

RENEW THE PROMISE

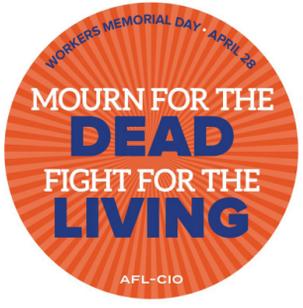
SAFE JOBS
FOR ALL





Workers Memorial Day 2021

Renew the Promise



Every Worker Has a Right to Leave Work as Healthy as When They Arrived

A little over a year ago with Covid-19 wreaking havoc throughout the world, a new, daunting health and safety challenge was presented to UAW members. UAW President Rory L. Gamble quickly convened an unprecedented national task force of leaders of the Detroit-3 to work out health and safety protocols in the workplace.

The COVID-19 pandemic has killed more than 500,000 people in this country so far, devastating working families.

In March 2020, the UAW immediately took action as a fierce advocate for tough, science-based safeguards and measures. UAW health and safety teams implemented precautions and worked with employers to educate workers and insisted on following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization recommendations on social distancing and required health and safety standards in the workplace.

Unions, Gamble said, once again, made a difference and illustrated that unionized workplaces are safer workplaces.

At the Big 3 and elsewhere, UAW contracts and constant work by the UAW Health and Safety Department and local union leadership and committees made sure the workers' well-being was given priority in plants throughout the pandemic. And some UAW members volunteered to make critical PPE equipment to help plants safely reopen and support workers in other industries to meet their emergency PPE needs.

"We thank the thousands of UAW members who have stepped up in variety of ways to help the nation deal with this deadly pandemic," said Gamble. "Their sacrifices have made a huge difference. Still, we mourn for the many members who have died and those who have lost close family and dear friends to Covid-19. Many are still recovering. We must continue the proven practices of wearing a mask, social distancing and frequent hand-washing to continue to reduce the risk."

The pandemic added to the dangers workers face on the job in 2020-2021. According to the AFL-CIO's 2020 Death on the Job report, 275 U.S. workers die each day from hazardous working conditions. The report noted that 3,250 U.S. workers died on the job in 2018 and another 95,000 died from occupational diseases such as cancers, occupational asthma, silicosis, and others.

In 2018, the Death on the Job report says, nearly 3.5 million workers across all industries, including state and local government, had work-related injuries and illnesses that were reported by employers, with 2.8 million injuries and illnesses reported in private industry.

But due to limitations in the current injury reporting system and widespread underreporting of workplace injuries, the AFL-CIO estimates the number is two to three times greater — or 7 million to 10.5 million injuries and illnesses a year. In 2018, state and local public sector employers reported an injury rate of 4.8 per 100 workers, significantly higher than the reported rate of 2.8 per 100 among private-sector workers.

The cost of these injuries and illnesses is enormous — estimated by the AFL-CIO at \$250 billion to \$330 billion a year.

On April 28, the UAW joined with unions of the AFL-CIO to observe Workers Memorial Day to remember those who have died and those who have been injured on the job. While the event is to mourn for the dead, it is also a reminder to "fight like hell" for the living. Gamble said, the UAW, through its development of health and safety practices and protocols, investigation of workplace incidents, thoughtful collective bargaining and hard-nosed advocacy in state capitols and Washington, continues the fight for the right of every worker to have a safe and healthy work environment.

Two UAW members died on the job in 2020 — two members who will never come home to loving families. It is two, too many. Gamble said that all workplace incidents resulting in injury or death are avoidable. For him, Workers Memorial Day is a reminder that much needs to be done to reach the goal of workers always returning home in the same condition as when they reported for work.

2021 Fatal Incidents at UAW-Represented Facilities

Two UAW members lost their lives in workplace incidents since the last Workers Memorial Day.

June 17, 2020
Michael Curcio
Age: 58
Local 3063, Region 8
Maintenance Technician
Metalsa
Hopkinsville, Kentucky

Brother Curcio was killed while performing a service and maintenance task on an automated welding line used to construct van frames. He was replacing a proximity switch for a hydraulic cylinder powering a rail transfer shuttle. After releasing hydraulic pressure and removing a bolt on the cylinder, the transfer table dropped, crushing Brother Curcio to death. The equipment was not equipped with adequate blocks to prevent motion. Kentucky OSHA issued initial citations for improper lockout procedures, failure to perform periodic inspections of equipment to ensure adequate energy control lock-out procedures, failure to retrain employees after changes were made to energy control procedures.

Dec. 30, 2020
Mark Anthony McKnight
Age: 57
Local 977, Region 2B
Electrician
Caravan FM
Marion, Indiana



Brother McKnight, a contract electrician for Caravan FM inside the General Motors' Marion Stamping facility, was killed when an 18-foot-by-11½-foot partition wall made of tubular steel weighing approximately 4,500 pounds (2,050 Kg) fell on him while he was working on attaching conduit to a guard rail. The wall was being prepared for final placement after having been moved the day before by a group of contract mechanical trades. The plan was to remove chains that were temporarily holding the wall in place at its new location and then secure the wall with a fork truck while additional repairs were made. Upon removal of the chains, a contract mechanical tradesperson attempted to position a fork truck to support the wall when he made contact at an elevated point of the structure causing it to fall forward and onto Brother McKnight, who was working in close proximity. Attempts made by in-plant emergency personnel to revive the electrician were unsuccessful.