

# New register for workplace exposure to fumes and dust launched, as GMB Congress calls for action on hidden health dangers for aviation workers



Aviation workers are being exposed to a range of hidden health risks, including fuel fumes, ultraviolet exposure, and diesel particulates, GMB Congress said today.

The union has set out its intention to work more closely with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and employers on ways to safeguard workers.

GMB has also established a [Workplace Exposure Register for Fumes and Dust](#) via its law firm, UnionLine, to log and investigate exposure to chemicals and fumes with a view to making claims against irresponsible employers.

According to HSE statistics, 13,000 deaths occur every year due to exposure at work, primarily to chemicals or dust.

**A former aviation worker who left due to illness, said:**

“During my time as a member of ground staff, I was exposed to aircraft and vehicle fumes for up to six hours at a time.

“You could smell it all around you.

“Dehydration was also a major risk as employers didn’t supply us with drinks and you couldn’t get to water points during a shift.

“We had people collapse with dehydration.

“The job aviation workers do is a detriment to our health, but there is no recognition of this fact.”

**Mike Reynolds, aviation worker and GMB delegate, told Congress:**

“As holidaymakers arrive to airports and board their flights this summer, aviation workers nationwide will be working hard to ensure they reach their destinations safely and comfortably.

“However, the work we do at Britain’s airports poses a risk to our health and wellbeing on a daily basis.

“Working outside for six hours or more impacts exposure to UV radiation, while aviation fumes and the emission of diesel particles from vehicles add up to a cocktail of chemicals and carcinogens.

“Better monitoring of air-quality levels, stronger PPE controls, and employer assessment of cumulative UV and emissions exposure could all play a role in keeping aviation workers safe.”



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