



SAFE JOBS NOW



WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY
APRIL 28



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Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

Each year, April 28th marks the legislative anniversary of the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970. Since 1989 the AFL-CIO, affiliated unions and labor organizations have designated April 28 as Worker Memorial Day, also known as the day of mourning for workers who have tragically perished in the workplace. On this solemn day, we pause and reflect on workplace tragedies that have taken the lives of our sisters and brothers at worksites across the country and around the world.

In the 53 years since the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, it is estimated that over 700,000 lives have been saved through workplace safety standards and hard-won negotiated worker protections. In fact, through collective bargaining agreements, worker advocacy groups and established OSHA standards, workplace fatalities have been reduced from nearly 38 per day or 14,000 each year before OSHA was enacted. Workplace fatalities have been reduced to 14 per day or 5,000 per year in recent years. While a 62% reduction in fatalities is noteworthy, there are still an unacceptable number of deaths occurring at worksites every day. Tragically, five of our UAW family lost their lives in workplace accidents in 2022. Their deaths were unacceptable and preventable. We mourn their loss and grieve deeply for their loved ones left behind.

While the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 5,190 workplace fatalities in the past year, an additional 2.6 million workplace injuries and illnesses were also reported, an alarming number that is most certainly higher considering injuries and illnesses are historically under-reported. Further, it is estimated that 50,000 workers perish each year because of long-term chemical or environmental exposure. Most have either retired or left their place of employment only to succumb to a chronic long-term illness related to their work environment.

The UAW has a proud history of being at the forefront and in the fight for improved safety standards in not only our represented workplaces, but all worksites across the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and beyond. We have proven time and again that the fight for worker's rights and safe jobs are best won through the collective bargaining and the legislative process. UAW negotiated health and safety contract language is often referred to as the industry-leading standard. Our legacy of winning significant protections for our members over many decades is recognized throughout the world.

While we are proud of our accomplishments of winning significant life-saving protections for our members through research, information, technology and education, we must remain vigilant in protecting what has been won, while demanding companies and government agencies expand common sense effective safety practices. Decades of gains in worker protections can be lost if they are not protected in the workplace and in the legislative halls of congress.

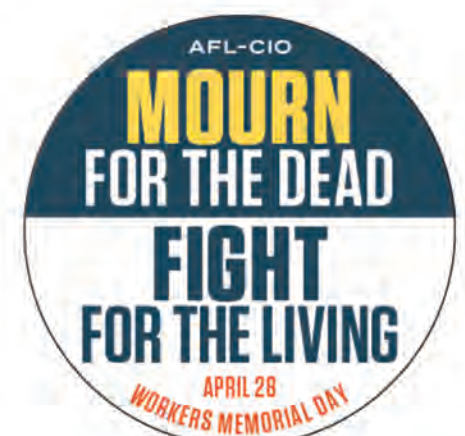
Many safety standards established and expanded during the Obama administration were subsequently repealed or rescinded via the Congressional Review Act, funding reductions or by executive order under the Trump administration. GOP-led congressional reviews and anti-worker Presidential executive orders were issued at an alarming rate. Under the previous administration in Washington, D.C., toxic substance protections, whistleblower protections, accurate record keeping, and environmental health and safety regulations were diminished or eliminated putting workers at risk of premature death, injury or illness from unnecessary exposures. Fortunately, the Biden administration has taken action to restore many of the worker protections that were eliminated and have restored or increased

funding for worker training programs, compliance and enforcement agents, and health and safety regulations. President Biden has appointed and nominated strong pro-worker, pro-union candidates who advocate for worker safety to lead the Department of Labor's worker protection programs such as outgoing Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh and Deputy Secretary of Labor (and current nominee for Secretary of Labor) Julie Su.

As we take the time to honor those who have lost their lives in workplace tragedies or died pre-maturely from workplace exposures, let us all double our efforts to ensure every sister and brother returns home to their loved ones at the end of their workday. Whether you are a member working in higher education, manufacturing, gaming, health services, or one of the many other sectors of our increasingly diverse union, leaving our place of employment and returning home safely from work each day is a right and expectation we all demand. We must remain steadfast in protecting it. Speak up and speak out on unsafe conditions in your workplace. Our lives and the lives of our sisters and brothers in this great union depend on it.

