



**General Field Talking Points
for
Workers' Memorial Day 2023**

- On April 28, 1971, the Occupational Safety and Health Act went into effect, promising every worker the fundamental right to a safe job.
- That law was won in 1970 because of the tireless efforts of the labor movement and allies, which drew major attention to work-related deaths, disease, and injuries, organized for safer working conditions, and demanded action from their government.
- For more than 50 years, unions and our allies have fought hard to make that promise a reality—winning protections in workplaces and federal and state regulations that have made jobs safer and saved lives. But there is much more work to be done moving forward.
- Each year, hundreds of thousands of workers are killed, and millions suffer injury or illness because of their jobs. Far too many workers die from preventable hazards and become ill from exposure to toxic chemicals—and these chronic exposures are becoming more common.
- The impact of workplace hazards is extensive: Workers and their families pay with their lives and livelihoods. Workplace injuries and illnesses shift costs from employers to workers and can limit working people's opportunities and quality of life for decades.
- But workplace injuries, illnesses, and deaths are preventable.
- Unions are fighting for safe jobs for everyone—regardless of race, gender, employment relationship, or background. We fight for strong standards and employer practices to save lives. We educate working people on their rights to keep our most vulnerable from being silenced.
- Because of this, workers are coming together across all industries demanding safe working conditions.
- [Talk about how workers in your area/workplace are working together to demand safer working conditions.] Some examples include:
 - Freight drivers, last-mile delivery workers, and couriers are organizing as they see misclassification and subcontracting practices lower workplace safety standards.

- Rail workers are demanding modernized and comprehensive safety regulations after years of warnings about cost-cutting measures putting workers and communities at risk.
- Hotel workers are organizing after their co-worker was severely injured when required to operate equipment without the necessary staff.
- Healthcare workers are organizing with their lives on the line, being exposed to infectious diseases without protection.
- Manufacturing and warehouse workers are organizing as they see subcontracting practices lower workplace safety standards.
- Workers in digital technology are organizing because they are burned out and face unbearable production pressures.
- Workers have had enough of watching their co-workers injured in the name of corporate greed—we are demanding dignity at work!
- Corporations exploit the weakness in our job safety laws and lack of oversight resources, putting workers in danger. Employers cut corners and blame workers but refuse to address the root causes of unsafe workplaces for the sake of profit.
- We need employers to be held accountable through stronger criminal and civil penalties for companies that seriously violate job safety laws.
- Workers must be able to choose their own representation during an OSHA inspection to provide health and safety expertise on their behalf.
- We are fighting for an increase in safety agency budgets and resources to expand their enforcement and standard-setting efforts to protect the safety and health of all workers.
- We are calling for stronger anti-retaliation protections to be put in place for all workers.
- We must win new protections from workplace violence, heat illness, silica exposure in mining, COVID-19 in healthcare settings, toxic chemicals, and other hazards.
- This Workers Memorial Day, we will mourn for the dead and fight for the living. We will remember those who have suffered and died on the job and those who are struggling with chronic illnesses from workplace exposures. We will organize and fight for safe jobs now!