

The Year in U.S. Occupational Health & Safety

Fall 2017 – Summer 2018

7th Edition

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Labor Day, 2018

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The authors thank **Liz Borkowski, MPH**, for her editorial assistance.

The full-page photos in the yearbook were taken on Dec. 5-7, 2017 at the National Conference on Worker Safety and Health in Baltimore, MD (COSHCON17). Appearing is: Chee Chang, International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT); Ella Ellerbe, UFCW Local 1208 in Tar Heel, NC; Kayla Kelechian, Worker Center of Central New York; Manuel Pérez, Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center; Jim Moran, PhilaPOSH; and Steve Kreins, BLET 236/IBT in Portland, OR.

This report was produced with funding from the Public Welfare Foundation, but the views expressed in it are those of the authors alone.

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Introduction and Overview

While barely a thing is getting done in Congress, the Trump cabinet is busy advancing its anti-regulatory agenda. As many expected, the last year saw a continued rollback of worker health and safety protections, even as annual worker fatalities reach their highest rates since 2010.

Just before publication of this yearbook, the administration made headlines with two of the year's more egregious worker safety rollbacks. In late July, OSHA proposed eliminating Obama-era injury reporting rules that require large employers to electronically submit illness and injury data — data they are already collecting.

That last detail made it hard to argue that the rule — which would give researchers critical insights into how to prevent workplace injury and death — was a burden on employers. So instead, the Trump administration is arguing that the rollback is intended to protect the privacy of injured workers. Advocates, including former OSHA officials, quickly called the administration out, describing the move as a clear attempt to shield irresponsible employers from embarrassing scrutiny.

Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a framework to allow for new uses of asbestos. Even for the Trump administration — hardly an ally of worker health and safety — it was hard to believe. EPA's own staffers objected to and expressed shock over the proposal, according to internal emails obtained by *The New York Times*.

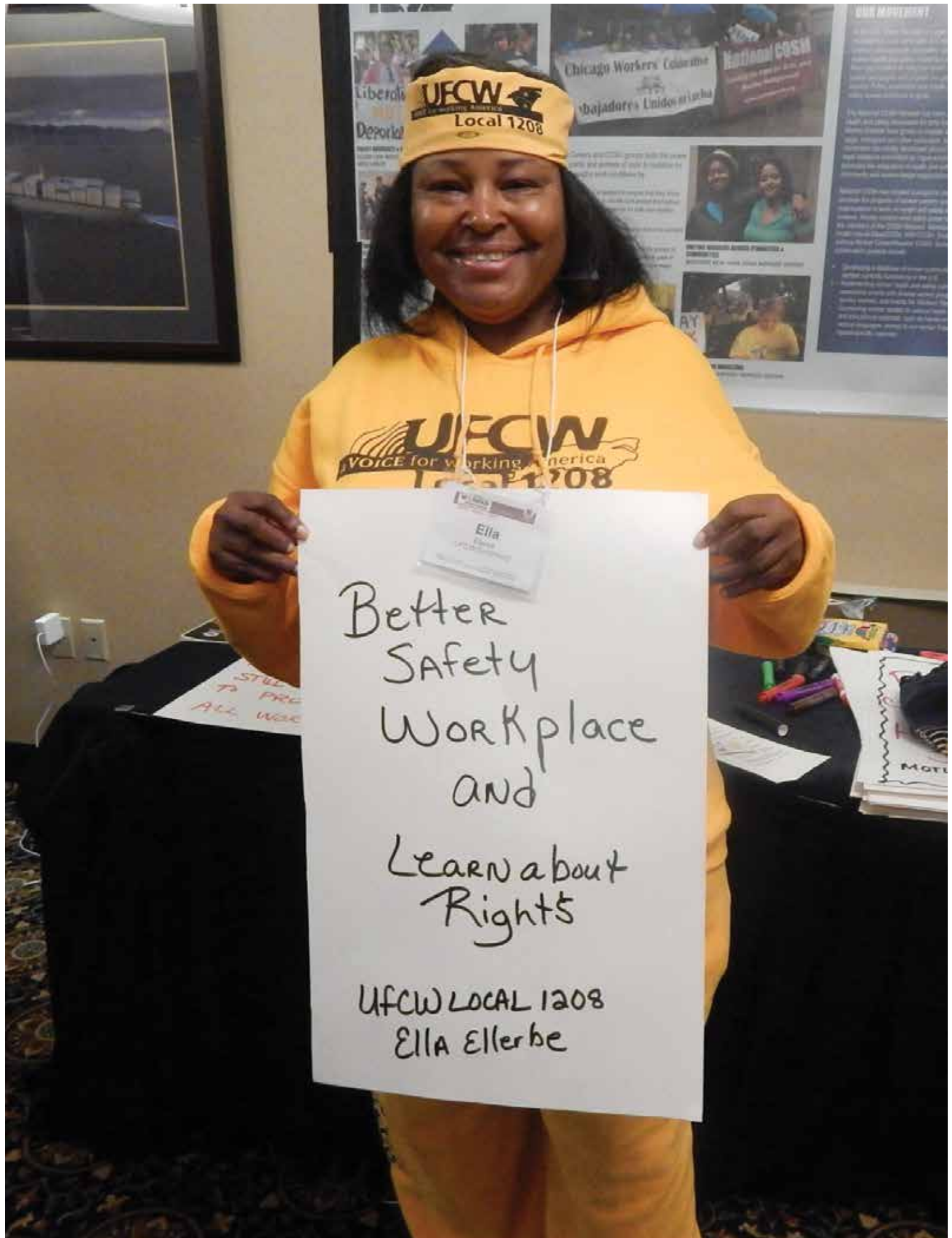
The two proposals are just a small sample of the administration's attempts to scale back worker protections. It's dismaying and frustrating to watch, but it's also familiar territory for advocates who are used to the steep climb toward justice on the job. So it's with that in mind that we present the seventh annual "The Year in U.S. Occupational Health and Safety," our attempt to document and preserve the year's successes, challenges, and losses. This report is not totally exhaustive and we had to make tough choices on what to include, but our goal was to create a "yearbook" that

advocates, researchers, workers, and officials can use as a source of education, connection, and motivation.

Released on Labor Day, the report, which spans August 2017 through July 2018, documents some of the most notable events, legislation, news stories, and research of the last year. In the following pages, you'll read about:

- Action on the federal level, including a judicial victory to secure OSHA's silica standard and a proposal to rollback chemical plant safety rules.
- Action on the state and local levels, including new workers' compensation protections for firefighters in Florida and New Hampshire, as well as a new regulation in California for hotel housekeepers.
- Outstanding news reporting on worker health and safety, including investigations into the dangerous world of garbage collection, injuries at Tesla, and the conditions facing night shift workers at meatpacking plants.
- New worker safety research and reports, including data on injuries among janitorial workers and temp workers, post-traumatic stress disorder among prison workers, and the impact of rest break rules on construction workers.

The following pages also include highlights from this year's Worker Memorial Week and coverage of grassroots actions from COSH groups, both of which serve as reminders that despite what's happening in Washington, D.C., workers won't be deterred from fighting for justice in their communities. To download a copy of this year's report as well as its previous editions, visit <https://bit.ly/2MZVRWq>.



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The Federal Government and Occupational Health and Safety

The Trump administration made its mark over the last 12 months with a proposal to reorganize the government, including plans to merge the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), and Wage and Hour division into a single enforcement agency; consolidate the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) under the National Institutes of Health; and eliminate the Chemical Safety Board. Congress — which would have to approve any such reorganization — mostly shrugged at the plan, but it did underscore the President's disdain for government agencies and their role in protecting workers and communities from unchecked business interests.

Within agencies that have responsibility for worker health, appointees continue to push for less regulation while advocates and researchers raise concerns about injuries and illnesses that occur with alarming frequency under current safeguards. The U.S. Senate has yet to confirm an assistant secretary to head OSHA, but that has not stopped the Labor Department from proposing a rollback of an injury reporting rule. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics released in December indicated the annual rate of fatal injuries reached a six-year high. A move by MSHA to weaken requirements for pre-shift safety checks is the subject of a lawsuit brought by the United Mine Workers and the United Steelworkers. Alarming studies by NIOSH researchers reveal an epidemic of black lung disease in central Appalachia. Public health and worker advocates were hopeful that amendments to the Toxic Substances Control Act would fill gaps in worker protections. Despite his resignation, former EPA administrator Scott Pruitt left a wake of policy decisions on chemical safety and pesticides that could have damaging consequences for workers.

In the following section, we describe these topics and other noteworthy federal activities on occupational health and safety in the past year.

Leadership at OSHA and MSHA

In October 2017, President Trump nominated Scott Mugno to serve as the assistant secretary of labor for OSHA. Mugno is vice president of safety, sustainability, and vehicle maintenance at FedEx Ground and has worked for the firm

since 1994. Mugno's confirmation hearing was held in early December 2017. Mugno told Senators that safety is a "team sport" and if confirmed he intends to consult with career staff to make decisions. As of August 15, 2018, Mugno had not been confirmed by the Senate. The highest ranking political appointee at OSHA is deputy assistant secretary Loren Sweatt. She was appointed to the post in July 2017 and previously worked for Republican leadership on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce's Subcommittee on Workforce Protections.



David Zatezalo testifies at his confirmation hearing in October 2017 before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

David Zatezalo was confirmed by the Senate in November 2017 to serve as the assistant secretary of labor for MSHA. Zatezalo began his career in 1974 as a coal miner, managed 39 different coal mines in the U.S. and Australia, and had been chair of both the Kentucky and the Ohio Coal Associations. During his Senate confirmation hearing, Zatezalo said he wants



Deputy asst. secretary for OSHA Loren Sweatt (center) signs an alliance agreement in February 2018 with the Board of Certified Safety Professionals. She is joined by the organization's Treasa Turnbeaugh and Linda Martin.

to ensure that MSHA has adequate funding to conduct all of its mandatory inspections.

Government Reorganization

President Trump announced in June 2018 his plan to reorganize the executive branch by eliminating, consolidating, and transferring dozens of federal agencies and programs. The head of the White House's Office of Management and Budget, Mick Mulvaney, said the reorganization is necessary because the federal government "is bloated, opaque, bureaucratic, and inefficient."

The plan calls for merging all education and labor programs into a new Department of Education and the Workforce. The Department would have a single enforcement agency that would be responsible for duties currently performed by the Labor Department's MSHA, OSHA, and Wage and Hour Division, as well as the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights. NIOSH would be transferred from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to the National Institutes of Health, and there would be an assessment conducted of the feasibility of integrating NIOSH research into existing agencies. The Bureau of Labor Statistics would be transferred from the Labor Department to the Commerce Department and consolidated with the Census Bureau and other agencies that collect economic data. Many other changes are proposed in the plan, including privatizing the air traffic control system, reducing the Public

Health Service's Commissioned Corps, and consolidating EPA's regional offices and oversight of state environmental programs.

Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, criticized the plan, saying it is "unrealistic, unhelpful, and futile." She added it was the administration's "latest attempt to make government work worse for the people it serves."

Regulatory Rollbacks

The Communication Workers of America, Public Citizen, and the Natural Resources Defense Council continued to pursue a lawsuit challenging President Trump's executive order that directs agencies to identify at least two existing regulations to repeal for every new regulation proposed or issued. In February 2018, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled that the groups did not have standing to file a lawsuit. They amended their complaint in April 2018, and as of August 15, 2018 are awaiting the court's decision.

Obstacles for Public Sector Unions

In May 2018, the Trump administration issued an executive order targeting the collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) between federal agencies and their employees. It directs agencies to renegotiate CBAs in order to limit resources available to union representatives such as official time and office space, restrict the conditions that can be bargained, and curtail telework options. The American Federation of Government Employees and other unions filed a lawsuit to block the changes.

Public sector unions were the subject of a June 2018 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Janus v. AFSCME, Council 31*. In a 5-4 decision, the Court held that public sector employees who do not join the union cannot be charged for the cost of collective bargaining. Twenty-two states had laws allowing unions to collect "agency fees" from employees who were not dues pay-



Texas Federation of Teachers

Public school teachers hold a press conference in June 2018 with Texas AFL-CIO president Rick Levy and pledge to fight back against the Supreme Court's *Janus* ruling.

ing members, but benefitted from the union contract.

OSHA

Silica rule stands

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled in December 2017 to uphold OSHA's silica standard. The court rejected all of the legal challenges made by the National Association of Home Builders, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, American Foundry Society, and other industry groups. The lawsuits were filed in spring 2016 shortly after OSHA adopted the silica rule. The North American Building Trade Unions, the United Steelworkers, and other unions intervened in the case to support the regulation. In October 2017, the court heard oral arguments by the parties, and it was apparent the judges were not convinced by the industry groups' claims. The judges were convinced, however, by arguments made by the unions. The court ordered OSHA to reconsider or further explain its decision not to provide medical removal protections for construction workers.

Beryllium

Materion Brush, the National Association of Manufacturers, and other groups filed legal challenges to OSHA's health standard on beryllium that was issued in January 2017. The United Steelworkers (USW) intervened in the cases. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit agreed to hold the lawsuits in abeyance while OSHA, the industry groups, and USW negotiated a settlement.



United Steelworkers

Ashlee Fitch with the USW's Health, Safety and Environment Department, production operator Joseph Bolton and USW Int'l Vice President Carol Landry. The union is fighting regulatory rollbacks by the Trump administration, including OSHA's beryllium standard.

In May 2018, OSHA issued a direct final rule to implement changes to the rule agreed upon by the USW and the industry. OSHA also issued a proposed rule in May 2018 to change certain provisions of the rule, including the definitions of beryllium work areas and dermal contact. Comments on the proposal were due in June 2018.



Curtis Monroe and Keith Kerr of USW Local 959 in Fayetteville, NC share their reason for attending COSHCON17.

Rollback of injury and illness reporting

In July 2018, OSHA proposed changes to an Obama-era rule that requires certain employers to submit injury and illness (I&I) records to the agency. The proposal would eliminate the requirement that workplaces with 250 or more employees electronically submit their OSHA 300 and 301 forms. OSHA provided a 60-day comment period on the proposed changes.

A lawsuit filed in 2016 by the National Association of Home Builders, the National Chicken Council, and other business groups to challenge the Obama-era I&I rule is on hold. The court put a stay on the case to give OSHA time to propose changes to the rule. The AFL-CIO, the United Steelworkers, the American Public Health Association, and other groups are parties in the litigation to support the I&I reporting rule.

Lawsuit for OSHA data on injuries

Public Citizen filed a lawsuit in January 2018 to compel OSHA to make public the records received from employers pursuant to the agency's May 2016 rule on injury and illness (I&I) reporting. When OSHA issued the rule, it said it intended to post certain establishment-specific I&I data on its website. The Trump administration's failure to do so led Public Citizen to request the data under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In November 2017, OSHA denied the FOIA request and Public Citizen asked the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit to intervene. OSHA told the court in June 2018 that it is premature to release the data because it would impede its enforcement program.

Petition for heat stress protections

Farmworker Justice, the United Farm Workers, and Public Citizen, along with 130 other organizations, petitioned OSHA to initiate rule-making for a standard to protect outdoor and indoor workers from occupational exposure to heat. An additional 90 public health physicians, scientists, and other advocates signed the petition. The petitioners noted that only California, Minnesota, and Washington have standards for heat exposure, but that this leaves more than 260,000 workers in other states at risk of heat-related illness and death with no standard to protect them. The document petitioners submitted to OSHA described the necessary components of a standard, including heat acclimatization plans, mandatory rest breaks, and medical monitoring. Two former assistant secretaries for OSHA, Eula Bingham and David Michaels, participated in a press event to support the petition.

Record number of fatal injuries

The annual rate of fatal injuries reached a six-year high in 2016, according to data reported in December 2017 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The fatal injury rate topped 3.6 deaths per 100,000 workers, the highest rate since 2010. BLS recorded 5,190 fatalities in 2016,

and it was the first time since 2008 that the number of deaths exceeded 5,000.

Crane operator certification

OSHA's 2010 final rule on crane safety included provisions for employers to ensure the operators of cranes and derricks were qualified. The certification requirements, however, were subject to much stakeholder feedback that led OSHA to delay their effective date until November 2017. In May 2018, OSHA proposed a rule to address the qualification requirements. The public comment period ended in July 2018.

Railroad construction equipment

In July 2018, OSHA issued a proposal to clarify safety requirements for cranes and derricks when they are used on or along railroad tracks. The proposal stemmed from a lawsuit by the Association of American Railroads (AAR) that challenged the agency's 2010 final rule on cranes and derricks. In a 2014 negotiated settlement of the lawsuit, OSHA agreed to propose a rule to address the AAR's concerns. The comment period will end in September 2018.

Advisory committees

During the Trump administration to date, only one of the four worker safety and health (S&H) federal advisory committees held a meeting. The Advisory Committee on Construction S&H

(ACCSH) last met in June 2017. Its charter indicates that it should meet two to four times per year. The last meeting of the Maritime Advisory Committee on S&H was in August 2016; the National Advisory Committee on S&H (NACOSH) was in November 2016; and the Federal Agency Advisory Committee on S&H was in July 2015. The charters for NACOSH and ACCSH expire in October and November 2018, respectively. The charters for the other two committees expired in 2017. The multi-stakeholder committees are established to provide recommendations to the Secretary of Labor.

Audit reports

The Labor Department's Inspector General (IG) issued a report in September 2017 concerning OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). The IG investigated a complaint that OSHA did not take appropriate follow-up action when contract workers were fatally injured at VPP sites. The IG did not find merit with the complaint, but made recommendations to OSHA for improving the collection and dissemination of information to OSHA VPP staff about contract worker fatalities and severe injuries.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report in December 2017 concerning efforts by OSHA, NIOSH, and USDA to ensure worker safety and health in meat and poultry plants. GAO interviewed workers in eight states who reported being punished or losing their



A delegation of poultry workers, labor organizations, food safety, and animal welfare groups pose after a meeting in October 2017 with USDA officials.



