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NEW PROPOSALS 'PUT BUSINESS PROFITS BEFORE WORKERS' SAFETY'

A campaign group has warned that workers in Northern Ireland could be put at risk of recurring injury because of a proposed trade-off against business costs.

The Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) has today closed its consultation on proposals to amend the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) to allow employers only to report more serious injuries which occur in the workplace.

"The worry is that these proposals, if implemented, would allow a business to become more blasé in ensuring workers' safety," said Martin Hanna, a Belfast-based executive committee member of the not-for-profit Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL).

Under the proposals, an employer would be allowed to report an injury which has resulted in an employee being absent from work for seven working days or more, rather than the current three. If implemented, an employer is expected to save £7.91 for each report not submitted.

"This is effectively a trade-off between workers' safety and a saving for a business of £7.91 per report," said Mr Hanna. "It is a pathetic sum when you consider the value of preventing serious injury.

"Lessons should always be learned from the mistakes of the past to avoid putting workers at risk of more injury in the future.

"Instead of watering down the rules which are designed to protect people, the best thing to do to cut costs is to cut the carelessness which causes needless injury in the first place.

"If a business finds itself spending lots of time and money submitting RIDDOR reports, then clearly that business may have serious health and safety issues which need to be addressed."



Notes to editors:

- APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) is a not-for-profit organisation, whose members are dedicated to campaigning for improvements in the law to help people who are injured or become ill through no fault of their own.
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