

RED SHIRT WEDNESDAY

Union members wear red shirts on Wednesdays as a sign of solidarity. When a sea of red shirts greets management, it's a way to let them know that the workers stand together.

This modern tradition goes back to 1989 with the Communications Workers of America (CWA) whose members began wearing red on Thursdays to commemorate the death of Gerry Horgan. Horgan was a CWA chief steward for Westchester County in New York who died of head injuries after being struck by a speeding car on a picket line. That vehicle was driven by a scab, the teenage daughter of a

manager. She was never charged for his death.

Wearing the red shirt to show solidarity took on new meaning during Wisconsin's Gov. Scott Walker and his relentless attacks on labor in 2011. Unionists around the country wanted to show solidarity with Wisconsin and donned red shirts once a week.

Today, it remains an act of showing unity, both to one another and the world. It's not anti-management; it's a positive statement of workers standing together.

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1955-1989

In 1989, members of Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 1400 were on strike against NYNEX in Valhalla, New York.

E. Gerald Horgan, a steward from CWA Local 1103, was walking the picket line with the strikers on August 15 when he was struck by a speeding vehicle driven by a scab.

Horgan died, leaving behind a wife and two very young children. We wear red to remember the tragedy and symbolize the sacrifice Gerry made that day to fight for worker rights.



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Tips for organizing your own Red Shirt Wednesday



Announce the action well in advance and remind co-workers that Wednesday is for red shirts.



Bring a supply of red bandanas for co-workers to wear if they don't have a red shirt.



Start small: concentrate on one department or area. Since the idea is to show a sea of red, 15 people in a department of 30 wearing red is more powerful than 15 people in a spread-out worksite of 200.



Let people know why you are wearing red; it's a great conversation starter.



Post pictures on social media and share the stories. Accompany them with quotes about why members wear red.



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