Former asst. secretary for OSHA David Michaels testifies in February 2018 before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. He warned lawmakers about the impact of the Trump administration's roll back of OHS standards and failure to fill critical positions at the agency.

jobs if they report safety or health problems; being denied access to the bathroom; and experiencing problems receiving proper medical care for work-related injuries. GAO made seven recommendations, including one addressing worker exposure to the antimicrobial chemicals used in poultry processing.

The IG initiated an audit in May 2018 on OSHA's process for issuing regulations. The IG may have been compelled to commence the investigation in response to complaints by Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and other Senate Democrats. They sent a letter to the IG in May 2017 asking his office to investigate OSHA's decision to delay enforcement of its recently adopted beryllium rule and provisions of its silica rule applicable to the construction industry.

The IG announced in August 2018 it was initiating an audit of OSHA's whistleblower protection program (WPP) in Region IX. The audit stems from allegations by a former OSHA WPP investigator that retaliation claims filed by Wells Fargo employees were mishandled by the agency.

Significant enforcement cases

A waste disposal and trucking firm was cited by OSHA for exposing workers to confined space hazards – having them enter enclosed areas where gases can reach fatal concentrations.

U.S. Environmental in Downingtown, PA received citations in November 2017 for three willful and four serious violations and a proposed penalty of \$334,000.

A vinyl tile manufacturer in Fostoria, OH received OSHA citations for four willful and four serious violations related to hazards that caused crushing and amputation injuries to two workers. In December 2017, OSHA proposed a \$514,000 penalty to **Nox US LLC** and added the company to the agency's Severe Violator Enforcement Program.

Wilbert Inc., a plastics manufacturing plant, received citations in April 2018 for three repeat and four serious violations at its plant in Bellevue, OH. The violations related to machine guarding and lockout/tagout procedures. OSHA proposed a penalty of \$261,000.

In June 2018, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit ordered **Lessard Roofing & Siding** and **Lessard Brothers Construction** to implement a comprehensive OHS program and conduct employee safety training. The employer had been charged in 2011 with contempt of court for failing to correct violations and pay \$389,000 in accumulated penalties and interest. Between 2000 and 2011, OSHA inspectors in Maine found safety violations at 11 different worksites operated by Lessard.

OSHA proposed a \$507,000 penalty in July 2018 to **Gavilon Grain** for willful and repeat violations related to the deaths of Joshua Rasbold, 28, and Marcus Tice, 32. The men suffocated in January 2018 inside a grain elevator in Wichita, KS. Gavilon Grain has a long history of OSHA violations, including a 2011 willful violation that stemmed from the death of Andrew Dill, 20, at its grain elevator in Morral, OH. The company was already on OSHA's Severe Violator list.

MSHA

Pre-shift safety exams

MSHA issued a final rule in April 2018 to amend requirements for pre-shift examinations in metal and aggregate mines. The changes came in response to industry complaints about a mine examination regulation adopted at the end of the Obama administration. Operators of hard rock mines were going to be obligated to conduct safety examinations before a shift began. The Trump administration changes allow operators to make the safety checks when miners begin work in an area. They say the amendments give employers more flexibility and are less burdensome. The United Mine Workers and the United Steelworkers say the changes diminish safety. In May 2018, the unions filed a lawsuit in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit challenging the changes.



(L-R) Janae Fischer-Sparks and Janet Sparks know the devastating consequence when safety hazards are not addressed. Their father and son, Kevin Sparks, 34, was a SEPTA rail inspector who was fatally struck by a commuter train that was not supposed to be traveling at that time. They are shown here at PhilaPOSH's 2018 Worker Memorial Day event.

Mobile equipment hazards

In the last decade, more than 60 mine workers suffered fatal injuries when trucks plummeted over elevated haulage roads and when large vehicles struck smaller vehicles. Additional fatalities occurred around conveyor belt drives and rollers that were inadequately guarded. In June 2018, MSHA published a request for information on engineering controls and other best practices to address these hazards. The comment period will end in December 2018.

Revisiting coal dust rule

In July 2018, MSHA published a request for information to obtain feedback on whether the regulations adopted in 2014 are achieving the goal of protecting miners from black lung disease. The agency indicated its objective is to develop a "framework to assess the health effects of the dust rule and its impact on health protections provided to coal miners." The comment period will expire in July 2019. MSHA chief David Zatezalo said the agency "has no intention of rolling back the protections afforded to coal miners for respirable dust."

Experts examine coal dust monitoring

A panel convened by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine issued a report in June 2018 on the sampling methods used to assess respirable coal mine dust in underground mines. Members of Congress requested the study in response to complaints by the coal industry about a 2014 MSHA regulation that required the use of continuous personal dust monitors. The expert panel concluded that the devices were accurate to determine compliance with MSHA's coal dust exposure limit. It also offered recommendations for research to better understand the relationship between particular dust particle characteristics and incidence of respiratory illnesses.

Poultry and meatpacking workers challenge USDA policies

Federal food safety regulations dictate the way poultry, pork, and beef is slaughtered, processed, and inspected. Workers in the plants want the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to know how the agency's decisions contribute to occupational injuries and illnesses.

Thousands of poultry workers mobilized to defeat a petition from the National Chicken Council (NCC) that was being considered by the USDA. The industry asked USDA in September 2017 to establish a waiver system that would allow poultry plants to operate without any caps on production line speeds. It was an effort by the NCC to sidestep the Obama administration's decision that maintained a line speed maximum of 140 birds per minute. Member of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the Western North Carolina Worker Center, the Northwest Arkansas Worker Center, and Centro de Derechos Laborales joined with food safety and animal welfare groups to submit more than 25,500 post-cards and comments to USDA in opposition to the NCC's petition.



(L-R) Morrison "J.R." Harris and Mona Darby with the RWDSU Mid-South Council carry a box of petitions to oppose a poultry industry petition to increase line speeds. The red handprints on the box symbolize worker injuries. Harris and Darby were part of a December 2017 delegation that met with government officials. Sadly, J.R. Harris passed away in April 2018 at age 64.

Their campaign continued with visits to Washington, D.C. in October and December 2017. Poultry workers along with representatives from Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ), the National Employment Law Project (NELP), Oxfam America, Food & Water Watch, and others protested in front of USDA headquarters and met with agency officials to argue against the NCC's petition.



Poultry workers and Bacilio Castro, Hunter Ogletree, and Juan Monroy of the Western North Carolina Workers' Center meet in October 2017 with Senator Richard Burr's staff.



(L-R) Martha Ojeda with Interfaith Worker Justice rallies other diaper-wearing advocates in front of the White House in December 2017. They protest the policies of poultry companies that restrict workers' access to bathrooms.

When USDA announced in late January 2018 that it was denying the industry's petition, UFCW president Marc Perrone called it "a victory for hard-working poultry workers who hold one of the most dangerous and difficult jobs in America."

UFCW members who work in pork processing plants also face a threat of more injuries because of a proposed USDA policy. In February 2018, the agency asked for public comment on a plan to "modernize" swine inspections. USDA proposed a system in which inspection responsibilities would shift from federal inspectors to plant employees, and suggested an increase in maximum line speeds. The UFCW, COSH groups, Nebraska Appleseed, the American Public Health Association, NELP, and many other labor, health, food safety, and animal welfare advocates submitted comments to the USDA and asked for the proposal to be withdrawn. At the end of the comment period in May 2018, more than 83,500 comments were submitted, with the vast majority opposing the proposal.

In May 2018, poultry workers from North Carolina and Texas continued to pressure government officials about workplace safety. With colleagues from IWJ, NELP, and Oxfam America, workers met with the top political appointee at OSHA, Loren Sweatt, and agency staff. The workers asked Sweatt about the status of recommendations made to OSHA in December 2017 by the Government Accountability Office. These included the need for inspectors to interview workers privately, and if possible, away from the plant. The delegation also met with USDA officials to raise worker safety concerns. In addition to line speed hazards, the poultry workers described the health effects of peracetic acid, a chemical disinfectant being used heavily in poultry plants.

This year journalists have offered compelling stories about the experiences of meatpacking and poultry workers and conditions in the plants. Three of examples of this reporting appear on pages 39 and 40.

Criminal charges for falsifying dust samples

The U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky announced in July 2018 the indictment of eight former managers of Armstrong Coal for falsifying respirable dust samples at the Parkway and the Kronos coal mines. Each individual could face up to five years in prison

and a \$250,000 fine. The criminal case stemmed from the brave diligence of miner, Mike “Flip” Wilson. Wilson was featured in a 2015 story by Dave Jamieson at the Huffington Post, contributed evidence to the U.S. attorney’s case, and attended the Justice Department’s announcement of the indictment.

Black lung trust fund in debt

In June 2018, the Government Accountability Office issued a report on the financial stability of a federal trust fund set up to compensate coal miners who are disabled by black lung disease. The trust fund is \$4.3 billion in debt. With an epidemic of black lung disease in central Appalachia, more miners will need to rely on the program for support. However, an excise tax of \$1.10 per ton of coal is scheduled to be cut in half at the end of 2018 unless Congress takes action. GAO made projections about the future solvency of the trust fund and described options for shoring up its finances.



Dave Jamieson/HuffPost

Mike “Flip” Wilson is one of the whistleblowers who spoke out about fraudulent coal dust sampling at Armstrong Coal.

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NIOSH

In Oak Creek, CO, coal miners Benny Herrera, Jeffrey Rios, Randy Vauthier, and Caleb Jones prepare for x-rays and breathing test in NIOSH’s mobile health unit.

NIOSH

Budget

In February 2018, President Trump released his fiscal year 2019 budget. It called for cutting NIOSH's budget by \$135 million, eliminating the 18 NIOSH Education and Research Centers, and consolidating NIOSH's functions within the National Institutes of Health. The White House asserted that activities conducted by NIOSH "could be more effectively conducted by the private sector." In response, Peter Dooley with LaborSafe said, "History shows us that businesses with their huge conflicts of interest can't be relied upon for independent OHS research. It's the fox guarding the chicken house and exactly why Congress created NIOSH."

The President's budget also proposed that the World Trade Center Health Program be overseen by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rather than by NIOSH. The program was established in 2011 and has been managed by NIOSH since its inception. It has served more than 83,000 individuals who suffer from 9/11-related health conditions.

"It's pretty simple: Work shouldn't make people sick. The revised TSCA law is an tremendous opportunity to protect workers from harmful chemical exposures. While the Trump administration is subverting the intent of the law to favor the chemical industry, labor unions and allies are working together to hold EPA accountable to protect people in their workplaces."

— Rebecca Reindel, Senior Safety & Health Specialist, AFL-CIO

Over the last 12 months, the AFL-CIO's Safety and Health Department has been engaged extensively in EPA rulemakings that will have critical implications for worker health and safety.

Leadership

Without any fanfare, John Howard, MD, MPH marked his 15th year serving as NIOSH director. Hundreds of researchers have investigated occupational health and safety topics and enhanced our understanding of the impact of work on health because of NIOSH funding and John Howard's leadership.



NIOSH staff tweeted out this photo of John Howard and encouraged everyone to get a flu shot. The 2017-2018 influenza season was a particularly harsh one.

Research agendas

In March 2018, NIOSH requested comment on its National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) for Respiratory Health. The agenda was developed by a 22-person multi-stakeholder council to identify the most critical work-related respiratory health issues. More than 30 research objectives are described in the document, including identification of workplace exposures associated with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis; use of CT screening for lung cancer in workers with history of exposure to carcinogens; and approaches to assess respiratory health of workers impacted by catastrophic weather, industrial, or geopolitical events.

NIOSH accepted comments on the agenda through July 2018.

In June 2018, NIOSH requested comment on its NORA for the Healthcare and Social Assistance industry. The agenda was developed by a 45-person council of labor, academic, government, and industry representatives. It describes 17 research objectives and dozens of specific research needs, including studies on the prevalence of low-wage work, evaluation of safe patient handling and mobility education, and occupational infectious disease surveillance. NIOSH accepted comments on the agenda through August 2018.

Opioid hazards

The epidemic of opioid overdose incidents, including 64,000 U.S. deaths in 2017, forced attention on the hazards faced by first responders and other workers affected by the epidemic. In a November 2017 report by a White House commission on the opioid crisis, the authors recommended a national outreach plan to distribute fentanyl safety information to first responders and to standardize data collection related to first responder opioid-intoxication incidents.



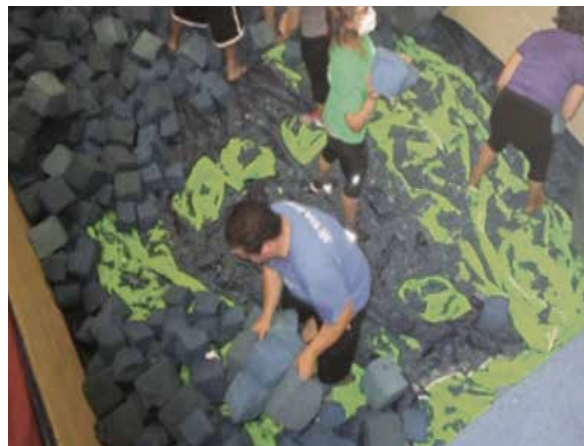
Mark Strickland, an EMT in Charleston, WV, says opioid overdose calls are a near daily occurrence.

In a June 2018 commentary published in the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, NIOSH's John Howard and Jennifer Hornsby-Myers address fentanyl safety precautions for

first responders. They describe the routes of exposure for EMTs, clinicians, law enforcement, and other occupations, as well as exposure prevention measures.

Health hazard evaluations

Over the last 12 months, NIOSH researchers have published reports on more than 30 health hazard evaluations (HHEs), in which NIOSH teams examine conditions at workplaces where hazards are reported. The hazards investigated by the NIOSH staff included air contaminants generated during laser tattoo removal; metal and flame retardant chemical exposure at an electronics recycling facility; musculoskeletal risks for forklift operators; and respiratory hazards at coffee roasting and spice preparation plants.



Gerry Croteau, NIOSH

Exposure to polyurethane foam in the pit of a gymnastic studio was the subject of a NIOSH HHE published in September 2017.

Chemical Safety Board

Resignation of Vanessa Sutherland

Chair of the Chemical Safety Board (CSB)
Vanessa Sutherland resigned in May 2018. Her five-year term was scheduled to expire in August 2020. Upon announcing her departure, Sutherland said that she accomplished what she set out to do during her tenure, mentioning changes to improve board governance and conducting regular public meetings.

Board member Kristen Kulinowski was selected to serve as the CSB's interim executive authority until a new chair is nominated. Kulinowski said that the Trump administration's threat to eliminate the CSB makes it difficult to recruit and retain staff. The agency has 40 positions, but only 32 of them are filled.



CSB Member Kristen Kulinowski in February 2018 at a chemical risk management conference in Houston, TX.

Budget

President Trump's fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget zeroed out funding for the CSB. The administration asserted that CSB investigations overlap with other agencies' probes; it uses its authority to push for more regulations; and it has "generated friction" with other agencies. The President's FY 2018 budget also eliminated funding for the CSB. Congress, however, appropriated \$11 million to the agency.

Subpeona power

In February 2018, a federal judge ruled that the CSB did not have authority to compel Exxon-Mobil to turn over certain records concerning a close-call hydrofluoric acid incident at the company's former refinery in Torrance, CA. The agency sought the records for its investigation of a 2015 explosion. The judge determined that the CSB's request involved records that were not sufficiently connected to their investigation. In April 2018, the CSB asked the U.S. Court

of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to review the lower court's ruling.

Lawsuit to mandate facility reporting

Safety and environmental advocacy groups, including the Texas chapter of the Sierra Club, Air Alliance Houston, and the Louisiana Bucket Brigade, filed a lawsuit in December 2017 to compel the CSB to require facilities to report chemical releases. The plaintiffs contend that the CSB's authorizing statute requires the agency to issue a regulation to mandate the reporting. In 2009, the CSB issued an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking on the matter, but the agency did not proceed further to develop a reporting rule. In July 2018, the CSB asked the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to dismiss the case. They argued that the plaintiffs do not have legal standing and have not demonstrated the Board has unreasonably delayed the rulemaking.

Inspector General report

The EPA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG), which has audit authority over the CSB, issued a report in June 2018 concerning two management challenges faced by the CSB. One involves ongoing disputes about the chair's authority and the confusion it creates for agency staff. The OIG recommends that the CSB ask Congress to examine the issue and make necessary legislative changes. The second challenge is the President's proposal to eliminate the CSB and its effect on recruiting and retaining staff. OIG recommends that CSB officials continue to work with Congress to secure agency funding.

Ongoing and completed investigations

Over the last 12 months, the CSB held seven public meetings to brief stakeholders on the status of ongoing investigations. The agency also deployed investigation teams to a January 2018 gas well explosion in Pittsburg County, OK that killed five workers; an April 2018 refinery

fire at Husky Energy in Superior, WI; and a May 2018 explosion at Kuraray America in Pasadena, TX that injured 21 workers.

In September 2017, the CSB issued a safety bulletin following its investigation into the chemical release and fire at the **ExxonMobil** refinery in Baton Rouge, LA. The November 2016 event occurred during maintenance on an isobutene line in the plant's sulfuric acid alkylation unit. Four workers suffered serious injuries.

In January 2018, the CSB released its final investigation report on a massive chlorine release from **MGPI Processing, Inc.** in Atchison, KS. The October 2016 event led to an evacuation and shelter-in-place order for thousands of residents. Five residents and one employee were hospitalized, and 120 people sought medical attention. The CSB determined that a hose on a chemical delivery truck was inadvertently connected to a tank containing incompatible material. A chemical reaction generated the toxic chlorine plume. The CSB made recommendations to the companies involved and the Atchison County Department of Emergency Management.

