

STAND UP FOR WORKER SAFETY



WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY
APRIL 28, 2024



STAND UP FOR SAFETY

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

Fifty-three years ago on April 28, 1971, the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) was promulgated into law by Congress, promising every worker the fundamental right to a safe job. The law and many additional standards were won largely because of the labor movement standing up and demanding action from the government to protect working people. Since 1989, April 28th has been recognized by labor organizations and our allies as International Workers' Memorial Day. It is a day of reflection and remembrance where we collectively mourn the loss of workers who reported to work just like any other day, but tragically lost their lives in the workplace.

Our Union has fought hard for decades to make the promise of safe jobs for all a reality. We have stood up to win protections that have made jobs safer and saved lives. But our work is not done. Each year, thousands of workers are killed on the job and millions more suffer injury and illness because of dangerous working conditions that are preventable. Last year, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported 5,486 fatal injuries and more than 2.8 million recordable cases of injury or illness in workplaces across the United States. There are an estimated ten million injuries per year that go unreported or underreported. Additionally, the BLS estimates 50 to 60 thousand post-retirement workers die every year because of long term hazardous environmental exposures contracted during their working years.

Our nation's job safety laws are still too weak. Corporations exploit these weaknesses and create environments where workers are not adequately protected when they speak out against unsafe working conditions. Black, Latino and

immigrant workers disproportionately work in higher risk, less protected jobs and suffer a higher number of serious injuries and deaths. Unions have and will continue to be at the forefront of worker safety and yet workers still cannot freely join a union without retaliation from their employers.

Enforcement and oversight are major parts of the OSHA program, but different administrations have placed different levels of priority on worker safety. Democratic administrations have favored strong enforcement to protect workers while Republican administrations are less supportive of enforcement and emphasize compliance assistance. For the entire four-year term of the Trump administration, OSHA did not have a confirmed head of the agency and a decline in enforcement activity occurred. Since taking office, the Biden administration has prioritized enforcement by responding to several major workplace safety incidents.

By standing up and demanding safe and healthy work sites our Union has led the fight for worker protections. Through collective bargaining and protected contract language, working people have won safety and health protections from the shop floor to the halls of Congress. Unions continue to fight for safe jobs for everyone, regardless of race, gender, or background. We will continue to stand up and demand stronger enforcement from governments and higher standards of safety protections from employers. Educating working people on their rights keeps our most vulnerable from being silenced. Collectively, as our sisters and brother's keepers, we must stand up together to ensure everyone goes home at the end of a work shift, alive and without the chronic illnesses caused by work exposures that

continue to plague many workers.

Together on this Workers' Memorial Day, let us all stand up and speak up to win stronger safety and health protections in our workplaces and stronger job safety and health laws for all workers. We can hold employers accountable to keep workers safe through stronger contractual language and legislative victories. We must demand action on critical safety and health protections against preventable workplace hazards. Issues such as heat illness, workplace violence, infectious diseases, silica, toxic chemical exposures, and many others need to be addressed. We will continue to demand more resources from Congress for our nation's job safety agencies to hold employers accountable and demand the dignity of a safe job at work for everyone.

Every sector of our Union faces workplace hazards from a variety of ever-changing exposures. While serious debilitating injuries can be life changing, fatalities are forever. We must stand up, organize, and fight for the fundamental right of every worker to be provided with a safe job until that promise is fulfilled.

In solidarity,

Shawn Fain
President and Director
UAW Health and Safety Department



Fatal Incidents at UAW-Represented Facilities

The UAW Health and Safety Department received notification of 4 work related deaths among UAW members since the last remembrance of Workers' Memorial Day.