In Solidarity,

UAW International
Executive Board



Fatal Incidents at UAW-Represented Facilities

The UAW Health and Safety Department received notification of 5 work related deaths among UAW members since the last remembrance of Workers Memorial Day.

June 2, 2022
Steven Matthew Dierkes
Age: 39
Local 974, Region 4
Furnace Operator
Caterpillar, Mapleton Foundry
Mapleton, Illinois

Brother Dierkes was a new employee at Caterpillar. During his second day of "on the job training", he was tending a 60-ton gray iron induction furnace. He was assigned the task of taking samples of molten iron while standing on the melt deck. To sample the metal the operator uses a control panel to raise the ventilation system covering the top of the furnace. The ventilation lid pivots to expose the surface of the melt pot which is 8-10 feet in diameter and 12 feet deep. The working surface of the melt deck of Furnace #2 is normally 12 inches above the surface of the molten metal. Steven used a small ceramic cup (aka a spoon) attached to a 10-foot length of aluminum conduit to skim the surface then transfer the metal to a small mold to create a medallion (aka a sample button) that is sent to the metallurgy lab for chemical analysis. In the process of taking the second sample using the spoon to test the thermal properties of the metal, Steven was seen falling to one knee. He then rotated to his left side, rolled onto his left shoulder and back then slide into the molten bath. His body was incinerated.

June 7, 2022
Lance Winemiller
Age: 24
Local 3047, Region 8
Product Technician
Metalsa
Elizabethtown, Kentucky

Brother Winemiller was assigned to a four-person crew to conduct a final quality inspection on truck frames, in the yard sort area outside of the facility. The truck frames are stacked ten high and moved throughout the yard by Powered Industrial Vehicles (PIV); in this case, a Taylor 30-ton PIV (fork truck). The truck frames are then broken down in stacks of five in a sort area, (not clearly defined). After the frames are broken down the crew makes their final inspection and places the stickers the frames. Once the frames are stickered, they are restacked ten high and taken to the load area or directly loaded on a rail car. The yard sort area has lighting, however the stacking of the frames cast shadows in some areas of the yard sort area making visibility difficult to see pedestrians. At approximately 2:50 a.m., Brother Winemiller was picking up debris when he was struck and killed by a Taylor 30-ton PIV.

August 16, 2022
Kyle Williams
Age: 59
Local 1248, Region 1
Fork Truck Driver
SBM Janitorial Services
Warren, Michigan

Brother Williams was a 59-year-old UAW worker who was employed by SBM Janitorial Services assigned to the Stellantis Warren Stamping Plant. On August 5, 2022, Brother Williams sustained serious injuries to his torso region when a Bale of cardboard weighing approximately 2500 pounds, that was stacked on top of another bale of cardboard fell, pinning him against his forklift truck. Brother Williams was transported to the hospital and placed in intensive care with life threatening injuries. On August 16, 2022, eleven days after the incident, Brother Williams succumbed to his injuries.

August 16, 2022
Eric Allen Osborne
Age: 53
Local 523, Region 8
Electrician
CSMA Metals
Calvert City, Kentucky

Brother Osborne went to replace a belt on a mantel fan that blows air into a blast furnace (#6) to cool the mantel. At 8:25 a.m. on Tuesday, August 16, 2022. A camera recorded Brother Osborne climbing the steps to what is known at the facility as the "slip-in" floor. He was neither seen again nor recorded by a camera until 8:39 a.m. when his body was observed to be at the ground level on fire with traumatic injuries, well below the "slip-in" floor. Brother Osborne was working alone. No task-based risk assessment or other pre-task planning was done prior to the task.

August 17, 2022
Travis Baker
Age: 49
Local 1268, Region 4
Paint Technician
Stellantis, Belvidere Assembly
Belvidere, Illinois

Brother Baker was an operator on the polish deck in the paint shop. On August 12, 2022, he sustained a fall, hitting his head on the ground. Brother Baker was transferred from the plant to Swedish American hospital in Belvidere. Due to the severity of his injuries he was transferred to Javon Bea Hospital in Rockford, IL. On August 17, 2022, five days after the incident and being on life-support, Brother Baker succumbed to his injuries.