In April 2018, the CSB released its final investigation report on the explosion and fire at the **Packaging Corp. of America** in Deridder, LA. Three workers were fatally injured in the February 2017 incident when a crew was conducting hot work activities near a tank with a flam-



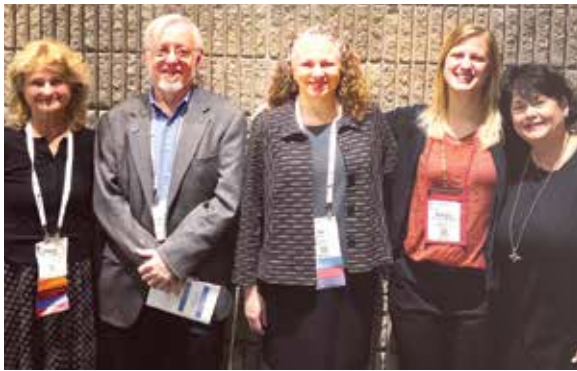
Trailers with organic peroxide products were destroyed by fires at the Arkema facility in Crosby, TX during Hurricane Harvey.



(L-R) Josh Ray, 35; Matt Smith, 29; Cody Risk, 26; Parker Walldridge, 60; and Roger Cunningham, 55, were the victims of the January 2018 oil rig explosion in Pittsburg County, OK.

mable atmosphere. The explosion propelled the tank 375 feet and over a six-story building. Seven other workers were injured. The CSB made recommendations to the employer to adopt standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association and reiterated recommendations for OSHA to amend its process safety management standard with respect to storage tanks.

The floodwaters from Hurricane Harvey in late August 2017 caused the **Arkema Corp.** in Crosby, TX to lose power. Standby refrigeration trailers were used to keep the plant's organic peroxide mixtures cool, but they eventually decomposed and caught fire. Toxic fumes forced an evacuation of 200 residents, and fires continued at the facility for several days. The CSB investigated the incident and released its report in May 2018. CSB Chair Vanessa Sutherland said, "Considering that extreme weather events are likely to increase in number and severity, the chemical industry must be prepared for worst case scenarios at their facilities." The agency made recommendations to the company, the Center for Chemical Process Safety, and Harris County, TX, and reiterated recommendations made in 2002 to the EPA on reactive hazards.



(L-R) Patrice Sutton, John Morawetz, Eve Gartner, Becky Reindel, and Linda Reinstein prepare to speak about TSCA amendments at the 2017 APHA annual meeting.

EPA

Implementing TSCA

EPA continued to make key policy decisions to implement the 2016 amendments to the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). Actions in the last 12 months include the following:

In August 2017, environmental groups and unions filed a lawsuit to challenge two EPA rules, one on prioritizing chemicals for safety review and the other on evaluating the risks of those chemicals. The United Steelworkers; Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families; and nine other organizations filed the lawsuit with the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. Additional legal challenges to the EPA rules were brought by the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environ-

ments; Natural Resources Defense Council; the Environmental Defense Fund; and others, while the American Chemistry Council and business groups intervened to be parties in the lawsuit. A decision is not expected until 2019.

In November 2017, EPA issued its "Decision-Making Framework" for new chemicals or new uses of chemicals. It was immediately criticized by OHS and environmental advocates for failing to meet the law's intent. EPA's assessments of unreasonable risk posed by new chemicals to workers or other susceptible groups will be defined by "intended use," which would include recommendations by the manufacturer to use personal protective equipment. As the AFL-CIO pointed out in comments to EPA, "intended use" can be wildly different from what actually happens in workplaces. An industry group called the New Chemicals Coalition supported the EPA framework and urged the agency to further limit its determinations of unreasonable risk by deferring to OSHA for workplace chemical exposures. In June 2018, EPA issued its instructions for manufacturers and users based on the framework.

In June 2018, EPA published "Problem Formulation Documents" for the first 10 chemicals selected for action. The documents define the scope of the risk evaluations EPA will conduct on asbestos, methylene chloride, 1-bromopropane, and seven other chemicals. The agency decided on very narrow scopes, asserting that it need not address health risks under TSCA if other laws, such as the Clean Air Act, can address them. With respect to asbestos, for example, EPA decided that its risk evaluation would not address asbestos exposure from "legacy" uses, such as in building materials. EPA accepted public comment on the documents until August 2018.

Farmworker protections

In March 2018, a federal judge ruled that EPA illegally delayed implementation of a regulation designed to protect farmworkers who apply pesticides. The Certification of Pesticide Applicators rule was adopted at the end of the Obama administration and scheduled to take



In May 2018, an asbestos company in Russia stamped its shipment "Approved by Donald Trump." EPA proposed rules on asbestos in June 2018 that largely ignore the risks to workers and communities.

Uralasbest Facebook page

effect in March 2017. EPA arbitrarily changed the effective date to March 2018. The court agreed with Farmworker Justice, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste, Earthjustice, and the other plaintiffs that EPA failed to provide an opportunity for public comment on the delay, as required by the Administrative Procedure Act. The protections include a minimum age of 18 years for pesticide applicators, training for workers on the specific pesticides they use, proper use of personal protective equipment, and ways to report pesticide safety violations.

In addition, EPA announced in December 2017 its intention to propose changes to both its Worker Protection Standard and its Certification of Pesticide Applicators rule. The expected changes include reducing the age limit for workers who mix and apply pesticides from 18 years to 16 years, removing requirements to prevent workers and bystanders from being sprayed during pesticide application, as well as

eliminating the right of a farmworker to have a designated representative, such as a lawyer or healthcare provider, to request pesticide information on their behalf. As of August 2018, the proposed rules had not been published.

In August 2018, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ordered EPA to prohibit the sale of chlorpyrifos. The court held that the Trump administration illegally reversed a 2016 decision by the Obama administration to ban the pesticide. Farmworker advocates first petitioned EPA for a ban on chlorpyrifos in 2007 and multiple lawsuits followed to compel the agency to act.

Chemical plant safety

In May 2018, EPA proposed a major rewrite of its Risk Management Program (RMP) rule. The agency seeks to repeal key provisions adopted in December 2016 by the Obama administration. The changes would eliminate requirements for a facility to conduct “root cause”





investigations and to identify inherently safer technologies. More than 60 individuals testified in June 2018 at a public hearing about the proposal, including representatives of the BlueGreen Alliance and Public Citizen. The rule adopted by the Obama administration stemmed from the 2013 explosion at a fertilizer plant in West, Texas that killed 12 volunteer firefighters and three members of the public.

EPA also delayed the effective date of the RMP rule for 20 months while it engaged in rewriting the rule. In August 2018, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled that EPA's delay of the rule was illegal. The rule will take effect as originally scheduled.

Pruitt resigns

EPA administrator Scott Pruitt resigned in July 2018 under a cloud of ethics investigations. During his 17 months in office, Pruitt proposed numerous deregulatory actions, such as limiting the type of scientific evidence that can inform EPA decisions; changing the way EPA estimates the costs and benefits of regulations; and rolling back chemical plant safety rules and protections for workers who apply pesticides. Many of the proposals, however, were not finalized by the time Pruitt left office. Deputy administrator Andrew Wheeler, a former industry lobbyist and staff member of Senator James Inhofe (R-OK), was appointed acting EPA administrator.





YouTube




EPA chief Scott Pruitt is confronted in July 2018 at a restaurant. The woman asks Pruitt to resign so that her infant will not be harmed by environmental hazards.

Dourson withdraws

President Trump's pick to lead EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention withdrew his nomination in December 2017. Michael Dourson, PhD, was criticized by public health advocates because he often provided toxicology expertise to the chemical industry and frequently recommended permissible exposure limits that were much less protective than established ones. His nomination ultimately failed when several Republican Senators announced opposition to his nomination.

 I came
here to become a 
* better organizer. *
To gain ideas + become inspired
by the most amazing
people. I, myself feel
inspired + EMPOWERED

+ MOTIVATED.

  Kayla
Workers Center of
CNY  *

Study of Health and Safety Programs and
Unionized Metal and Non-Metal

Insitt, James Frederick, Seth McCormick, and

RESULTS

Results were gathered across four areas: Scale 1
work and related employees by prior work
conditions across the four states were.

Scale 2: Workload, including the number of
hours worked, the number of days worked, and the
number of days off.

The study
differences
employees
Many employees
were exposed
to hazardous
conditions.
The study
includes four countries
managers, the level of
short-staffing.

CONCLUSIONS

In this population of four metal
work organization factors including
excessive work hours, etc., and
among employees safety
the hazards
the fixes, and
hazards are tre
shared set of values
safety culture" did not
concept of "safety culture"
researchers and practitioners

Addressing Occupational Health and Safety at the State and Local Levels

Over the last 12 months, OHS advocates secured a wide range of new worker protections, addressing hazards from violence to chemical exposure. Hotel housekeepers in California now have rules to prevent musculoskeletal injuries, while those in Chicago have panic buttons to stave off assaults. Oregon adopted rules to better protect farmworkers and their families from pesticide drift. Firefighters in Florida will be eligible for workers' compensation (WC) benefits for post-traumatic stress disorder, and New Hampshire amended its WC law so that a firefighter's cancer diagnosis is presumed to be work-related. In the wake of Hurricanes Harvey and Maria, National COSH, labor unions, and the larger OHS network realized the power of collaboration. They rapidly organized safety trainings in Houston, TX and San Juan, PR to assist the "second responders" who would be hauling flooded debris and spending the year ahead rebuilding their cities. Highlights from states and localities are recapped below, and reports from local and regional news outlets on a range of worker safety topics are profiled beginning on page 37.

Arizona

Workers protest Labor Commission

In September 2017, more than 150 carpenters with Local 1912 in Phoenix, AZ demanded the resignation of Dale Schulz, the chairman of the Industrial Commission of Arizona (ICA). The skilled laborers attended an ICA meeting and probed officials about their practice of reducing penalty amounts proposed by Arizona OSHA. A 2017 investigation by Emily Bregel of the *Arizona Daily Star* brought the practice to light. Federal OSHA determined that the ICA was "operating outside of its legal authority." ICA Chair Schultz disagreed, and the agencies are at an impasse.

California

Whistleblower protections

Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation to strengthen protections for workers who are fired or discriminated against for reporting dangerous working conditions or other labor code violations. The law took effect in January 2018. It allows for affected workers to be temporarily reinstated while their claims are investigated, gives the Labor Commissioner more authority to investigate retaliation cases, and increases penalties for employers who break the law.

Hotel housekeeper protections

The OSH Standards Board approved a new regulation in January 2018 to address the ergonomic hazards faced by the 100,000 hotel housekeepers employed in the state. The victory was the culmination of a decade-long effort by workers, including a petition for rulemaking submitted by UNITE HERE Local 11 and UNITE HERE International Union. The rule requires lodging establishments to identify and address hazards that put housekeepers at risk of back injuries and cumulative trauma disorders. It took effect on July 1, 2018.



Hotel housekeepers in California will be better protected from musculoskeletal injuries with a new Cal/OSHA rule adopted in January 2018.

Cleaning product labeling

Workers who use cleaning products, detergents, and air fresheners will have access to more complete ingredient information on the labels because of a law passed in October 2017. The new disclosure requirements will include whether the product contains allergens, asthmagens, carcinogens, and bioaccumulative agents, as designated by authorities including the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics and the World Health Organization. Worksafe, SEIU, and the California Domestic Workers Alliance joined with Women's Voices for the Earth and other groups in a campaign for the legislation. The law will take full effect by January 2020.

Indoor heat standard

A Cal/OSHA advisory committee received public comment on a draft regulation to address heat-related illnesses among workers in indoor settings. The action stems from a state law passed in 2016 that requires Cal/OSHA to propose a rule to the Standards Board by January 2019. Worksafe, the Garment Worker Center, and other advocates were alarmed after reading the February 2018 version of the draft rule. It would not require employers to implement the most effective controls, such as fans or cool-down breaks, until the workplace heat index reached 95°F.



Firefighter Steve LaDue committed suicide in 2017.

Florida

PTSD coverage under workers' comp

Gov. Rick Scott signed a bill in March 2018 to expand wage loss protections under workers' compensation to first responders with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Family members of firefighters were powerful advocates for the bill. Leslie Dangerfield described the toll that 27 years of emergency calls had on her husband's mental health. David Dangerfield, 48, was the battalion chief in Indian River, FL and he took his life in 2016. Megan Vila's brother, Stevie LaDue, 55, was a veteran firefighter and paramedic with the City of Tampa. He struggled with PTSD and committed suicide in 2017. Vila said it wasn't right that workers' compensation did not cover mental injuries. "They are human

In Memoriam FDNY Fire Chief

Fire Chief Ronald Spadafora had a 39-year career with the New York City Fire Department (FDNY). Following the 9/11 terrorist attack, he was named Chief of Safety for the entire Ground Zero Recovery Operation. In June 2018, Spadafora, 63, became the 178th member of FDNY to die from a World Trade Center-related cancer. He was passionate about OHS training and was an expert on the hazards for firefighters of "green building" designs.



New York Fire Department

Fire chief Ronald Spadafora oversaw recovery work at the former World Trade Center site in New York City.



Chicago Workers Collaborative

At an October 2018 press conference, temp workers in Illinois celebrate passage of new labor protections.

beings and heroes and their jobs affect them," she said. Claims will be accepted beginning in October 2018.

Illinois

Protections for temp workers

The Chicago Workers' Collaborative and its allies celebrated the passage in September 2017 of the Responsible Job Creation Act. The law requires staffing agencies to make an effort to place temp workers into permanent positions as they become available; notify workers about the safety training and equipment required to perform a job; bear the cost of background checks and drug tests; and ensure that workers are given transportation back from a job site if they were given a ride to it. The law took effect in June 2018.

Panic buttons for Chicago hotel workers

Beginning in January 2018, hotel operators in Chicago were required to provide workers with personal panic buttons to help reduce sexual assaults and harassment. The city council adopted the protections in response to a successful campaign by UNITE HERE Local 1 and the Chicago Federation of Labor. In a survey of 500 of the city's female hotel workers, nearly 50 percent

said that guests had exposed themselves or masturbated in their presence.

Kentucky

Limits on black lung claims

Lawmakers passed a bill in April 2018 to restrict the type of medical evidence needed to support a workers' compensation claim for black lung disease. Coal miners will only be able to use evidence provided by a pulmonologist, not from a radiologist. There are only six pulmonologists in the entire state of Kentucky who are NIOSH-certified B-readers, and four of them typically work for coal companies to challenge miners' claims for black lung benefits.

Massachusetts

OHS and public employees

Gov. Charlie Baker signed legislation in March 2018 to extend OSHA protections to the state's 400,000 public sector employees. The Department of Labor Standards will have authority to investigate and establish regulations to protect legislative, judicial, and municipal employees from safety and health hazards. The Massachusetts AFL-CIO, AFSCME Council 93, SEIU Locals 888 and 509, and other labor organizations campaigned for the law. MassCOSH executive director Jodi Sugerman-Brozan called

(cont'd p. 27)

COSH Groups: Fighting for and winning safer workplaces

The National Council for Occupational Safety and Health (National COSH) is a grassroots advocacy organization with a network of 22 local organizations in 15 different states. During the last year, COSH groups launched new health and safety campaigns, conducted training sessions, met with policy makers, participated in rallies, strengthened coalitions, and organized Worker Memorial Day events. Highlights of COSH group activities over the last 12 months include:

Latina members of **MassCOSH** conducted dozens of interviews with other Latina workers to learn about their experiences with sexual harassment on the job. The project is a natural fit with the organization's fight for safe jobs, which has always included the hazards of bullying, violence, and discrimination. The Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace is funding this unique MassCOSH project.

MassCOSH continued its multi-year campaign against ReadyJet, the contractor used by JetBlue to clean the passenger cabins on its airplanes. In May 2018, allies including SEIU District 615 (32BJ), and U.S. Rep. Katherine Clark, spoke at a press conference to support Rosa Morban. The 22-year-old was a cleaner for ReadyJet and described harassment that she and co-workers experienced on the job. Milagros Barreto, the director of MassCOSH's Immigrant Workers Center,

explained, "The immigrant community is being made more vulnerable by our national leaders. ...I'm here to talk about the importance of workers receiving training in workplace harassment and violence at work."

MassCOSH continued its strong collaboration with the public health community, including the state's Occupational Health Surveillance Program. In fall 2017, MassCOSH organized these allies with labor partners to discuss the connection between the nation's opioid crisis and work-related injuries.

Midstate COSH published in July 2018 a handbook called "Protect Your Health and Safety at Work: Here's How." It was a collaborative effort with the Occupational Health Clinical Center based in Syracuse, NY and the Tompkins County Workers Center. The handbook includes chapters on ergonomic injuries, workplace stress, and chemical hazards.

New Hampshire COSH worked with state representative Mark MacKenzie on a bill to improve investigations of injuries and fatalities involving public employees. MacKenzie, who is also the NH COSH board chair, noted that passing the bill would be a step in the direction toward a state OSHA program to cover public sector workers.

This issue has special meaning to worker safety activist Samantha Wooten. Her father, Tom Wooten, 56, was employed by the Northfield, NH Public Works Department when he was killed on the job. She became involved in NH COSH activities after attending their 2017 Worker Memorial Day dinner and now is a member of their board. In May 2018, Wooten received a \$10,000 academic scholarship from the American Society of Safety Engineers Foundation. The scholarship is awarded to spouses or children of workers killed on the job.

North East New York COSH (NENYCOSH) was determined to keep public attention on the preventable death of day laborer Justus Booze. The 23-year-old was fatally injured in a wood

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Milagros Barreto, director of MassCOSH's Immigrant Worker Center, sees the #MeToo movement as a way to raise awareness about the experiences of low-wage workers with sexual harassment.



NH COSH

Sam Wooten receives her scholarship award from Dave Crowley, chair of the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) Foundation. She was joined by (L-R) NH COSH's Susi Nord and Brian Mitchell, and ASSE's Don Olesen.

chipper on his first day working for Countryside Tree Care. The company contested OSHA's willful violations and its proposed \$141,000 penalty. NENYCOSH engaged with the Albany County District Attorney's Office to urge that the employer be held criminally liable for Booze's death. An assistant district attorney listened in at the October 2017 hearing where the employer contested the OSHA citations.

