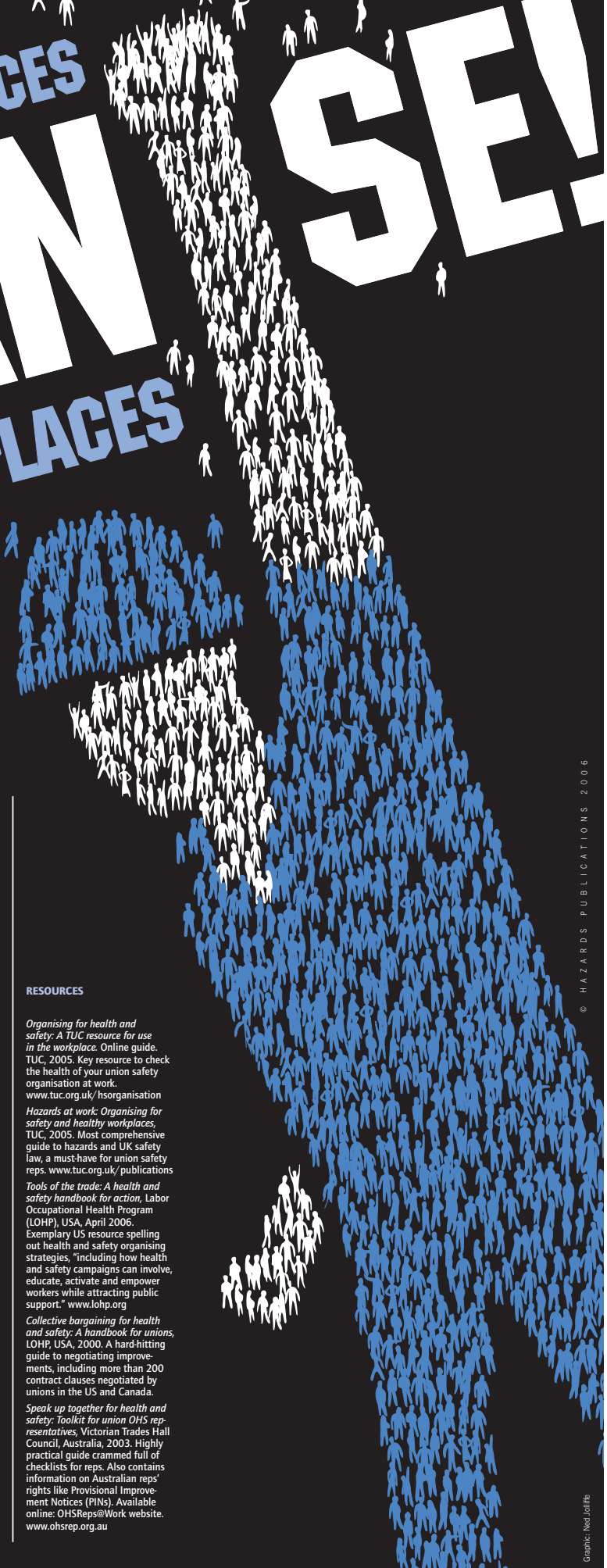


ORGANISED WORKPLACES ORGANISE! ORGANISED WORKPLACES ARE SAFER WORKPLACES

Unions save lives. Organised workplaces are safer workplaces – fact. Trained and active safety reps have the knowledge, back-up and the organisational clout to make a difference at work. Safety reps are so effective because they are union reps, representing union members. They know the jobs, they know the hazards. And they know how to spot problems and get something done. But good organisation doesn't happen by chance. It requires effort, creativity and constant vigilance. Give your workplace a safety organisation health check.



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UNION SAFETY CHECK-UP

- ◆ How many safety reps are there?
- ◆ Are they trained?
- ◆ Has the employer been notified about new reps?
- ◆ Does each rep have a clear constituency?
- ◆ Are there union-side meetings to discuss safety issues?
- ◆ Are all workers covered by a safety rep?
- ◆ Have reps got adequate support and time off?
- ◆ Does the union branch communicate with safety reps and vice versa?
- ◆ Are any groups within the workplace being overlooked – shiftworkers or migrant workers for example?
- ◆ Could you negotiate new rights like roving reps or union “notices” to improve union organisation and effectiveness?
- ◆ Is the safety committee functioning properly – so problems raised get remedied and there is effective monitoring of progress?
- ◆ Are health and safety issues considered when bargaining issues such as reorganisations are discussed?
- ◆ If there's problems with any of the above, what are you going to do about it and when?

SAFETY REP AT WORK

- ◆ When did you last do a walk through the workplace?
- ◆ When did you last do a formal inspection or investigation?
- ◆ How do you communicate information to members?
- ◆ How do members communicate with you?
- ◆ Are you tackling the right issues?
- ◆ When did you last involve members in a union safety activity – a survey, risk mapping or body mapping?
- ◆ Is your training up to scratch?
- ◆ Does management resolve safety problems you identify, or do they stay in the “to do” pile?
- ◆ Are the top safety priorities the least likely to be addressed?
- ◆ Are you receiving all the documentation you need – including copies of risk assessments and workplace accident and sickness records?
- ◆ Do all safety reps receive a copy of *Hazards* magazine? Details from Hazards, PO Box 4042, Sheffield S8 2DG. Tel: 0114 201 4265. email: sub@hazards.org www.hazards.org
- ◆ If there's problems with any of the above, what are you going to do about it and when?

GETTING THINGS DONE

- Be organised**
- ◆ Put things in writing
 - ◆ Make regular reports
 - ◆ Encourage members to raise problems
 - ◆ Use agreed procedures
 - ◆ Use safety committees
 - ◆ Make health and safety agreements with the employer
 - ◆ Ensure any partnerships with the employer are genuine and effective
 - ◆ Negotiate use of Union Inspection Notices (UINs)
- Use the law**
- ◆ Be clear about your employer's duties and your legal rights
 - ◆ Get involved in risk assessments
 - ◆ Use inspectors where appropriate
- Use union power**
- ◆ Good communication
 - ◆ Surveys, bodymapping, inspections
 - ◆ Planning action and reporting back

RESOURCES

Organising for health and safety: A TUC resource for use in the workplace. Online guide. TUC, 2005. Key resource to check the health of your union safety organisation at work. www.tuc.org.uk/hsorganisation

Hazards at work: Organising for safety and healthy workplaces. TUC, 2005. Most comprehensive guide to hazards and UK safety law, a must-have for union safety reps. www.tuc.org.uk/publications

Tools of the trade: A health and safety handbook for action. Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP), USA, April 2006. Exemplary US resource spelling out health and safety organising strategies, “including how health and safety campaigns can involve, educate, activate and empower workers while attracting public support.” www.lohp.org

Collective bargaining for health and safety: A handbook for unions. LOHP, USA, 2000. A hard-hitting guide to negotiating improvements, including more than 200 contract clauses negotiated by unions in the US and Canada.

Speak up together for health and safety: Toolkit for union OHS representatives. Victorian Trades Hall Council, Australia, 2003. Highly practical guide crammed full of checklists for reps. Also contains information on Australian reps' rights like Provisional Improvement Notices (PINs). Available online: OHSReps@Work website. www.ohsrep.org.au

Graphic: Ned Joffins