Saad Hirmiz

Age: 62

Date of Incident: 1-24-2024

Local 155, UAW Region 1

Job Description: Press Operator

Hercules Tool and Die

Warren, Michigan

Brother Hirmiz was seriously injured while performing his job duties at Hercules Tool and Die in Warren, Michigan. At approximately 6 pm on January 24, 2024, Saad was in the process of unloading a 38,000-pound die and a 500-pound checking fixture from a 53-foot flatbed trailer. After successfully unloading the 38,000-pound die with the 50-ton Shaw-box overhead gantry crane, Saad and the truck driver that had delivered the load attempted to move the 500-pound checking fixture along with its stand that was equipped with casters to the edge of the trailer. Saad had planned to remove the checking fixture and its stand off the trailer with a forklift once the fixture was positioned at the edge of the trailer. While attempting to get the stand and fixture to the edge of the trailer, the top-heavy fixture tipped over pulling Saad over the edge of the trailer with it. Saad landed on the floor and the fixture and stand landed on top of him in the mid-section of his body. This resulted in internal injuries to the intestines and a fractured pelvis along with a head laceration because of the load landing on Saad. Saad was transported to the hospital where they put him in a medically induced coma and on a ventilator. Saad succumbed to his injuries and passed away on February 22, 2024.

Anthony S. "Tony" LeCleur

Age: 55

Date of Incident: 10-20-2023

Local 79, UAW Region 4

Job Description: Production Support

John Deere, Milan PDC

Milan, Illinois

Brother LeCleur was in the process of replacing returned parts to the PDC facility and was performing this work in Aisle D-426. He was operating a Taylor Dunn Tugger (Stock Chaser) with a cart attached. He had exited the Taylor Dunn and had scanned the part that was to be replaced. As he was turning to scan the rack area of where the part is located, the cart he was pulling behind the Taylor Dunn was struck by a Hyster fork truck that had swerved to miss an obstacle (box) that was in the aisle. The collision caused the Taylor Dunn and the cart to jack-knife in the aisle way striking him. Brother LeCleur was taken by ambulance to Rock Island Unity Point Campus Emergency Room. He was sedated due to his injuries. His injuries included a broken pelvis and crushed vertebrae. He had a skin infection which required a skin graft on his back where the crushed vertebrae were located. Brother LeCleur underwent 6 surgeries and received approximately 50 units of blood. Anthony S. LeCleur "Tony" succumbed to his injuries on November 7, 2023.

Pablo Herrera, Jr.

Age: 24

Date of Incident: 4-24-2023

Local 724, UAW Region 1D

Job Description: Production Worker

Alliance Interiors

Lansing, Michigan

Brother Herrera was working in a cell where a large sheet of TPO material is heated in an oven. Once the material is brought to temp, the conveyor extends to lay the material on top of a vacuum mold die. At the time of the incident, Pablo Herrera, Jr. was torching the sheet of TPO that was currently on the vacuum mold as part of the normal process to be able to trim excess material away. The conveyor began to extend with a new sheet while Pablo stood between the conveyor and the die. The sensor within the cell did not recognize his presence and, therefore, didn't disable any part of the cell from operating. He was crushed when the conveyor cycled forward. This pinned Brother Herrera Jr. between the conveyor and the die. The conveyor system faulted out due to an overload. Maintenance personnel were called to manually reverse the conveyor to allow EMS personnel to access him. Pablo Herrera, Jr. was transported to Sparrow Main Hospital in Lansing, Michigan where he succumbed to his injuries approximately 2 hours after the incident.

Anthony Kohut

Age: 74

Date of Incident: 2-25-2023

Local 2000, UAW Region 2B

Job Description: Electrician

Ford Ohio Assembly Plant

Avon Lake, Ohio

Brother Kohut was seriously injured when he sustained a fall of approximately two feet when transitioning from a platform to a lower level within the roof load robot cell in the body shop of the facility. Brother Kohut sustained a fracture to his pelvis and was transported to the hospital for treatment. After being released from the hospital he was home recovering from the injuries sustained during the fall. On May 14, 2023, almost three months after the incident, he began to have discomfort in the area of the pelvis injury and went to a local urgent care for treatment the following day. He was immediately transported to a local hospital where he underwent emergency surgery. Following this procedure Anthony Kohut experienced complication from the surgery and passed away later that evening on May 15, 2023.