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News release

15 Month 2010 - NR 08/10

'Elf and safety' stories should carry a warning - IOSH Chief Executive tells national press

Writing in a national newspaper today, IOSH Chief Executive Rob Strange OBE has questioned the way the media portrays health and safety.

In a [personal opinion article published in today's media section of the Independent](#), Rob claims how a media formula of "exaggeration, half-truth, generalisation and myth-making has created a great British joke, the one about 'elf n safety gone mad.'"

Citing media coverage, particularly in the Daily Mail, and David Cameron's speech, last December, in which he announced his party's review of health and safety, Rob says:

"But lately, things have taken a more worrying turn. If health and safety professionals had got used to the joshing, heavier blows are now starting to rain in. As we approach an election, we've started to see health and safety become a political punch bag, left to swing with repeated right hooks from predictably aggressive elements of the media."

Rob talks about the [Sunday Telegraph's mis-reporting of the IOSH position on gritting snow and ice in public areas in January](#), and warns of the danger of trivialising health and safety. He says:

"The cumulative danger is that the public will turn its back on health and safety, encouraged to see it as more an irritation than a necessity to protect life and limb; it becomes something "done to" them, rather than owned by them, requiring their input and responsibility to make it work."

- Ends -

Notes for editors:

IOSH is the Chartered body for health and safety professionals. With more than 37,000 members in 85 countries, we're the world's biggest professional health and safety organisation.

We set standards, and support, develop and connect our members with resources, guidance, events and training. We're the voice of the profession, and campaign on issues that affect millions of working people.

IOSH was founded in 1945 and is a registered charity with international NGO status.

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