For the 30th consecutive year, **PhilaPOSH** took the lead in organizing one of the country's largest Worker Memorial Day events. More than 300 union leaders, health professionals, religious community members, and politicians participate in the annual breakfast and procession to the Delaware River. This year, 50 individuals, representing 11 families who have lost a loved one in a workplace fatality, attended the event.



Michael Koff / The Enterprise

(L-R) NENYCOSH's Rossana Coto-Batres, Susan Zucker, Matt London, and John Van Raalte at the Albany County courthouse in October 2017.

"They love coming to the event but they realize it is not enough," remarked Barbara Rahke, executive director of PhilaPOSH. She says that they have their minds set on building an "army of families" who will fight for stronger workplace safety laws and protections.

Worksafe mobilized allies to turn out in Oakland, CA for a Cal/OSHA advisory committee hearing on a proposed indoor heat standard. The February 2018 meeting gave worker safety advocates an opportunity to object to a watered-down version of the proposal, likely the result of concessions to industry groups. Cal/OSHA faces a January 2019 deadline to develop a standard.

Worksafe senior staff attorney Nicole Marquez organized meetings in Washington, D.C. with staff from offices of U.S. Reps. Mark DeSaulnier and Barbara Lee. Both are strong supporters of labor rights and workplace safety, and Marquez



PhilaPOSH

Families who have been touched personally by a work-related fatality were well represented at PhilaPOSH's 2018 Worker Memorial Day event.



Nicole Marquez at the Washington, D.C. office of Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA).

extended Worksafe's appreciation for their continued support.

Western New York COSH (WNYCOSH) celebrated Oktoberfest 2017 at a solidarity-filled event in Buffalo, NY. They honored Mark Gaston Pearce with their Leadership Award for his longstanding commitment to workers' rights. Pearce is a member of the National Labor Relations Board. The keynote speaker at the event was Arturo Rodriguez, President of the United Farm Workers.

Workers at Wendt Corporation in Buffalo, NY have serious concerns about a myriad of safety and health hazards. In February 2018, the workers asked WNYCOSH to serve as their designated OSHA representative, which allowed its specialists to participate in a walkthrough

assessment of the plant and to review its health and safety records. The workers, who are members of the Ironworkers Local 576, reached out to the COSH group because they have yet to secure a collective bargaining agreement with the company.



(L-R) NLRB member Mark Gaston Pearce with WNYCOSH director Germain Harnden and United Farm Worker president Arturo Rodriguez.

WNYCOSH's four-month investigation, co-authored by Rachel Terhart and Nellie Brown, identified serious safety lapses, including inadequate engineering controls, gaps in personal protective equipment requirements, and training deficiencies. At a July 2018 press conference outside the plant, WNYCOSH and the union released "Risky Business," a comprehensive report on working conditions faced by workers at Wendt Corp.



Members of WNYCOSH and Ironworkers Local 576 are joined by state lawmakers Sean Ryan and Tim Kennedy at Wendt Corp. in July 2018.

the victory “historic” and noted it was a 10-year effort. The law takes effect in September 2018, and the state will be eligible to submit a proposal for an OSHA-approved state plan.

New Hampshire

Workers’ comp for firefighters

Lawmakers passed a bill in May 2018 that expands workers’ compensation protections for firefighters who develop cancer. It establishes a presumption that melanoma, mesothelioma, colon, stomach, lung, and other cancers are work-related. New Hampshire became the 40th state to adopt this protection for firefighters.



New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu signs a bill on workers’ compensation at the Portsmouth Fire Department.

New York

Cleaning chemicals

Workers who use cleaning products will have access to more complete ingredient information due to final rules issued in June 2018 by the state’s Department of Environmental Conservation. Manufacturers will be required to make available online each product’s ingredients, including contaminants, fragrances, by-products, and nano-materials. Women’s Voices for the Earth, the American Lung Association, and other groups forced the state to issue the chemical disclosure rules after first suing manufacturers to do so, as required by a 30-year-old state law that had not been enforced.



New York City Central Labor Council

Members of the Building and Construction Trades Council of New York celebrate passage of Intro 1447-C.

Safety training for NYC construction workers

A new law in New York City requires construction workers to receive at least 40 hours of safety training. The legislation was approved by the city council in September 2017. Local unions, NYCOSH, and worker centers campaigned for the law, noting the more than 40 construction worker deaths in NYC in the previous two years. Lawmakers also established a fund to assist workers with the cost of the safety training. Fines up to \$25,000 per worker could be assessed to contractors, permit holders, and site owners who fail to comply with the law.

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Oklahoma

Lawsuits against oil companies

The state’s Supreme Court struck down a law that protected oil and gas firms from lawsuits for worker injuries. The court’s January 2018 ruling said it was unconstitutional to treat the oil and gas industry differently than other businesses. The family of David Chambers, 59, challenged the law following his death in 2014 from severe burns suffered at an oil well site.

Oregon

Farm workers and pesticide

Oregon OSHA adopted new rules in July 2018 to protect workers and their families from pesticide drift. Oregon will require a 150-foot application exclusion zone (AEZ) for pesticides that require applicators to use a respirator, compared to a 100-foot AEZ under the EPA rule; “information stations” where farm occupants can see the pesticide application schedule and receive training; and closeable storage areas for footwear to prevent tracking of pesticides into farmworkers’ homes. A provision opposed by farmworker and housing advocates on “sheltering in place” during pesticide application was modified, but not eliminated. The new rules take effect in January 2019.



Advocates at a protest in Medford say new Oregon OSHA rules won't protect farmworkers.



Firefighter Mike White testifies before Washington State lawmakers in support of a ban on fluorinated chemicals.

fast food wrappers and pizza boxes. It will take effect in 2022 provided that a safer alternative is identified.

Workers' comp for Hanford workers

A March 2018 law will improve workers' compensation benefits for individuals who worked at the Hanford nuclear weapons site. The state will presume that certain illnesses, including neurological diseases and many cancers, are work-related for workers and contractors. Workers who were previously denied compensation can request reconsideration of their claims. The *Tri-City Herald* profiled Bill Evans, 44, who worked at Hanford and suffers from frequent seizures. Evans may benefit from the new state law.



Bill Evans was cut by broken glass after suffering a seizure. Evans worked for 12 years at the Hanford complex in Washington State.

Washington

Ban on fluorinated chemicals

Gov. Jay Inslee signed into law two bills to address workers' and the public's exposure to fluorinated chemicals. One bans the use of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in personal protective equipment worn by firefighters and in the foam they use to fight fires. The ban takes full effect in July 2020. The other law will ban the use of PFAS in food packaging, such as



Maria Duarte with Casa Latina testifies in June 2018 before the Seattle City Council in support of a proposed domestic worker bill of rights.

Domestic workers' rights

The Seattle City Council began consideration of a bill in June 2018 that would establish labor protections for housekeepers, nannies, gardeners, and other domestic workers. The proposed ordinance would require domestic workers, excluding live-in workers, to be paid the minimum wage and receive rest breaks. It would also establish a nine-member board that would examine ways to coordinate sick leave, retirement, health, and other benefits for domestic workers. An estimated 30,000 domestic workers are employed in Seattle.

Wisconsin

Violence protection for Milwaukee's city employees

Access to personal panic buttons, car decals, and other protections were implemented in November 2017 for employees of the City of Milwaukee.



Milwaukee city inspector Ziggy Zyskiewicz and his wife Olha.

SeattleChannel.org

waukee. The improvements followed the death of city inspector Greg "Ziggy" Zyskiewicz, 64, who was the victim of a carjacking while on duty. Ideas for the safety measures were solicited from city workers and in consultation with the employees' union. Workers are encouraged to log threats and violence incidents into a new tracking system. Previously such data was not collected.

Largest penalty in state history

In November 2017, OSHA proposed the largest fine in Wisconsin history for worker safety violations. The \$1.8 million penalty stemmed from 14 willful and five serious violations following a May 2017 grain dust explosion at Didion Milling. The incident killed five workers and caused burns and amputations to other workers. OSHA's regional administrator said the employer could have prevented this disaster, but "instead, their disregard for the law led to an explosion that claimed the lives of workers, and heartbreak for their families and the community."



Steven Potter

Since losing his legs in the explosion at Didion Milling, Collin Vander Gallien says "I'm trying to make a normal life."

Hurricane recovery demonstrates power of COSH network and collaboration

Meteorologists used labels like “hyperactive” and “catastrophic” to describe the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season. The 17 named storms caused \$282 billion in damage. In Puerto Rico alone, Hurricane Maria caused more than 1,400 deaths due to inferior emergency response and recovery programs.

Hurricane Harvey made landfall on August 26, 2017 near Port Aransas on the Texas Gulf Coast. The storm brought more than 40 inches of rain in the Houston area and caused unprecedented flooding. Even before the rain let up, staff with the Fe y Justicia Worker Center and National COSH were mobilizing. They knew that construction workers, day laborers, and domestic workers were already being called upon by residents and businesses to begin the massive clean-up.

Jessica Martinez, co-executive director of National COSH, told *The Pump Handle*, “The big alarm for us was that we needed to move quickly to organize a training of trainers. We’re not in Texas, we don’t have a national office there, but being able to support the local capacity was really important.” The executive director of Houston’s Fe y Justicia Worker Center, Marianela Acuña Arreaza, had already been publicizing worker safety information while the rain was still falling.

About a week-and-a-half after Harvey, National COSH had a trainer on the ground in Houston and was coordinating donations of personal protective equipment. The first training session was held at the Dominican Sisters of Houston Spirituality Center. About two dozen attendees, most of them worker leaders with Fe y Justicia, already had experience with peer-to-peer training.



National COSH

Chris Saldivar, an organizer with Fe y Justicia, records hazard information at a train-the-trainer session. Saldivar’s family lost their home during Hurricane Harvey.

“Workers are our second responders,” said Arreaza. “The work that they do is so important in terms of getting our city back on its feet. We just need to commit to treating them well, not cheating them out of wages, and ensuring safety protections for the work they do.” Arreaza knew that the rush to restore Houston would likely bring a rash of health, safety, and wage violations for the largely immigrant workforce.

The three-day training, in English and Spanish, included information on mold, electrical hazards, and asbestos, as well as the kind of personal protective equipment needed in post-flood cleanup and how to properly use it. Attendees also learned techniques for engaging and training community members about the hazards they would likely encounter in their own homes and neighborhoods.

In the first 60 days following Harvey, Fe y Justicia hosted 10 disaster training classes that brought safety and health information directly to workers. The worker center also partnered with the Workers Defense Project and United Steelworkers (USW) to hold another train-the-trainer class in October.

That program expanded the network of worker-teachers to nearly 30. Fe y Justicia and USW also hosted resilience training workshops for workers and community members.

Less than a month after Harvey struck Texas, Hurricane Maria devastated the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. National COSH pulled together a diverse group of allies to prepare a weeklong training program in San Juan. It was offered in January 2018 for graduate students in public health at the Universidad de Puerto Rico, as well as members of AFSCME.

"The work we're doing in disaster areas makes a real difference," said Luis Vazquez, education coordinator at the International Chemical Workers Union, who was the lead trainer for the event held on the university campus. "This is personal for me. I have many family and friends in Puerto Rico. There are all kinds of dangers

lurking in homes and buildings after a hurricane."

Others joined Vazquez in San Jose, including trainers from MassCOSH, NYCOSH, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, and Fe y Justicia. Topics included how to recognize disaster-related workplace hazards, safe clean-up procedures, and workers' rights. The students honed their training skills in the classroom and then went into communities to share safety information at temporary shelters and recovery worksites.

"Even if you didn't lose everything in the storms, the work of cleaning up and rebuilding is mentally draining," explained Marianela Arreaza. "There's so much damage and devastation that you're reminded of it eight hours a day. It's really intense."



Alejandro Zuniga (right) of Fe y Justicia Worker Center in Houston engages with students in San Juan, Puerto Rico during a safety training class about post-disaster clean-up and recovery.

National COSH

Worker Memorial Week 2018

From Sunday, April 22 through April 28, 2018, union locals, COSH groups, worker centers, and other advocates, as well as OSHA staff, took time out to remember the women and men who died from work-related illnesses and injuries. Labor rights groups from around the world marked International Worker Memorial Day with rallies, vigils, marches, and safety workshops. In the U.S., more than 100 events took place in small towns, as well as in the country's largest cities.

Each event reflected the priorities and passion of the organizers. The shared theme for every event was remembering those killed by workplace hazards and committing to fight for healthy and safe jobs for all workers.

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Augusta, ME

State Rep. Donna Doore reads about Martin Qualey, an excavator operator and one of the 17 workers in Maine who were killed on the job in 2017. She joined others at the Maine AFL-CIO's headquarters in Augusta for a Worker Memorial Day event. The Maine Labor Group on Health organized the commemoration in collaboration with SEIU Local 1989 and other groups.



Houston, TX

Mayor Sylvester Turner (second from right) and members of the Houston City Council stand while Marianela Acuña Arreaza of the Fe y Justicia Worker Center reads the names of 70 workers who were killed on the job in the Houston area during 2017. The lawmakers also listened to statements from the Houston Gulf Coast Building & Construction Trades and other labor groups on the need for a responsible contractor ordinance.



Lincoln, NE

Families from Nebraska gather on the steps of the State Capitol to commemorate their loved ones who were killed on the job. The event was organized by United Support and Memorial for Workplace Fatalities.



MassCOSH

Boston, MA

A mother and daughter take in the poignant display in front of the Massachusetts State Capitol. The photographs and names commemorate the 74 workers in the Bay State who were fatally injured in 2017.



NHCOSH

Concord, NH

(L-R) Deb Russell with the OSHA Massachusetts Training Center, Judy Stadtman with New Hampshire AFL-CIO and member of the NH COSH board, and widow Lynne Moran at the city plaza in front of the New Hampshire State House. Moran's husband George was killed in a fall at a construction site in Wolfeboro, NH in May 2017.



Kevin Riley

Los Angeles, CA

SoCal COSH, along with UCLA LOSH, the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, LA Fed, and others organized a die-in at Los Angeles City Hall. During a press conference, they called on elected officials to hold employers accountable for providing safe workplaces and wages that allow workers to live with dignity.



MassCOSH

Boston, MA

Participants lay flowers at the display prepared by MassCOSH.



Midstate COSH

Johnson City, NY

Terry Leonino, Greg Artzner, and George Mann, who are members of Musicians' Union Local 1000, performed at an event organized by Midstate COSH, the Occupational Health Clinical Center, and the Broome Tioga Labor Council. Attendees honored deceased workers by singing and sharing stories.



New Labor

New Brunswick, NJ

Members of New Labor, the New Jersey Work Environment Council, and the Jersey Renews coalition assemble at the Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple. Their rally and march coincided with Earth Day, which inspired the organizers to link themes of climate justice and worker rights.



Kevin Riley

Los Angeles, CA

(L-R) Rev. Andy Schwiebert, senior pastor of Immanuel Presbyterian Church, and Deacon Robert Vazquez of St. John Chrysostom Church share a social justice message during a die-in at Los Angeles City Hall.



Philadelphia, PA

Vicki and Bo Stauffer attend PhilaPOSH's Worker Memorial Day event at Penn's Landing. Their son, Robert Stauffer, 47, was fatally injured at Phoenix Packaging in Mount Joy, PA. Bo Stauffer stirred emotions when he played his guitar and sang a song about labor folk hero Joe Hill.



Central NY Labor Federation

Syracuse, NY

(L-R) Rebecca Fuentes, lead organizer with the Workers' Center of Central New York, congratulates Dolores Bustamante, a farmworker, mother, and community leader. Bustamante was recognized for her efforts to improve safety for farmworkers, at the same time she faces a legal struggle on her asylum case.



Ike Gittlen/USW

Pittsburgh, PA

Fred Arabia rings a bell as names of deceased workers are read during the USW's event. Arabia works at ATI in Brackenridge, PA and is president of USW local union 1196. The bell was removed from a locomotive that was involved in a fatality at his plant.



Central NY Labor Federation

Syracuse, NY

Debra Gonzales stands with her personal contribution to the Central New York Area Labor Federation's Worker Memorial Week event. Her artwork is an annual tradition.



Steve Zeitler

San Francisco, CA

Ahimsa Porter Sumchai speaks at an event organized by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 34 and the Injured Workers National Network. Sumchai told the story of Chris Carpenter, a Tetra Tech worker at the Hunters Point Shipyard who was assaulted for raising safety concerns. He died in 2016 from a work-related cancer. Sumchai's father died from asbestosis and had been a member of ILWU Local 34.



