

HSE given more teeth and larger role

New and higher penalties are to be introduced for workplace safety crimes and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is going to have a greatly expanded inspection empire absorbing four other agencies, the government said this week. The changes announced in the final Hampton report on 16 March and endorsed the same day in the Chancellor's Budget speech, were welcomed by Health and Safety Commission (HSC) chair Bill Callaghan. He said HSC "we strongly welcome the recommendations to increase penalties, and to augment the range of sanctions available to our inspectors by using administrative penalties and to explore the use of restorative justice orders - issues which we already have under consideration." Timothy Walker, HSE director general, said: "The addition to our remit of the inspection role of the Coal Authority, the Engineering Inspectorate, the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority and the Gangmasters Licensing Authority will allow us to build on the synergies between us and the work of these regulatory bodies." TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson commented: "The TUC broadly welcomes the fact that the review has focussed on avoiding duplication rather than reducing regulation. It recognises the importance of a strong regulatory regime and we welcome the expansion of the role of the HSC. We also welcome the commitment to higher penalties. The TUC will be using the report to argue for more resources for the HSC and more research into what forms of enforcement are most effective." Lawrence Waterman, president of the safety professionals' body IOSH, welcomed the Chancellor's announcement, but warned "it will be necessary to ensure that adequate resources for the expanded role are provided. IOSH would be bitterly opposed to any move that took resources away from regulation in the workplace."

- [HSC news release](#), [Treasury news release](#), [full Budget speech](#) and [Hampton review webpages, including full report](#), [IOSH news release](#).