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**For immediate release**

**Scottish TUC Condemns New HSE Scottish Workplace Fatality Statistics**

Statistics released today by the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) reveal a dramatic increase in the number of reported fatalities occurring in the Scottish workplace. The number of fatalities in Scotland rose from 15 in 2003/4 to 36 in 2004/5, an increase of 140%.

STUC Assistant Secretary, Dave Moxham, said, "This tragic rise in workplace fatalities is unacceptable. Every worker and their family should have the right to expect to return safely home at the end of the working day and not be at risk from their employers' negligence."

"It is a matter of national shame and concern that Scotland now has the highest workplace fatality rate of any British reporting region. This isn't a one-year statistical blip. From 2001 to 2005 the number of fatal injuries to workers in Scotland increased by 29% compared to a decrease of 12% in Great Britain for the same period."

"The tragedy of the ICL/Stockline fatalities and the support the STUC has provided for affected workers and families has reminded us all of the terrible personal consequences of workplace fatalities."

The figures for Major Injuries to Scottish workers provide little evidence of improvement

Dave Moxham said, "There is little evidence that accidents that could lead to injuries so severe that the workers can no longer remain in employment are reducing. With a figure of just under 3,000 major injuries each year since 2003 the STUC must question whether the current HSE strategy based on prioritisation is working. The STUC will now be reviewing our continuing support for the revitalising strategy as we are now 5 years into a ten-year plan with no evidence of sustainable improvement."

Referring to the 8% drop in injuries resulting in absences of three days or more Moxham said, "This small drop in injuries is welcome but it is still far from satisfactory that 120,000 injuries occur each year which result in a prolonged absence from work and that Scottish workers are being exposed to unnecessary risk to such a degree."

On the issue of reporting levels Scotland yet again tops the GB table as the worst area with an estimated 60% of reportable accidents going unreported. Commenting on this figure Dave Moxham said, "With this pattern of non

reporting continuing we must now seriously question whether Scottish employers are deliberately encouraging non-compliance with Reporting of Death or Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)”

In contrast to the fatalities and injury statistics the figures for HSE enforcement action in Scotland continue to reveal less convictions, lower fines, and less enforcement notices being issued

“The STUC are disappointed that Scotland continues to have a significantly lower record of health and safety prosecutions than England and Wales and that fines for those convicted are totally inadequate to provide any meaningful deterrent. The Transco £15 million pound fine when compared to the turnover of the organisation is not a significant deterrent but it will greatly distort the average fines figures for next year’s HSE Statistics. The STUC will be discussing the issue of prosecutions and convictions and exploring the need for a stakeholder group involving the Fiscal Service, trade unions, the HSE and others to investigate any inconsistencies in prosecutions.”

The STUC are very disappointed with these statistics, which do little to convey the pain and suffering experienced by thousands of Scottish workers and their families as a consequence of hazards encountered at the workplace. We call on employers to ensure provide safer workplaces and more power for health and safety representatives, including the right to issue Provisional Improvement Notices and inspect workplaces where unions have members irrespective if there is a collective agreement in place. The safest workplaces continue to be unionised workplaces

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