Ike Gittlen/USW

Pittsburgh, PA

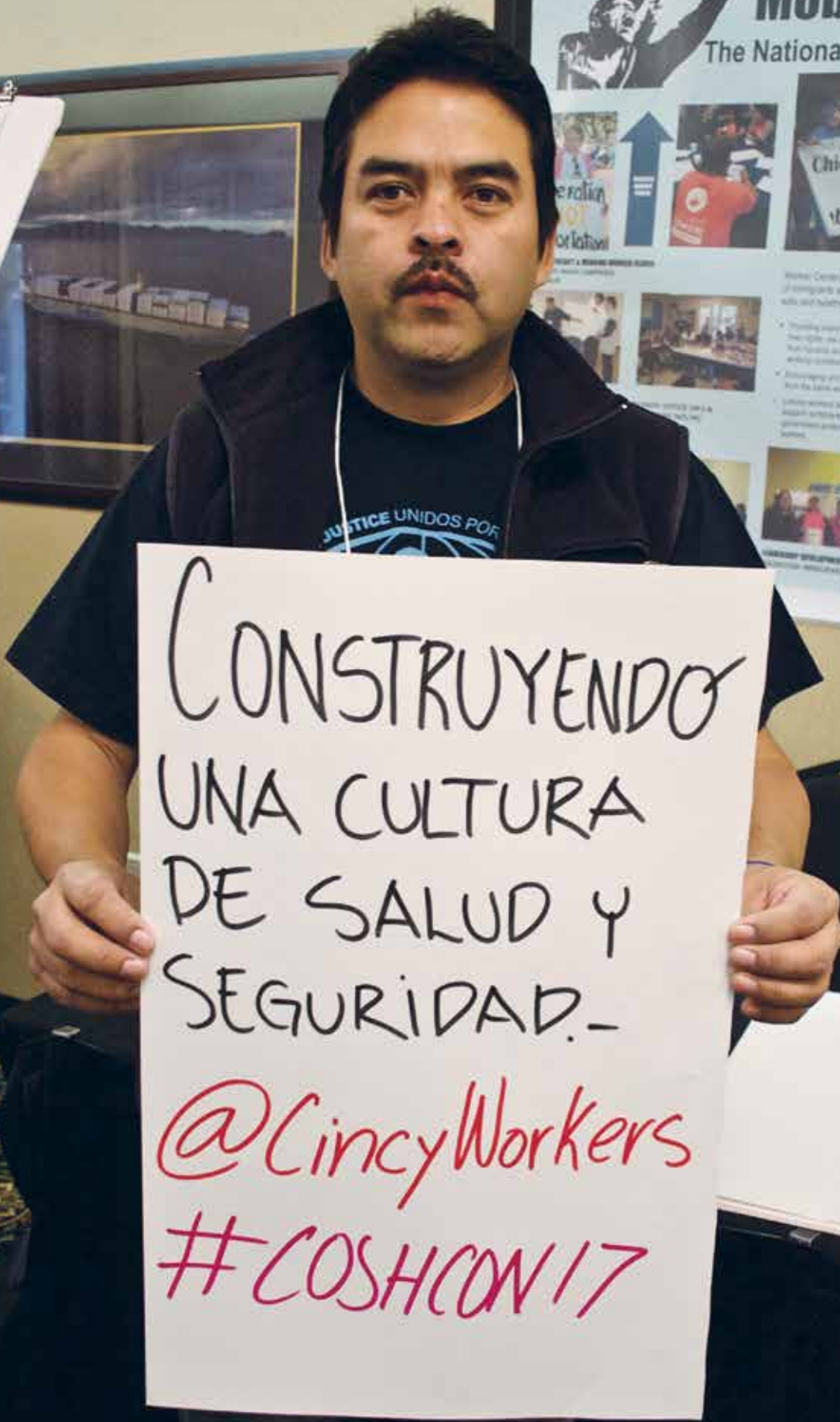
Tom Duffy extinguishes candles as part of a Worker Memorial Day event held at the headquarters of the United Steelworkers. Duffy is a health, safety and environment technician with the union. He worked for U.S. Steel for 25 years and was a member of local 1557 in Clairton, PA.



Ben Townsend, RWDSU

New York, NY

Corey Johnson, Speaker of the New York City Council, offers remarks about the need for strong worker safety protections. Attendees include (L-R) Terry Ferriera and Charlene Obernauer with NYCOSH, Tony Utano with TWU Local 100, Rabbi Feinberg with the Labor Religion Coalition, Vinny Alvarez with the NYC Central Labor Council, Beverly Brakeman with UAW 9A, and Charlie Uruchima, who is holding the NYCOSH banner.



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@CincyWorkers
#COSHCON17

News Coverage of Worker Health and Safety Topics

National and local reporters play a vital role in raising public understanding of the prevalence of workplace hazards. They bring to life workers' stories through words and photos. Reporters use their investigative skills to illustrate the impact of unsafe jobs on individuals and communities. Standouts from news outlets over the past 12 months include a multi-part series on the deadly world of garbage collection in New York City and in-depth coverage of extraordinary asbestos and lead exposures for school employees and students in Philadelphia. Three different outlets published investigations of working conditions in meatpacking and poultry plants and the vulnerability of immigrant workers to abuse. Other journalists dug into chemical hazards at plants that make wind turbines, gig workers, and sleep-deprived truck drivers. Our picks for the best OHS reporting this year are profiled below.

Deadly world of garbage collection

More than 250 different sanitation companies have contracts in New York City to collect garbage from restaurants, stores, and office buildings. Unlike the city's union employees who collect garbage from residences during the day, the for-profit waste hauling happens at night by driver and helper pairs.

Reporter Kiera Feldman spent 18 months with sanitation crews on their nightly routes. The workers cover as many as 100 miles during their shifts, make a thousand stops, and often exceed the maximum driving hours allowed by the Department of Transportation. Feldman found drivers were compelled to run red lights and exceed speed limits in order to complete their routes in the allotted time. She met drivers and helpers who were missing digits and suffering other injuries because employers failed to maintain trucks and supply appropriate equipment. In 2017, there were seven deaths in NYC involving private sanitation trucks. Their public sector counterparts have not had a fatality since 2014.

Feldman tells the stories of several workers. Alex Caban is a driver whose body is scarred from injuries, including an indentation on his skull where he was struck by a winch. Caban's helper, Bilal, is an 18-year-old immigrant from Yemen. Bilal runs ahead of the truck, tosses garbage bags from the curb to the street and



Midjao Diallo

Mouctar Diallo, 21, was fatally struck by a garbage truck in November 2017.

then into the truck's hopper. They make an impressive team doing dangerous work.

Mouctar Diallo, 21, was a Guinean immigrant who worked as a helper for Sanitation Salvage. In November 2017, he was fatally struck by a garbage truck. The driver and company lied to police and claimed he was a homeless man who "popped out of nowhere." Diallo was one of hundreds of "informal" helpers in the industry. He was paid off the books, \$30-\$80 per night. He was left to die in the street.

Kiera Feldman. "Trashed: Inside the deadly world of private garbage collection." ProPublica and The Investigative Fund, Jan. 4, 2018. <https://tinyurl.com/ydghbrvk>

"Treated like trash." ProPublica and Voice of America, May 4, 2018. <https://tinyurl.com/yabomdtm>

Reporters gunned down in newsroom

Workers at the *Capital Gazette* in Annapolis, MD were the target of an armed gunman who stormed into their newsroom on June 28, 2018. He killed five employees, in-



A memorial of flowers and candles left in June 2018 near the offices of the *Capital Gazette* in Annapolis, MD.

Joshua McKerrrow, The Capital Gazette

cluding reporters he had previously threatened. The incident occurred at the same time that President Trump launched verbal attacks on journalists with claims that they are enemies of the people.

National Public Radio's media correspondent David Folkenflik reminded listeners that employees of local papers like the *Capital Gazette* work hard to tell important stories. Local newsrooms are understaffed and underpaid, but their reporters are committed to covering news and doing it with integrity.

The *Capital Gazette* employees who were killed by the gunman were: Gerald Fischman, 61; Rob Hiaasen, 59; John McNamara, 56; Wendi Winters, 65; and Rebecca Smith, 34.

Journalism can be a dangerous occupation. According to the International Committee to Protect Journalists, 46 reporters were killed on the job in 2017.

Tesla left injuries off the books

Debilitating headaches from glue fumes, tendonitis and carpal tunnel from poor ergonomic design, and injuries from being struck by vehicles and hoists. More than three dozen current and former Tesla employees described these and other unsafe conditions at the company's Fremont, CA plant. They spoke to reporters Will Evans and Alyssa Jeong Perry, who were investigating allegations that the company's official injury logs did not match up with its internal injury tracking system. Data from the latter was provided by a confidential source, which allowed the reporters to pose questions about specific injuries to Tesla's senior management. For example, strains and sprains that required medical treatment were not recorded on Tesla's logs because the company asserted they were "personal medical" cases.

The reporters describe Tesla's response to negative press, such as that stemming from a May 2017 report prepared by Worksafe. Tesla hired a new vice president for environment,



Emily Harger for Reveal

Mark Eberley, 48, was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome in 2014. He injured his hand welding thousands of studs during 12-hour shifts at Tesla.

health, and safety who had worked previously for Alcoa Aluminum. She and other Tesla officials challenged Reveal's reporting. In a written statement, the firm claimed, "what they portray as investigative journalism is in fact an ideologically motivated attack by an extremist organization working directly with union supporters to create a calculated disinformation campaign against Tesla." Two days after the Reveal story, Cal/OSHA confirmed it was conducting an inspection at the plant and would be examining its injury logs.

Will Evans and Alyssa Jeong Perry. "Tesla says its factory is safer. But it left injuries off the books." Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting, April 16, 2018.

<https://tinyurl.com/y7scaeza>

Will Evans. "Tesla left injuries off the books, but it might not face penalties." Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting, May 23, 2018.

<https://tinyurl.com/y9gg2ww0>

Indentured servants in poultry plants

Brad McGahey, 23, fell behind paying his court fines and violated his parole. He faced a year in prison, but the "diversion court" judge in Oklahoma gave him an alternative sentence: a one-year residence at a Christian addiction treatment center. Reveal reporters Amy Julia Harris and Shoshana Walter write, "the program promises freedom from addiction. Instead, they've turned thousands of men and women into indentured servants."

Christian Alcoholics & Addicts in Recovery (CAAIR) coordinates with local "work providers" to give residents jobs, but CAAIR gets their paychecks. McGahey was assigned to a job at Simmons Food, a poultry processing plant in northeastern Oklahoma. About 200 CAAIR residents work at the plant. McGahey's hand was crushed and mangled in a machine. The hospital physician told him not to work, but CAAIR managers said he must either go back to work or to prison. McGahey chose



Shane Bevel for Reveal

Following Brandon Spurgin's chicken plant injury, CAAIR filed for workers' compensation on his behalf and kept the \$4,500 insurance payment.

prison, telling the reporters, "Anywhere is better than here."

CAAIR requires residents to sign a form saying that they are clients, not employees. The workers are therefore not covered by workers' compensation (WC). The reporters found, however, that when residents were injured on the job, CAAIR filed WC claims and kept the reimbursements.

Amy Julia Harris and Shoshana Walter. "All work. No pay." Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting, Oct. 4, 2017.

<https://tinyurl.com/y8exc94w>

Slaughterhouse cleaning crews

Peter Waldman and Kartikay Mehrotra investigated the dangerous conditions faced by the night shift workers who sanitize meatpacking and poultry plants. Tysons, Pilgrim's Pride, and other large food manufacturers contract with specialty firms to manage the overnight plant clean-up. Packers Sanitation Services is the largest of these firms and continues to grow by purchasing smaller firms in the industry.

The overnight cleaning crews use scalding water and chemical disinfectants to remove the blood, fat, flesh, and bone left behind from the production shifts. The sanitation jobs are exhausting and hazardous. "Only the destitute or desperate will take them," the reporters write. Packers Sanitation Services has one of the highest numbers of severe injuries report-



Abraham Watkins Law Firm

Hugo Avalos-Chanon, 41, was fatally injured while working at Interstate Meat Distributors.

ed to OSHA under its rule to track amputations and hospitalizations. When a worker suffers an injury, the company accuses the person of not following safety rules and retaliates against them.

Waldman and Mehrotra describe the death of sanitation worker Hugo Avalos-Chanon, 41, at Interstate Meat Distributors in Clackamas, OR. His cleaning hose got caught in a machine and pulled him into it. His employer, DCS Sanitation Management, was penalized \$6,300 by Oregon OSHA. The firm has since been purchased by Packers Sanitation.

Peter Waldman and Kartikay Mehrotra. "America's worst graveyard shift is grinding up workers." *Bloomberg Business Week*, Dec. 29, 2017. <https://tinyurl.com/y79r98lm>

Death in a trench

Twenty-six U.S. workers died in trench collapses in 2016. Jim Spencer, 61, was one of them. He was an experienced plumber who had connected excavated city sewer lines to residential plumbing many times over his career. He'd refused to enter trenches that he deemed unsafe, but that didn't happen in March 2016 on a jobsite in Alliance, NE. Spencer was in the 10-foot hole to set the pipe when the soil gave way. His helper was rescued, but Spencer could not be saved.

Jim Morris with the Center for Public Integrity weaves the voice of Jim Spencer's wife, Cheryl, into his reporting on trench fatalities. Spencer's employer claimed they were not familiar with OSHA's excavation standards. By sharing Cheryl Spencer's story and her reminiscences of her husband, Morris captures the intense loss felt when a loved one is killed on the job.

Jim Morris. "Death in a trench." Center for Public Integrity, Dec. 14, 2017.

<https://tinyurl.com/ycyrnj98>

Inspectors made ill, retaliation followed

Tina McClellan and Jessica Robertson were USDA inspectors with similar symptoms: shortness of breath, coughing fits, and headaches. Poultry workers at their plants confided that they had the same symptoms. The likely culprit was peracetic acid, a chemical used to disinfect the chicken and turkey carcasses. It is now used in abundance during the slaughtering process.

McClellan and Robertson alerted USDA officials about their health problems and sent written reports up the chain of command. Both were reassigned to jobs in far-flung locations. McClellan and Robertson said that news coverage about the welfare of animals in the plants is not unusual. They want more attention paid to the mistreatment of people who work in the industry.

Eyal Press. "Something in the air." *The Intercept*, July 19, 2018.

<https://bit.ly/2uzmNJf>

Asbestos and lead in a city's schools

A multi-part series by investigative journalists in Philadelphia examined the prevalence of asbestos and lead in the city's public schools. Staff at 19 of the most rundown elementary schools collaborated with Barbara Laker and Wendy Ruderman to collect samples of tile,

pipe insulation, paint, and dust in areas frequented by students and teachers. The results revealed asbestos levels that exceeded federal standard in classrooms, gymnasiums, auditoriums, and hallways, and lead dust on windowsills, floors, and bookshelves. The investigation included a review of city records that showed more than 80 percent of schools had damaged asbestos and officials approving waivers to use less robust abatement methods. Union officials described a lack of oversight of the contractors performing the work.

In the U.S., teachers have one of the highest incidence rates for asbestos-related disease. Sharon Bryant, 59, has taught in Philadelphia schools for 25 years. Elevated levels of asbestos were found in her classroom at Lewis C. Cassidy elementary school. Bryant worries about the impact on the developing lungs of “her babies” and on her own health, asking, “How can this be happening in 2018? Are we running an experiment?” The reporters examine the adequacy of EPA standards for testing asbestos samples. They note that the laboratory analyses are now more sophisticated and protective of health, but the regulations are stuck in the 1980s.

Dylan Purcell, Barbara Laker, and Wendy Ruderman. “Danger: Learn at your own risk.” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 3, 2018.
<https://bit.ly/2KvyDu6>

“Hidden peril.” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 10, 2018.
<https://bit.ly/2jM7iHT>

“Botched jobs.” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 17, 2018.
<https://bit.ly/2GrQbEo>

First responders’ trauma

“Suck it up and just move on,” is the way that North Attleboro, MA firefighter Rick Stack dealt with the life and death experiences of his job. Most fire fighters have the same “be tough” attitude. The trauma takes a mental toll, but it is not a comfortable topic to discuss for individuals whose chosen career is saving



Emily Harger for Reveal

David Dangerfield, 48, was a battalion chief with the Indian River, FL fire department when he committed suicide in 2016.

others. Trust is essential in the career and “no one wants to be seen as the weak link.”

Jenna Russell profiles Rick Stack’s career, his diagnosis with post-traumatic stress disorder, and the stigma associated with admitting a mental injury. The U.S. military has a long history of specialized care for PTSD, but fire departments have a lot of catching up to do. Stack eventually received care at a new, specially-designed treatment facility located in Maryland and established by the International Association of Fire Fighters.

Jenna Russell. “First responders can be haunted by close encounters with suffering and death.” *The Boston Globe*, July 28, 2018.
<https://bit.ly/2NZGQaK>

A gig worker’s death

Pablo Avendano, 34, made deliveries on his bike in Philadelphia for the food-ordering app Caviar. In May 2018, he was struck by a vehicle and killed. Like the millions of workers who earn their living driving for Uber, GrubHub, and the other gig employers, Avendano was considered an independent contractor, not an employee. Caviar says it is not liable for Avendano’s work-related death. Writing in *The Atlantic*, Thomas Fox Parry recounts the bike courier’s experience in the gig economy and reaction to his death among other couriers in Philadelphia.



Pablo Avendano, 34

Thomas Fox Parry. "The death of a gig worker." *The Atlantic*, June 2018. <https://theatltn.tc/2sxzvHj>

Green energy and skin disease

Zarpka "Patience" Green, 36, and five co-workers are suing their employer, TPI Composites, for firing them after they developed contact dermatitis. The company is the largest U.S.-based manufacturer of wind blades.



Dillon Clark shows the effects of severe dermatitis on his foot. He is one of six former TPI Composites employees who were fired after developing chemical-related skin diseases.

In the last nine years, the TPI Composites plant in Newton, IA has had more than 300 dermatitis outbreaks and chemical burns from exposure to resins and fiberglass. The workers allege that the company failed to provide appropriate coveralls and gloves, even after managers learned that workers were developing sensitivities to the chemicals used to produce the wind blades. Green and other workers describe their symptoms, the difficulty receiving a proper diagnosis, and the company's practices of firing injured workers instead of addressing the hazards and providing reasonable accommodations.

Following the *Des Moines Register* reporting, Iowa OSHA inspected the plant. In June 2018, TPI received citations for numerous violations, including failure to prevent chemical exposures and inadequate medical treatment for skin disorders.

Kevin Hardy and Grant Rodgers. "Chemical exposure results in injuries, pink slips at Iowa wind blade maker." *Des Moines Register*, Dec. 16, 2017. <https://dmreg.co/2JdlVH>

Grieving father v. Senate candidate

"I thought he would stay the hell out of West Virginia," but instead, Tommy Davis was seeing Don Blankenship on TV asking for his vote. Davis's son, brother, and nephew were killed in 2010, along with 26 other men, at a coal mine run by Blankenship's company. The former CEO of Massey Energy spent a year in prison for conspiring to break coal mine safety laws. Blankenship was back in West Virginia running to be the Republican candidate for Senate. Davis and Robert Atkins, whose son was also killed at the Upper Big Branch mine, spoke to Dave Jamieson of the Huffington Post about Blankenship's run for office.

