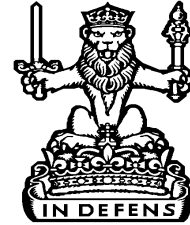


NEWS RELEASE

CROWN OFFICE AND
PROCURATOR FISCAL SERVICE

DWP Department for
Work and Pensions



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HSC – 040

Glasgow factory inquiry announcement

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Peter Hain MP and the Lord Advocate, Elish Angiolini QC today announced their agreement that there should be a public inquiry into the tragic plastics factory explosion which occurred in Glasgow on 11 May 2004.

This is the first public inquiry under the UK Inquiries Act 2005 in mainland Britain. The full remit and schedule will be finalized in the coming weeks, and will be announced shortly.

Nine people died and many more were injured when the factory in Maryhill, owned and operated by ICL Plastics Ltd and ICL Tech Ltd, was destroyed in an explosion caused by a leaking Liquid Petroleum Gas pipe. At the end of August the two companies were fined £200,000 each after admitting a series of health and safety breaches.

Speaking today Peter Hain said:

“Having taken the opportunity to meet with the families of the victims I am convinced that a full public inquiry is necessary to understand the facts that led to this tragic accident. I welcome the opportunity to ensure that lessons are learned from this tragedy.

“The findings of the inquiry are likely to have significance across the United Kingdom. It is vital for Ministers to work together to establish a full inquiry into the events leading to the explosion and the lessons which we can learn for the future.

“When talking to the families they told me their key concerns are to establish the facts, provide an explanation of why this happened, explain where the failures were and ensure we do not allow this to happen again. They also raised particular concerns over the qualifications of the pipe installers, the approach to risk assessment and the availability of advice on these matters – all these issues can and should be examined.

“They have also made it clear to me that they want to see the role that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) played in regulating these premises prior to the incident is fully investigated. I fully support them on this point. No issue relevant to the circumstances should be out of bounds.

“It is essential that the inquiry is thorough, transparent and exhaustive but not protracted. The families have suffered already and we do not want them to have to wait unduly for answers.”

The Lord Advocate said:

“At the conclusion of criminal proceedings in Scotland I confirmed my commitment to holding an inquiry in public into the circumstances surrounding this tragedy. I met members of families of the victims, and other interested parties, to consider their views on what it was hoped that the inquiry would achieve.

“In light of these helpful discussions and the matters uncovered by the investigation team in the course of the preparation for the criminal trial, I concluded that the best outcome would be a full public inquiry which comprehensively investigates the events leading up to the tragic explosion, and the issues arising out of that.

“I have been able to discuss the options with Lord McKenzie, the United Kingdom Minister with responsibility for Health and Safety at Work and with Peter Hain, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, and we have concluded that the best option for a public inquiry is one established jointly by Scottish and United Kingdom Ministers under the Inquiries Act 2005.

“I welcome the Secretary of State’s agreement to hold the first public inquiry between the two governments, and the first inquiry under the Inquiries Act to be held on mainland Great Britain. We intend to hold the inquiry in Scotland.

“As health and safety legislation is reserved to the United Kingdom Parliament, and the investigation of deaths in Scotland fall solely under my jurisdiction as the Lord Advocate, only a joint inquiry could truly address all of the issues which arise as a result of this case.

“I am conscious of the anxiety that the families of those who died and the survivors have continued to suffer and both the Secretary of State and I wish to ensure that the Inquiry takes place as quickly as possible, and should not be unduly lengthy.”

The full terms of reference for the inquiry will be agreed in the coming weeks, and will be announced as soon as the details are finalized.

Notes to Editors

1. On 11 May 2004 there was an explosion at a plastics factory operated by ICL Plastics Ltd and ICL Tech Ltd in Maryhill, Glasgow. As a result 9 people died and 33 were injured.
2. The Health and Safety Executive and the police, working closely with staff from the Glasgow Procurator Fiscal's Office, began a painstaking investigation into the circumstances surrounding the tragedy. As a result both ICL Plastics Ltd and ICL Tech Ltd were prosecuted for various health and safety breaches over a number of years.
3. On 17 August 2007 both companies pled guilty to all charges and were subsequently fined £200,000 each on 28 August.
4. The Lord Advocate has sole jurisdiction for the investigation of deaths in Scotland, following the conclusion of criminal proceedings she considered the form and remit of the inquiry, and in particular whether the issues could be properly addressed at a Fatal Accident Inquiry or another form of public inquiry.

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