

**General Field Talking Points
for
Workers' Memorial Day 2022**

- Each year on April 28, Workers Memorial Day, working people worldwide mourn for the people who were injured or killed on the job. The best way to ensure that workplaces are safe is to make sure workers have the freedom to organize and join a union.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of workers have become ill from COVID-19, and thousands have died. There were 390,000 COVID-19 cases involving days away from work (roughly averaging 13 days apiece).
- In addition to facing those risks, workers experienced extreme stress from limited workplace safety and health protections; weak, unenforceable government safety guidelines; a lack of enforcement of current OSHA regulations; and weak anti-retaliation protections.
- During the pandemic, the Teamsters Union and other unions have fought for safety protections for workers and demanded access to ventilation, personal protective equipment, and other measures that protect workers from inhaling aerosol transmissible disease-causing agents at work.
- On this Workers Memorial Day, we have organized actions and observances – such as broadcasting, in-person and/or virtually, in town squares and union halls, in front of manufacturing plants and memorials, in community after community – to fight for safe workplaces and good jobs that pay decent wages and provide health care and pensions.
- Union members have always pushed for safe jobs and for good jobs. More than 50 years ago, we fought for and won federal laws to create federal agencies and laws dedicated to protecting the lives of all workers, including public sector workers and miners.
- We still have much work to do to make workplaces much safer and ensure that significant standards are issued and enforced to protect workers. Millions of workers in state and local government are excluded from having workplace safety protections because federal OSHA rules do not cover public sector workers, and 24 states plus the District of Columbia have not elected to create their own OSHA plans to cover public employees.
- The latest 2020 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data describing fatal, non-fatal injuries and illnesses are now available.
 - Each year, there are over 3 million non-fatal injuries and illnesses in the private and public sectors – including injuries experienced by truck drivers, sanitation workers, and warehouse workers who suffer high rates of repetitive motion injuries and musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

- There were 390,000 COVID-19 cases involving days away from work (for a rough average of 13 days each). These cases exceeded musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) to account for the largest portion of work-related injuries and illnesses in 2020.
 - In 2020, state and local public sector employers reported an injury rate of 3.9 per one hundred workers, significantly higher than the reported rate of 2.7 per one hundred among private-sector workers.
 - Close to 5,000 workers were killed on the job.
 - An estimated 50,000-60,000 workers died from work-related illnesses.
 - Hispanic or Latino workers continued to suffer a growing rate of work-related deaths in 2020.
 - A worker died every 111 minutes from a work-related injury in 2020.
 - Transportation incidents remained the most frequent type of fatal event, accounting for **37 percent** of all work-related fatalities.
 - Workers in transportation and material moving occupations and construction and extraction occupations accounted for almost half (47.4%) of all fatal occupational injuries.
 - Workplace violence deaths increased and are now the third-leading cause of job death.
- We have organized workers to fight for safe workplaces, to collectively bargain for contract language that protects us where federal laws cannot. We have also formed and worked on safety and health committees to improve our workplace safety and health culture. We fought for and won a 40-hour workweek. We fought for and won healthcare benefits and strong pensions.
 - But today, we see an overall decline in the quality of jobs unlike any we have seen in decades. Lower-paying jobs and gig economy workers with lousy benefits are just the beginning. The increased push for production, growing use of subcontracting and outsourcing, rampant worker misclassification, mandatory overtime, and work process changes take a significant toll on workers.
 - The best way to make workplaces safe is to ensure workers have the freedom to organize and join a union and fight for good AND safe jobs. If unions don't fight for safe workplaces, and to keep good jobs in the United States, then who will?
 - Workers Memorial Day 2022 is a day when we call for an end to such injustices and rededicate ourselves to the fight to make workplaces safer and make our communities stronger.
 - Mary Harris Jones, known as “Mother Jones,” the great labor leader of the turn-of-the-century coal mines, called us to “Mourn for the Dead, and Fight for the Living!”
 - We mourn, we remember, and we ***Organize! Safe Jobs Now!***