"The man has no remorse," Atkins remarked, but realizes that some people in the state "worship the ground that he walks on." The



Dave Jamieson/HuffPost

Tommy Davis visits the granite memorial for the 29 coal miners who were killed at the Upper Big Branch mine.

fathers spent time trying to convince undecided voters to reject Blankenship. As the primary election day approached, Blankenship held a rally close to Davis's home and the father decided he would confront him. Davis erected a make-shift monument to the dead miners at the building's entrance. Blankenship saw it, stepped back, and left by a back entrance. (Ultimately, Blankenship came in third, with 20 percent of the vote.)

Dave Jamieson. "Don Blankenship's mine took this man's son, brother and nephew. Now Blankenship wants his vote." *Huffington Post*, April 30, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2szi8ol>

California failing lead-poisoned workers

A battery recycling plant in Vernon, CA is notorious in the region for causing massive lead contamination. After a decade-long struggle by neighborhood advocates, the Exide plant was shuttered in a deal with the U.S. Department of Justice. Reporter Joe Rubin examined how workers were affected by lead exposure inside the plant and state officials' failure to address the problem. Between 1987 and 2014, more than 2,300 blood tests from workers showed elevated lead levels. Records obtained by Rubin found health department officials rarely notified Cal/OSHA about the lead poisoning, and when the inspectors did visit the plant, few citations were issued. His reporting suggests that state officials grew numb to the lead exposure problems at Exide.

Joe Rubin. "Battery blood: How California health agencies failed Exide workers." *Capital & Main*, March 21, 2018.

<https://bit.ly/2xDINrg>

Asleep at the wheel

USA Today's Brett Murphy concluded his four-part series "Rigged" about labor practices experienced by truck drivers moving goods from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, CA. Workers are dispatched for 20-hour shifts and may work six days per week. Murphy examined the deadly combination of production pressure and fatigued drivers that poses a "near-constant threat on the roads around America's busiest ports." He compared four years of data, including truck time logs and federal crash data. Trucks whose drivers didn't take the required rest breaks were involved in nearly 200 crashes within a day of the extended period on the clock. The "Rigged" series details the "rent-to-own" arrangements on trucks at the ports that compel drivers to exceed work hour maximums and create hazardous conditions for the drivers and the public.

Brett Murphy. "Asleep at the wheel: Companies risk lives by putting sleep-deprived port truckers on the road." *USA Today*, Dec. 28, 2017. <https://tinyurl.com/y7my8r3v>



USA Today/Uriarte Family

Freddy Uriarte drove for Lincoln Transportation and had only four hours of sleep the night before his fatal crash.

Uphill battle to prevent chemical disasters

Explosions caused by reactive chemicals and combustible dust cause horrific injuries, deaths, and massive property damage. The methods for preventing the explosions are known, but requiring employers to adopt those measures has been an uphill battle. Journalist Jeff Johnson examines the history of the Chemical Safety Board (CSB) and the agency's efforts to prevent chemical disasters. He takes readers back to a 1995 explosion at Napp Technologies in Lodi, NJ that killed five workers. Pressure from unions and community groups finally convinced Congress to fund the

CSB, something it had not done since 1990 when the agency was established.

Johnson uses the experience of victim advocate Tammy Miser to illustrate the personal impact of a work-related death on a family. Eric Frumin of Change to Win describes the essential challenge faced by the CSB through its 20-year history. "The CSB was born with a rush of passion, but sustaining passion is rough," explained Frumin.

Jeff Johnson. "Death by dust" and "America's industrial accident investigators." *The Alicia Patterson Foundation*, March 2018.

<https://bit.ly/2I3yRNs>

#OurTurnatWork

In June 2018, the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health (National COSH) set out to amplify efforts to create work environments that are free from sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence. The group established the Sexual Harassment Action Network, #OurTurnatWork, an alliance of safety, labor, anti-violence, and women's rights advocates. The network's mission is to:

- create safe workplaces, free from physical, verbal, and emotional abuse;
- change the power dynamics that have allowed abusive practices to go unchallenged for far too long; and
- prevent abuse, hold abusers accountable, and support survivors with all necessary resources.

#OurTurnatWork has a special focus on low-wage and vulnerable workers because their experiences with sexual harassment remain in the shadows. Veronica Lagunas, a janitor in Los Angeles and a member of SEIU-United Service Workers West, says it is inspiring to see celebrities talk about the terrible incidents they've faced. "A lot of us



(L-R) Jenny Fernandez with MassCOSH and Elvira Carvajal with Lideres Campesinas attend the June 2018 assembly of the Sexual Harassment Action Network.

who earn a regular paycheck face the same problems, like sexual assault and physical and verbal abuse. It's our turn to unite and take action to stop the abuse, and hold abusers accountable."

The network's steering committee includes representatives from COSH groups, A Better Balance, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Futures without Violence, Healing to Action, and the National Women's Law Center. They laid out the network's principles, which evolved in a pledge for supporters called a "Commitment to Unity and Action." Among other things, signers agree to:



Amadeo Sumano takes a photo of himself in an Oxnard, CA strawberry field. Smoke from the Thomas Fire appears in the background.

Amadeo Sumano

Wildfire smoke and farmworkers

The December 2017 Thomas Fire, which struck California's Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, was one of the largest wildfires in the state's modern history. More than 8,500 firefighters were engaged in tackling the six-week event. Public radio reporter Leslie Berestein Rojas recorded how smoke from the fire was affecting farm workers in the region. Amadeo Sumano told Rojas the "smoke was suffocating" near the strawberry fields. His employer eventually provided masks, but no eye protection. Leaving work early because of the smoke was necessary on some days, but left him with lower earnings.

Leslie Berestein Rojas. "Working in farm fields during wildfire: 'It was full of smoke.'" KPCC, Dec. 13, 2017. <https://bit.ly/2JDwZJI>

- support increasing the financial stability of workers through higher wages so that they have the means to leave an abusive job;
- oppose power imbalances that allow supervisors to demand favors from workers in exchange for continued employment, opportunities for advancement, or essential benefits, such as time off to go to the doctor or care for sick children; and
- encourage organizing in the workplace to prevent, identify, and eliminate abuse, harassment, coercion, and intimidation.

An assembly of low-wage workers who are passionate about these topics met in Washington, DC for the launch of #OurTurnatWork. They are employed in hotels, restaurants, poultry plants, warehouses, and other settings. The group convened to exchange ideas and discuss proven strategies to pre-



National COSH

(L-R) Lolita Liedo with the Pilipino Workers Center and Nancy Lessin with the USW Tony Mazzocchi Center record notes during the assembly.

vent sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence in the workplace.

"For years, workers whose lives rest on the margins — low-wage workers, workers of color, immigrant women — have been fighting in the shadows to end sexual harassment in their workplaces," said Nicole Marquez, Worksafe senior staff attorney. "Now is the time build upon this powerful foundation and mobilize broadly to end sexual harassment on the job."



Me Too movement sparks new attention to workplace sexual harassment across industries

Sexual harassment in the workplace is hardly a new phenomenon — it certainly long predates the explosive *New York Times* investigation that led to the arrest of film mogul Harvey Weinstein on charges of rape and sexual abuse. Still, the article struck a nerve with women around the country, who began bravely speaking up and stepping forward with their own stories of being sexually harassed and assaulted on the job.

The groundswell of voices became known as Me Too, a movement and phrase originally started in 2006 by activist Tarana Burke to raise awareness about sexual abuse and assault. While the Weinstein investigation initially sparked a wave of revelations about other powerful men in Hollywood and in the media, coverage quickly expanded to tell the stories of women workers across industries, many with a focus on women in low-wage and service sectors. According to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) data over the last decade, more than one-quarter of sexual harassment charges were filed in industries with large numbers of service-sector workers and nearly three-quarters of sexual harassment charges included allegations of retaliation against the workers who spoke up.

Among the many stories following the Weinstein revelations was one by Greg Smith at *New York Daily News*, who reported on sexual harassment in the construction industry and highlighted the story of construction worker Ashley Foster, who described toxic work environments where male supervisors and peers routinely harass women employees. For instance, Foster said a male supervisor repeatedly exposed his genitals to her and two other male workers showed her cell phone pictures of their genitals. Foster complained to her employers at the construction company Trade Off

and she said they promised to investigate. But months later, Smith reported, there was no evidence that an investigation had been conducted. Foster, along with a fellow woman construction worker, filed a complaint with EEOC and New York's Division of Human Rights.

At the Huffington Post, Dave Jamieson reported about sexual harassment among low-wage workers in the hospitality industry, writing that the revelations that followed the Weinstein reporting were a “trend that would surprise no woman who’s ever worked as a housekeeper. If famous A-list actresses must deal with unwanted advances in the privacy of a hotel suite, imagine the vulnerability of an immigrant woman cleaning the room alone, for close to minimum wage, plus tips.”

Jamieson’s story cited survey data on nearly 500 UNITE HERE members working in hotels and casinos as housekeepers and servers; the survey found that 58 percent of hotel workers and 77 percent of casino workers had been sexually harassed by guests. Almost half of hotel workers said they had experienced a guest answering the door naked or that a guest exposed himself to her. For years, Jamieson reported, UNITE HERE has urged that housekeepers be supplied with handheld, wireless panic buttons they can use to alert hotel security.

For women in the food service and restaurant industry, sexual harassment is all too





Activists gathered in Alexandria, VA for the inaugural assembly in June 2018 of the Sexual Harassment Action Network.

common. In fact, EEOC data show that the accommodation and food services industry is home to the highest percentage of its sexual harassment complaints. At the *Washington Post*, Maura Judkis and Emily Heil reported on a “culture of widespread sexual harassment and abuse in kitchens and dining rooms.” Interviewing more than 60 people across the country, the reporters found that “how women experience sexual harassment depends on their place in the restaurant ecosystem. Cooks are harassed by other cooks, servers are harassed by everyone. And immigrants and young people — who make up a large percentage of the workforce — are particularly vulnerable.” The story cited 2014 survey data from the Restaurant Opportunities Center United that found that two-thirds of female restaurant workers reported being harassed by people in management.

Fortunately, low-wage workers and their advocates — many who had been working on the issue long before the Weinstein investigation broke — are taking advantage of heightened public attention to elevate the voices of low-wage workers and educate stakeholders.

For example, in late 2017, the New York Committee for Occupational Safety & Health held a press conference on the steps of New York City’s City Hall to call attention to sexual harassment in the construction

industry, while in Illinois, Arise Chicago, a local worker center, released “Out of the Shadows,” a video in which low-wage workers talk about their experiences with sexual harassment. And in June, the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health (National COSH) convened “Our Turn,” a new nationwide grassroots alliance to end

workplace sexual harassment, with a special focus on low-wage and vulnerable workers. (For more on Our Turn, see page 44.)

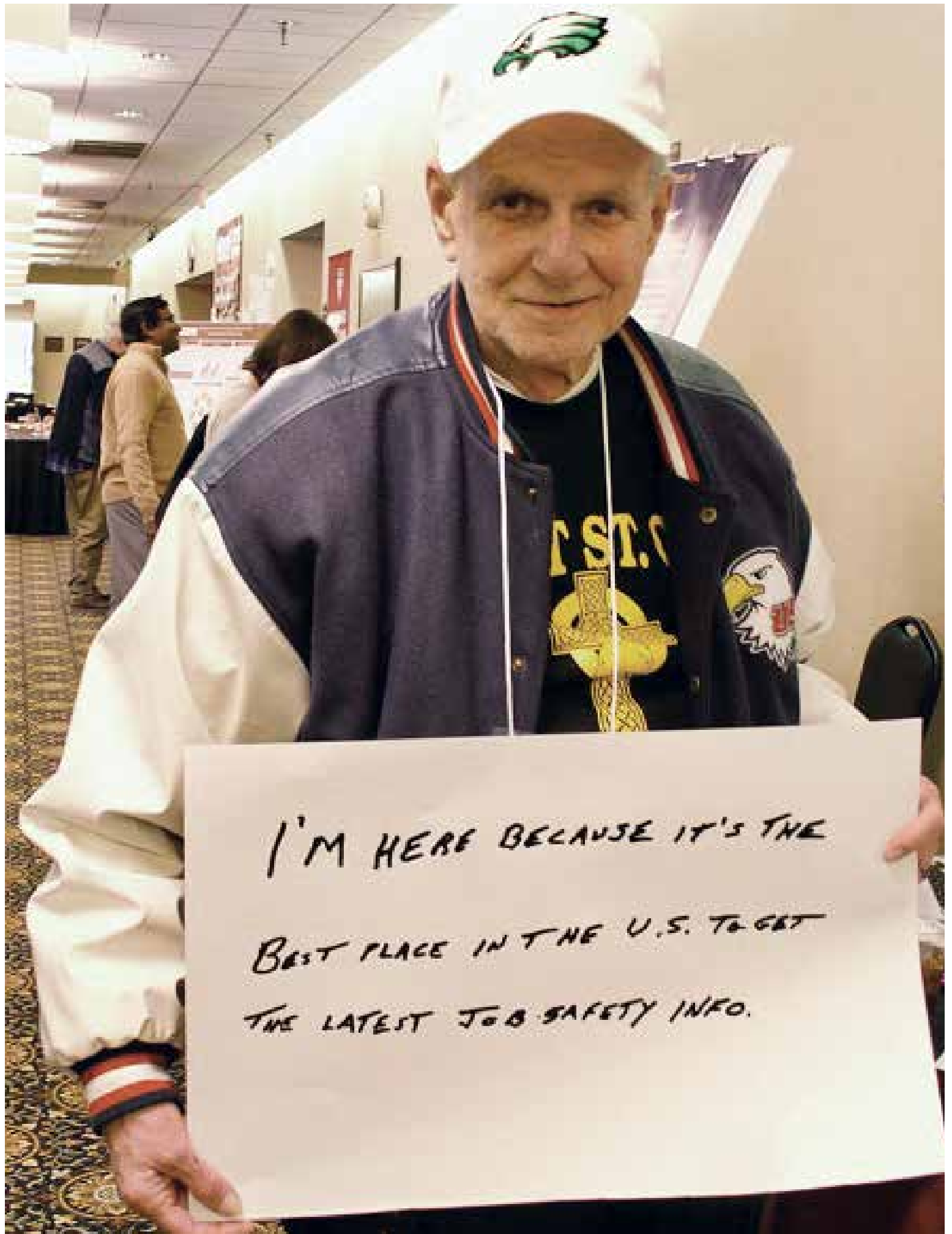
“Low-wage workers are fed up (and) are saying: ‘We will not tolerate abuse as a condition of earning a living,’” said National COSH co-executive director Jessica Martinez in a news release. “This is a basic issue of workplace safety. Every worker — regardless of race, gender, income or sexual orientation — has a fundamental right to a workplace free from abuse and harassment.”

Greg B. Smith. “Women hardhats say harassment runs rampant on construction sites.” *New York Daily News*, Dec. 13, 2017. <https://tinyurl.com/ybepf343>

Dave Jamieson. “‘He was masturbating... I felt like crying’: What housekeepers endure to clean hotel rooms.” *Huffington Post*, Nov. 18, 2017. <https://tinyurl.com/yczphyn7>

Maura Judkis and Emily Heil. “Rape in the storage room. Groping at the bar. Why is the restaurant industry so terrible for women?” *Washington Post*, Nov. 17, 2017. <https://tinyurl.com/y8lreumh>

Jocelyn Frye. “Not just the rich and famous: The pervasiveness of sexual harassment across industries affects all workers.” *Center for American Progress*, Nov. 20, 2017. <https://tinyurl.com/y9cxnsrk>



I'M HERE BECAUSE IT'S THE
BEST PLACE IN THE U.S. TO GET
THE LATEST JOB SAFETY INFO.

New Research on Worker Health and Safety Topics

The past year has been a productive one for occupational health and safety researchers. Studies published in the peer-reviewed literature addressed disaster recovery hazards, the opportunities for community health centers to address the impact of work on health, and interventions to reduce injuries and illnesses. We profile some of this new research below and provide a longer list of our top picks at the end of the yearbook. We also highlight papers published in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, such as a report on pulmonary fibrosis disease in a group of dentists, an estimate of asthma prevalence related to work exposures, and an investigation of recycling workers with mercury poisoning. Also profiled in this section of the yearbook are reports from non-profit organizations, including those published by the Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights, the Laundry Workers Center, and COSH groups.

Peer-Reviewed Literature

Building worker capacity for disaster clean-up

Researchers conducted interviews about tree-care activities with 23 key informants who were involved in clean-up activities following Hurricane Sandy in 2012. They described training gaps and lack of preparedness with respect to downed trees and electrical hazards. Recommendations from the informants include removing improperly located trees, improved coordination between utilities and emergency management officials, and Spanish-language training resources for laborers who are hired for clean-up work.

Ochsner M, Marshall EG, et al. Trees down, hazards abound: Observations and lessons from Hurricane Sandy. *Am J Ind Med*. 2018 May;61(5):361-371.

<https://bit.ly/2mOc21b>

The authors describe the Immigrant Worker Disaster Resilience Workgroup, a community-university-labor union demonstration project implemented after Hurricane Sandy. Among its goals are improving the capacity of community-based organizations to provide disaster preparedness and safety training to Latino immigrant laborers. Communities benefit because workers trained to safely perform di-



National COSH

Jessica Martinez with National COSH and Rossana Coto-Batres with NENYCOSH examine debris on a street in Houston, TX.

saster clean-up serve as a resource to improve preparedness and safeguard future recovery operations.

Cuervo I, Leopold L, Baron S. Promoting community preparedness and resilience: A Latino immigrant community-driven project following Hurricane Sandy. *Am J Public Health*. 2017 Sep;107(S2):S161-S164.

<https://bit.ly/2NUO5B9>

Community health centers and occupational health

Focus groups and interviews with staff at community health centers provide insight into the barriers to integrating information about patients' work into clinical encounters. Participants recognized that work is an important

social determinant of health, but described competing priorities, limited appointment time, and lack of training as key obstacles to addressing it. They described ways in which occupational information could be integrated into primary care, including referral mechanisms for occupational medicine specialists, changes in quality performance measures, and improvements in electronic health records.

Simmons JM, Liebman AK, Sokas RK. Occupational health in community health centers: Practitioner challenges and recommendations. *New Solut.* 2018 May;28(1):110-130. <https://bit.ly/2M1BXxi>

Researchers interviewed 51 patients awaiting medical services at two community health centers in Illinois to assess their experiences with the workers' compensation system. Nearly all were either African-American or Hispanic, and about 40 percent had previously experienced a work-related injury. Most were unfamiliar with the term "workers' compensation," but many indicated that their employer paid for the medical care related to their injury. The workers suggested ways to eliminate barriers to workers who fear reporting injuries to their employers.

Topete L, Forst L, et al. Workers' compensation and the working poor: Occupational health experience among low wage workers in federally qualified health centers. *Am J Ind Med.* 2018 Mar;61(3):189-197. <https://bit.ly/2LM3p5x>

Injury data accuracy

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimated that 1,260 work-related crushing injuries (WRCI) occurred in Michigan from 2013 through 2015. Researchers used records from the state's emergency departments and workers' compensation agency to calculate WRCI for the same time period. Their multi-source dataset identified two-and-a-half times more work-related crushing injury incidents than the BLS estimate.

Kica J, Rosenman KD. Multi-source surveillance for work-related crushing injuries. *Am J Ind Med.* 2018 Feb;61(2):148-156. <https://bit.ly/2mP7yHJ>

Researchers conducted interviews with a representative sample of employers to assess their knowledge of OSHA injury recordkeeping requirements. They concluded that many employers possess limited understanding of the requirements. Some errors lead to over-reporting of minor incidents, while other errors cause underreporting of cases that resulted in lost work time.

Wuellner S, Phipps P. Employer knowledge of federal requirements for recording work-related injuries and illnesses: Implications for occupational injury surveillance data. *Am J Ind Med.* 2018 May;61(5):422-435. <https://bit.ly/2OtEt1g>

Tradeswomen and psychosocial stress



Members of LiUNA! at the Oregon Tradeswomen annual career fair. The May 2018 event was held in Portland.

Nearly 200 tradeswomen and 100 tradesmen in Washington State answered surveys about workplace hazards, stress, and injuries. The women were significantly more likely to report being injured at work in the past year and high levels of stress. Psychosocial exposures associated with both stress and injury included gender discrimination, bullying, and sexual harassment.

Curtis HM, Meischke H, et al. Gendered safety and health risks in the construction trades. *Ann Work Expo Health*. 2018 Apr 18;62(4):404-415. <https://bit.ly/2uZYSTg>

APHA policy statements

The American Public Health Association (APHA) is a diverse organization of public health professionals that champions the health of all people and communities. In November 2017, APHA's Governing Council adopted four new policy statements on topics specific to labor rights and worker safety. The titles of the new policies are listed below, along with the names of the OHS advocates who drafted the statements and marshalled them through the association's year-long approval process.

Ensuring Language Justice in Occupational Safety and Health Training (Eunice Salcedo and Deborah Weinstein)

Improving Working Conditions for U.S. Farmworkers and Food Production Workers (Celeste Monforton and Robyn Robbins)

The Critical Need to Reform Workers' Compensation (Debbie Berkowitz, Steve Moser, and Glenn Shor)

Strengthening OSHA Standards for Inorganic Lead to Protect Workers' Health (Nancy Simcox and Marianne Sullivan)

APHA invites and encourages the OHS community to use the association's policy statements to reinforce their work. The full text of every APHA policy statement is available at <https://bit.ly/2MmEshs>.



Janitor injuries by gender

An analysis of ten years of workers' compensation (WC) data involving janitors in Washington State revealed factors associated with higher-cost injuries and more lost time. Fifty-five percent of WC claims involved women janitors, although women account for a much smaller portion of workers in the industry. Researchers reported an association between injured workers who reported a Spanish-language preference and longer periods of lost time and/or higher medical costs.

Smith CK, Anderson NJ. Work-related injuries among commercial janitors in Washington State, comparisons by gender. *J Safety Res*. 2017 Sep;62:199-207.

<https://bit.ly/2OomDwx>

Injury experiences of temp workers

The author investigated factors that may explain differences in injury rates between permanent and temporary workers in similar occupations. The investigation included telephone interviews with 460 workers who filed workers' compensation claims. Temp workers were less likely to report being exposed to hazards, but also reported being less likely to be equipped to cope with hazards because of lack of experience, safety training, and task control.

Foley M. Factors underlying observed injury rate differences between temporary workers and permanent peers. *Am J Ind Med*. 2017 Oct;60(10):841-851.

<https://bit.ly/2NOxpuT>



Illinois will soon lead the country in temp worker protections.

Prison workers and PTSD

A survey of 355 employees of the Washington State Department of Corrections found a 20 percent prevalence of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in prison employees, a rate comparable to Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans. A higher PTSD score was associated with being seriously injured or threatened, and encountering an inmate suicide attempt.

James L, Todak N. Prison employment and post traumatic stress disorder: Risk and protective factors. *Am J Ind Med*. 12 June 2018. [online] <https://bit.ly/2K9z3Fm>

Union effect on workplace fatalities

Nearly 30 U.S. states have adopted anti-union laws under the deceptive label “right-to-work.” The author analyzed unionization rates and fatality rates by state for the period 1992 through 2016. Nationwide, a one percent decline in unionization is associated with a five percent increase in fatality rates.

Zoorob M. Does ‘right to work’ imperil the right to health? The effect of labour unions on workplace fatalities. *Occup Environ Med*. 13 June 2018. [online] <https://bit.ly/2uVPAYA>



Public school teachers in West Virginia show their solidarity during a February 2018 state-wide strike.



Construction workers in Dallas demand an ordinance on heat stress that provides water, shade, and rest breaks.

Workers Defense Project

Impact of a rest break ordinance

Researchers used data from surveys conducted in 2009, 2012, and 2015 of construction workers in Austin, TX, which adopted a rest break ordinance in 2010, and Dallas, TX, which had no such ordinance during the study period, to compare the impact of a local rest break ordinance (RBO). Construction workers in Austin were 35 percent more likely to report receiving a rest break in the post-RBO period compared to their counterparts in Dallas where no RBO was in effect.

Scott J, Boggess B, Timm E. Ensuring the right to rest: City ordinances and access to rest breaks for workers in the construction industry. *J Occup Environ Med*. 2018 Apr;60(4):331-336. <https://bit.ly/2Aj2LHZ>

Loss prevention services and worker safety

Loss-prevention services (LPS) offered by insurers are a low- or no-cost means for employers to improve workplace safety. The researchers explored the relationship between construction employers' use of LPS and incidence of lost-time injuries (LTI). Depending on the number of contacts with a LPS representative, the intervention was associated with a 27 to 41 percent reduction in LTI.

Schofield KE, Alexander BH, et al. Workers' compensation loss prevention representative contact and risk of lost-time injury in construction policyholders. *J Safety Res*. 2017 Sep;62:101-105. <https://bit.ly/2LxbbAX>

Sustainability of safe patient handling programs

A Florida-based health care system with five hospitals implemented a safe patient handling program in 2008. After one year of implementation, both the number of OSHA-recordable patient handling injuries and the number of restricted duty days declined by more than 80 percent. The organization experienced the injury reduction for more than eight consecutive years. They describe the features of the program that contribute to its sustainability.

Olinski C, Norton CE. Implementation of a safe patient handling program in a multihospital health system from inception to sustainability. *Workplace Health Saf.* 2017 Nov;65(11):546-559. <https://bit.ly/2Os9NNA>

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports

Over the past year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* featured several investigations of work-related fatalities, injuries, and illnesses. The reports include the following:

Employee symptoms at indoor water park

In response to a complaint received by a local health department, investigators examined respiratory and ocular hazards at an indoor water park. More than 80 percent of the resort's 112 employees completed a symptom survey, with a majority reporting eye and nose irritation and cough. Five of the six HVAC units were not operating properly, which reduced airflow at the park.

Chiu SK, Burton NC, et al. Respiratory and ocular symptoms among employees of an indoor waterpark resort, Ohio, 2016. *Morbidity and Mortality Wkly Rep.* 2017;66(37):986-989. <https://bit.ly/2LNlddz>

Frequent standing at work

Investigators used data from the National Health Interview Survey to identify industries that require frequent exertion and frequent standing. Among the 20 major industry groups, the highest prevalence of both stressors was reported among individuals employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing; construction; and hotels and food service.

Shockey TM, Luckhaupt SE, et al. Frequent exertion and frequent standing at work, by industry and occupation, U.S., 2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Wkly Rep.* 2018;67(1):1-6. <https://bit.ly/2J3po7h>

Occupations and asthma

Investigators used the National Vital Statistics System for the period of 1999 to 2016 to evaluate asthma deaths that may have resulted from occupational exposures. The highest significantly elevated asthma proportionate mortality ratio for men was in those who had been employed in food, beverage, and tobacco manufacturing, and for women employed in social assistance jobs. As many as 21 percent of asthma deaths in the U.S. are related to occupational exposures.

Patel O, Syamlal G, et al. Asthma mortality among persons aged 15–64 years, by industry and occupation, U.S., 1999–2016. *Morbidity and Mortality Wkly Rep.* 2018;67(2):60-65. <https://bit.ly/2xypRZQ>

Cannabis workers

Researchers reported on an investigation of hazards faced by workers employed at a cannabis farm in Washington State. Air sampling identified a variety of actinobacteria and fungi, which can increase the risk for allergic and respiratory symptoms. The researchers characterized bud stripping and hand trimming stems as highly repetitive tasks. None of the workers reported musculoskeletal pain, but expressed concern about long-term effects of their work.



Employees at a cannabis farm demonstrate part of the harvesting process.

Victory KR, Couch J, et al. Occupational hazards associated with harvesting and processing cannabis, Washington, 2015–2016. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2018;67(8):259–260. <https://bit.ly/2GWyAFd>

Lung fibrosis and dentists

Over a 15-year period, eight dentists and one dental hygienist were treated at a Virginia hospital for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. The number of cases far exceeded the number of expected cases based on respiratory disease surveillance data. Investigators did not identify a specific cause for the disease cluster, but noted that dentists are exposed to infectious organisms, dusts, gases, and fumes.

Nett RJ, Cummings KJ, et al. Dental personnel treated for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis at a tertiary care center, Virginia, 2000–2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2018;67(9):270–273. <https://bit.ly/2tAEzOa>

Firefighters exposed to phosphine gas

Emergency responders were dispatched to a residence in Amarillo, TX where residents reported shortness of breath and loss of consciousness. Investigators determined that a restricted-use pesticide had been applied outside the residence, and it reacted with water and generated phosphine gas. Fifty-one emergency responders were exposed and 15 received medical care for symptoms.

NIOSH Hall EM, Patel K, et al. Phosphine Exposure Among Emergency Responders, Amarillo, TX, 2017. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2018;67(13):387–389. <https://bit.ly/2H8PHDr>

Fatal falls in fishing industry

During 2000 to 2016, 204 commercial fishermen in the U.S. died after unintentionally falling overboard. Nearly 60 percent of the incidents were not witnessed and 53 percent of all victims were never found. Thirty percent of the fatalities occurred in the Atlantic Ocean, and another thirty percent in the Gulf of Mexico. In all cases, the victims were not wearing personal flotation devices.

Case SL, Lincoln JM, Lucas DL. Fatal falls overboard in commercial fishing, U.S., 2000–2016. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2018;67(16):465–469. <https://bit.ly/2xvIWwW>

Heat-related deaths

OSHA investigated 25 incidents of heat-related illness between 2011 and 2016, including 14 deaths. In nearly all cases, the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health exposure limit for heat stress, measured as wet bulb globe temperature (WBGT), was exceeded. A “heat index” calculation can serve as a surrogate for WBGT. OSHA’s guidance threshold for preventing heat-related illness would have to be reduced from 91°F to



85°F in order to be an accurate surrogate for the WBGT exposure limit.

Tustin AW, Lamson GE, et al. Evaluation of occupational exposure limits for heat stress in outdoor workers, U.S., 2011–2016. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2018;67(26):733–737. <https://bit.ly/2KD5pxi>

Recycling workers and mercury

The Wisconsin Division of Public Health investigated five cases of mercury poisoning among workers at a fluorescent lamp recycling facility. Workers' symptoms included difficulty breathing, irritability, headache, and tremor. Airborne mercury levels were eight times higher than the ACGIH threshold limit value. Mercury was found in the workers' vehicles, demonstrating the potential for take-home exposure, but workers declined evaluation of their homes.

Wilson E, Lafferty JS, et al. Occupational mercury exposure at a fluorescent lamp recycling facility, Wisconsin, 2017. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2018; 67(27):763–766. <https://bit.ly/2upkJU7>

Black lung and premature mortality

From 1999 through 2016, black lung was the underlying cause of death for more than 4,300 U.S. workers. The number of years of potential life lost to life expectancy (YPLL) was 38,400 years, or a mean of nearly nine years per individual. YPLL per worker increased over time relative to the life expectancies, suggesting more severe disease and rapid disease progression.

Mazurek JM, Wood J, et al. Coal workers' pneumoconiosis, attributable years of potential life lost to life expectancy and potential life lost before age 65 years, U.S., 1999–2016. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2018; 67(30):819–824. <https://bit.ly/2n92u0W>

Reports from Non-Profit Organizations

Crimes Against Workers Database. Center for Progressive Reform, November 2017. <https://bit.ly/2K7kUNA>

The Center for Progressive Reform (CPR) launched in November 2017 an online catalogue of criminal prosecutions for worker fatalities. The database includes information about more than 75 prosecutions from 17 states. More than half of the cases are from 1990 to the present. For many of the cases, the database links to key documents related to the incident, such as case materials, court decisions, news clips, and advocacy materials. In some cases, prosecutors won guilty verdicts; in other cases, they did not. CPR's Katie Tracy worked with allies, including Nadia Marin-Molina of NYCOSH and Jay Herzmark with Safework Washington, to compile records for the database. The Crimes Against Workers database will be updated regularly as additional cases are identified and documents become available.



Kurtaj family

Ramadan Kurtaj was fatally injured in 2008 by a crane collapse at a construction site in New York City. Information about the criminal prosecution of his death is one of the many cases contained in the Crimes Against Workers database. Kurtaj is shown here with his sister.

After the Storm: Houston's Day Labor Markets in the Aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. Nik Theodore, University of Illinois at Chicago, November 2017.
<https://bit.ly/2jcErMq>

Before the floodwaters of Hurricane Harvey receded from Houston, the city's day laborers were already filling their role as "second responders." Researchers interviewed more than 350 day laborers to learn about their conditions of work. Nearly 90 percent had not been informed about unique recovery-related hazards, including unsafe structures, electrical lines, contaminated water, and mold.

Dying on the Job in Mississippi: Lack of Adequate Protection for Injured Workers Hurts Families and Communities. National Employment Law Project and the Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights, December 2017.
<https://bit.ly/2OpdC6g>

Researchers examined OSHA records and workers' compensation data to summarize the state of workplace safety protections for Mississippi's workers. Their findings include that the rate of work-related fatal injuries is two times higher than the national average. On average each week, four workers suffer an amputation or require hospitalization for an injury. Compared to every other state, Mississippi's workers' compensation law offers the lowest number of weeks of wage replacement for permanently disabling injury.



Members of the Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights draw attention to their state ranking last in workers' compensation protections.

Deadly Skyline: Annual Report on Construction Fatalities in New York State, NYCOSH, January 2018.
<https://bit.ly/2l6cmI0>



The authors used Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), OSHA, and other public data to characterize construction worker safety in the state of New York. They present five- and 10-year trends on injuries sustained,

hazards identified, violations cited, and penalties assessed. Over the past five years, the fatal injury rate for construction workers increased by nearly 30 percent. The authors offer data to illustrate safer conditions at union jobsites compared to non-union sites. They also note the impact of NYCOSH campaigns to secure new laws and hold employers accountable for workers' safety.

A Smarter National Surveillance System for Occupational Safety and Health in the 21st Century. The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, January 2018.
<https://bit.ly/2Jx9Ogk>

The U.S. system for tracking and evaluating work-related injuries and illnesses is based on a 30-year-old model. It could be significantly improved by strengthening coordination and data sharing between federal and state agencies and expanding the use of health information technology. The report is the culmination of an 18-month effort by a panel of experts sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, NIOSH, and OSHA. It includes 17 recommendations for a surveillance system to advance occupational health goals.

Workers' Health, Safety, and Pay are Among Casualties of Trump's War on Regulation.

Economic Policy Institute, January 2018.

<https://bit.ly/2BYggbD>

The first year of the Trump administration was marked by efforts to repeal safety and wage protections for workers and make it more difficult for agencies to adopt new regulations.

The authors highlight the administration's repeal of an OSHA regulation that clarified employers' responsibility to maintain accurate records of work-related injuries and illnesses; a delay in enforcement of OSHA's silica rule; a proposal to lessen MSHA requirements for pre-shift safety examinations; and a proposal to weaken EPA rules to protect farmworkers from exposure to pesticides.

The Dirty Dozen 2018: Employers Who Put Workers and Communities at Risk.

National COSH, April 2018. <https://bit.ly/2Onjehs>

National COSH solicited input from its network of health and safety activists to identify companies that gamble with workers' lives. The result is 12 profiles of employers who fail to take seriously their responsibility to provide a workplace free from recognized hazards. The companies include Amazon, Case Farms, JK Excavating, New York and Atlantic Railway, and Tesla Motors. The names, faces, and stories of workers employed by these firms, some of whom were fatally injured on the job, are featured prominently in the report.

Dying at Work in California.

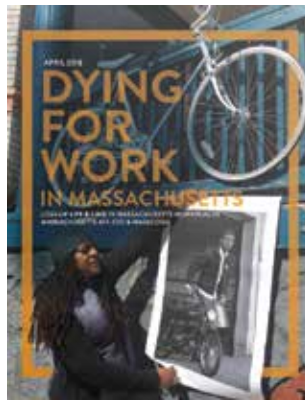
Worksafe, April 2018. <https://bit.ly/2Fn7OVg>

The Golden State has one of the lowest fatal occupational injury rates in the country, but the toll of worker deaths and injuries remains substantial. The authors profile 12 workers in California who died in 2017 from work-related hazards, and list the names and circumstances of 203 other victims. The authors' recommendations include enhanced funding from workers' compensation insurers for the Worker Occupational Safety and Health Training Program.

Dying for Work in Massachusetts: Loss of Life & Limb in Workplaces.

Massachusetts AFL-CIO and MassCOSH, April 2018.

<https://bit.ly/2K4CVqQ>



Seventy-four workers in the state lost their lives on the job in 2017, the highest number in 11 years. The report's "In Memoriam" lists the names, ages, and occupations of more than 80 individuals who died in 2017 from work-

related causes. Infographics answer questions such as "How are workers dying?" and "Where are workers dying?" Prominent in the report are stories about the victims and what is being done to prevent worker injuries.

Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect (27th edition).

AFL-CIO, April 2018.

<https://bit.ly/2HANvdP>

The AFL-CIO continued its Worker Memorial Day tradition with the release of the 27th edition of the Death on the Job report. It provides more than 75 charts and tables on injury and fatality rates, state-by-state comparisons, and new tables with data on workplace violence. The report also summarizes actions by the Trump administration to roll back worker protections.

Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders.

Ruderman Family Foundation, April 2018.

<https://bit.ly/2jsDpwk>

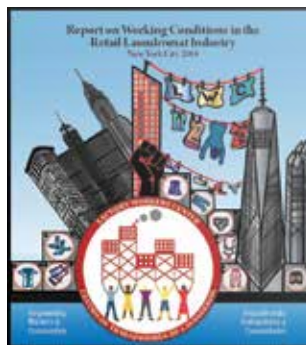
First responders are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty. The prevalence of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder in the occupation is significantly higher than in the general population and is associated with work-related trauma. The authors examine pragmatic and cultural barriers firefighters and police officers experience in accessing care.



Deregulatory Frenzy. Public Citizen, June 2018. <https://bit.ly/2kR8sT6>

The authors compared the first three rulemaking agendas published by the Trump, Obama, and G.W. Bush administrations for the number of delayed or withdrawn regulatory actions. Nearly 280 rulemakings of potentially significant economic consequence were withdrawn by the Trump administration. This is 77 percent more than the Obama administration and 26 percent more than the G.W. Bush administration during the same time period in their terms in office. Among the OHS hazards for which regulatory actions were withdrawn were combustible dust and vehicle backovers.

Report on Working Conditions in the Retail Laundry Industry, New York 2018. Laundry Workers Center, July 2018. <https://bit.ly/2L7jZfQ>



Members of the Laundry Workers Center in New York City teamed up with the Urban Justice Center to research working conditions for the thousands of women who wash and fold laundry in

neighborhood laundromats. The workers operate industrial washers and dryers for customers who drop off their dirty laundry and pick it up when it is clean and folded. The research team conducted 100 observations at neighborhood laundromats and surveyed 99 current workers at 78 different laundromats. Among the findings, two-thirds of the laundry workers reported experiencing health problems because of their work; one in five workers paid for protective gear that they thought necessary to do their job safely; and one-third reported feeling their personal safety was at risk while at work. The authors make several recommendations to improve working conditions, including ergonomic and violence prevention policies.

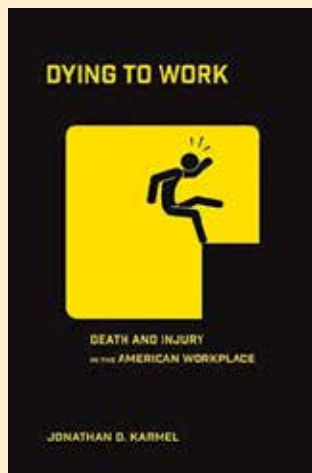
Protect Your Health and Safety at Work: Here's How. Midstate COSH, Occupational Health Clinical Center, and Tompkins County Workers' Center, July 2018. <https://bit.ly/2NYh6MY>

This 11-chapter handbook recognizes that workers play an essential role in recognizing hazards, identifying solutions, and demanding employers fix them. Having information about the causes of work-related illnesses and injuries is the first step in preventing them. One chapter describes why occupational diseases are more common than we realize, one explains why pain should not be "just part of the job," and another answers questions about protections for immigrant and refugee workers.

Risky Business: Wendt Corporation Walkthrough Inspection & Safety Record. Western New York COSH, July 2018. <https://bit.ly/2JwnBDi>

At the request of Ironworkers Local 576, WNY-COSH conducted an investigation of safety and health conditions at Wendt Corporation in Buffalo, NY. Using health and safety records from the plant and data observed during a walkthrough inspection, the investigators identified more than a dozen serious safety problems. The company's behavior-based safety program deflects attention away from

Dying to Work: Death and Injury in the American Workplace



Melissa King, Hanna Phillips, and Holly Shaw express pain, anger, and passion about workplace safety. Each suffered a personal loss because of workplaces hazards and employer indifference. Hanna's hand was amputated,

Melissa's father was electrocuted, and Holly's husband drowned.

Their stories are just three of the many that punctuate Jonathan Karmel's 2017 book *Dying to Work*. He weaves together interviews with injured workers and surviving family members with descriptions of the hazards faced today by U.S. workers. Each chapter offers personal accounts from families and injured workers to help us better understand why preventable injuries and deaths continue to occur. Karmel also includes enough statistics to give readers perspective on the magnitude of

the problem. He does the same with key political events, such as deregulation in the 1980s and OSHA's battle for an ergonomic standard in the 1990s, to put worker safety efforts in a historical context.

Dying for Work was published just as President Donald Trump was taking office.



David Yamada

Labor lawyer and author Jonathan Karmel at a March 2018 event by MassCOSH at the Suffolk University Law School in Boston.

The administration's anti-regulatory campaign makes the author's final "What Can We Do?" chapter particularly timely. In it Karmel offers his ideas for legal and regulatory changes to improve safety protections for workers.

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hazards at the plant, including unsafe suspended loads, explosion hazards, unsecured guardrails, lack of machine guarding, and absence of climate control. The investigators dissect the hazards and make recommendations to address them appropriately.

Extreme Heat and Unprotected Workers.

Public Citizen, July 2018.

<https://bit.ly/2NoqhFo>

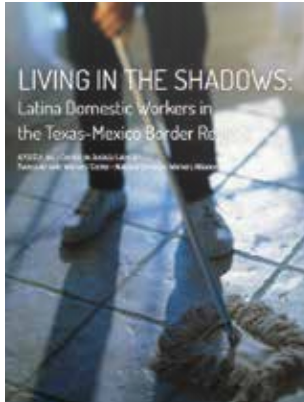
Hundreds of U.S. counties experienced extreme heat days during July 2017. Millions of agricultural and construction workers were

exposed to extreme weather that month, with at least six workers dying from heat-related illness. The authors provide data from climate model projections to estimate the number of workers at risk of excessive heat exposure in the coming decades. By 2050, more than 600,000 U.S. outdoor workers will work at least 25 percent of the year in dangerous heat conditions. Public Citizen timed the report's release to coincide with a petition submitted to OSHA for a regulation to address heat stress. (See page 6)

Living in the Shadows: Latina Domestic Workers in the Texas-Mexico Border Region.

AYUDA, Comité de Justicia Laboral, Fuerza del Valle Workers' Center, and National Domestic Workers Alliance, July 2018.

<https://bit.ly/2zOVBeF>



Domestic workers from three community-based organizations in the Texas Rio Grande Valley interviewed more than 500 housecleaners, nannies, and homecare workers about their conditions at work. The report describes the impact of low

wages and no benefits on the women's lives, as well as their experiences with hazards and injuries. Thirty percent of the house cleaners and care workers reported suffering a work-related injury. The interviews revealed significant differences in working conditions depending on the women's immigration status.

Opioid-related Overdose Deaths in Massachusetts by Industry and Occupation (2011-2015).

Massachusetts Department of Public Health, August 2018. <https://bit.ly/2oeVvnJ>

There were 4,302 opioid-related overdose deaths among Massachusetts residents from 2011 through 2015. The fatality rate for construction workers was 125 per 100,000 workers compared to an average for all workers of 25 deaths. The researchers used data from the Bu-

Occupational Health Internship Program

For 14 years, the Occupational Health Internship Program (OHIP) has been matching undergraduate and graduate students with unions and community-based organizations to learn about OHS from the perspective of workers. The collaborative projects during the summer of 2017 involved workers at ethnic grocery markets in Los Angeles; truck drivers in Wyoming; railway workers in Washington, DC; seafood workers in Louisiana; construction apprentices in San Francisco; domestic workers in Los Angeles; and temp workers in Chicago.



Ingrid Denis/AOEC

(L-R) OHIP interns Veronica Ponce de Leon, Jose "Gus" Arroyo, Lawrence Lan, Esther Epps, and Nader Hashweh at the 2017 APHA annual meeting in Atlanta, GA.

reau of Labor Statistics to explore work-related injury experience as a gateway to opioid use disorders.

The Year Ahead

Just a few weeks before this yearbook was published, voters in Missouri roundly rejected a new anti-labor law that made it illegal for unions to collect fair-share fees from workers who benefit from their negotiations but who don't pay union dues. In fact, the vote wasn't even close — more than 67 percent of voters rejected the anti-union measure, which through the tricks of Orwellian-type messaging, such laws have become known as “right-to-work.”

The news was a breath of fresh air for workers and their advocates, especially since only weeks earlier the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional to require public employees to pay fair-share fees, delivering a significant blow to public-sector unions and overturning decades of precedent. The Supreme Court decision was certainly a setback, but it wasn't terribly surprising considering the current political climate. On the other hand, the Missouri vote — where voters across both rural and urban communities rejected this attempt to weaken union power — felt like a sign that the American people are indeed not on board with laws intended to strip workers of the tools and ability to fight for fair and safe workplaces.

Fortunately, Missouri wasn't the year's only worker victory. In early 2018, thousands of West Virginia teachers went on strike to demand a pay raise and better working conditions. They inspired teachers around the country to do the same. Women across U.S. industries and occupations stepped forward to say “Me Too” and shine a light on the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace. From California to Philadelphia, people stood up to protect their co-workers from deportation under President Trump's new immigration regime. And across the country, workers celebrated hard-fought local victories, from new temp worker protections in Illinois

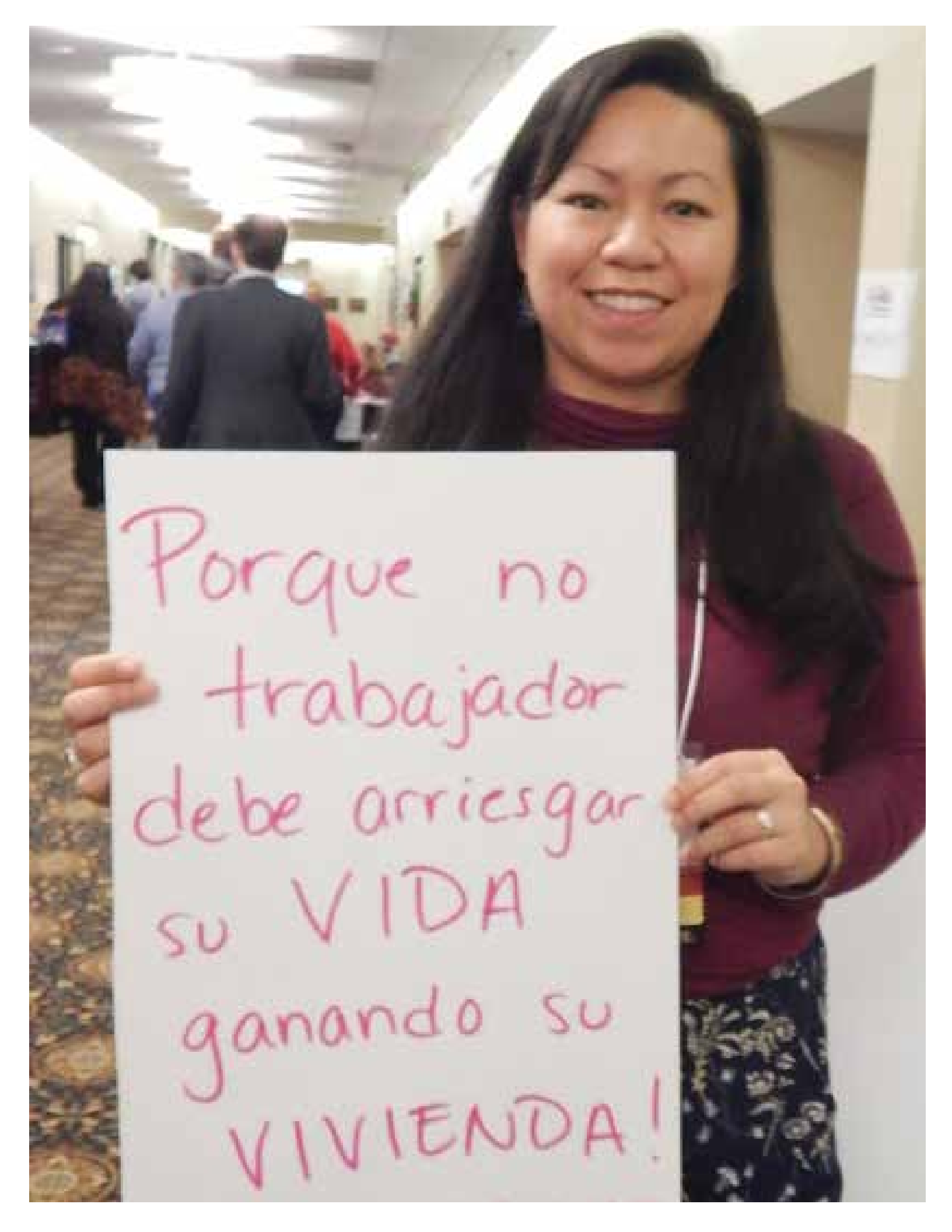
to a new Massachusetts law that extends OSHA protections to 400,000 public-sector employees.

So while the coming year will surely see continued efforts to erode worker protections at the federal level, the actions of the last year show that workers are far from powerless and more than ready to stand up and fight for their rights. Despite the troubling headlines that clutter our inboxes every day, the last year shows that when workers and their allies come together, they are powerful agents for health, safety, and justice on the job. As former AFL-CIO President Thomas Donohue famously said: “The only effective answer to organized greed is organized labor.”

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Read more at The Pump Handle

Much of the occupational health and safety policy change, advocacy, and research described in this yearbook is covered in more detail at the public health blog The Pump Handle. In particular, the twice-monthly “Occupational Health News Roundup” highlights local, national, and international news stories on worker health and safety. All past Roundups are available at: www.thepumphandle.org.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a maroon turtleneck and a patterned skirt, is smiling and holding a white sign. She is standing in a brightly lit hallway with other people in the background. The sign has handwritten text in red ink.

Porque no
trabajador
debe arriesgar
su VIDA
ganando su
VIVIENDA!

Peer-Reviewed Research on Occupational Health & Safety Topics

OHS researchers have published dozens of papers over the last year on many important topics. Their studies address hazards that are unique to particular occupations, as well as those that have adverse consequences for individuals in many different jobs. The following list represents some of the best peer-reviewed publications in the previous 12 months. Those marked with ✦ are profiled on pages 49–55.

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Allen A, Welch L, et al. Development of a diabetes mellitus knowledge resource for clinical decision support assisting primary care physicians with work-related issues. *J Occup Environ Med*. 2017 Nov;59(11):e236-e239.

Almberg KS, Cohen RA, et al. Linking compensation and health surveillance data sets to improve knowledge of U.S. coal miners' health. *J Occup Environ Med*. 2017 Oct;59(10):930-934.

Baron S, Filios MS, et al. Recognition of the relationship between patients' work and health: Qualitative evaluation of the need for clinical decision support for worker health in five primary care practices. *J Occup Environ Med*. 2017 Nov;59(11):e245-e250.

Blackley DJ, Reynolds LE, et al. Progressive massive fibrosis in coal miners from three clinics in Virginia. *JAMA*. 2018 Feb 6;319(5):500-501.

Bunn TL, Slavova S, Rock PJ. Association between commercial vehicle driver at-fault crashes involving sleepiness/fatigue and proximity to rest areas and truck stops. *Accid Anal Prev*. 2017 Nov; 17:30418-9.

Chari R, Chang CC, et al. Expanding the paradigm of occupational safety and health: New framework for worker well-being. *J Occup Environ Med*. 2018 Jul;60(7):589-593.

Combs B, Heaton K, et al. A descriptive study of musculoskeletal injuries in long-haul truck drivers: A NIOSH national survey. *Workplace Health Saf*. 2018 Mar [Ahead of print].

✦Cuervo I, Leopold L, Baron S. Promoting community preparedness and resilience: A Latino immigrant community-driven project following Hurricane Sandy. *Am J Public Health*. 2017 Sep;107(S2):S161-S164.

Cunningham TR, Guerin RJ, et al. Differences in safety training among smaller and larger construction firms with non-native workers. *Saf Sci*. 2018 Mar;103:62-69.

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Davis HT, Lynes C, Corley HR. The South Carolina Environmental Public Health Tracking Program's role in monitoring and reducing occupational exposure to lead. *J Public Health Manag Pract*. 2017 Sep/Oct;23:S53-S59.

Dement JM, Welch LS, et al. Longitudinal decline in lung function among older construction workers. *Occup Environ Med*. 2017 Oct;74(10):701-708.

Dugan AG, Punnett L. Dissemination and implementation research for occupational safety and health. *Occup Health Sci*. 2017 Dec;1(1-2):29-45.

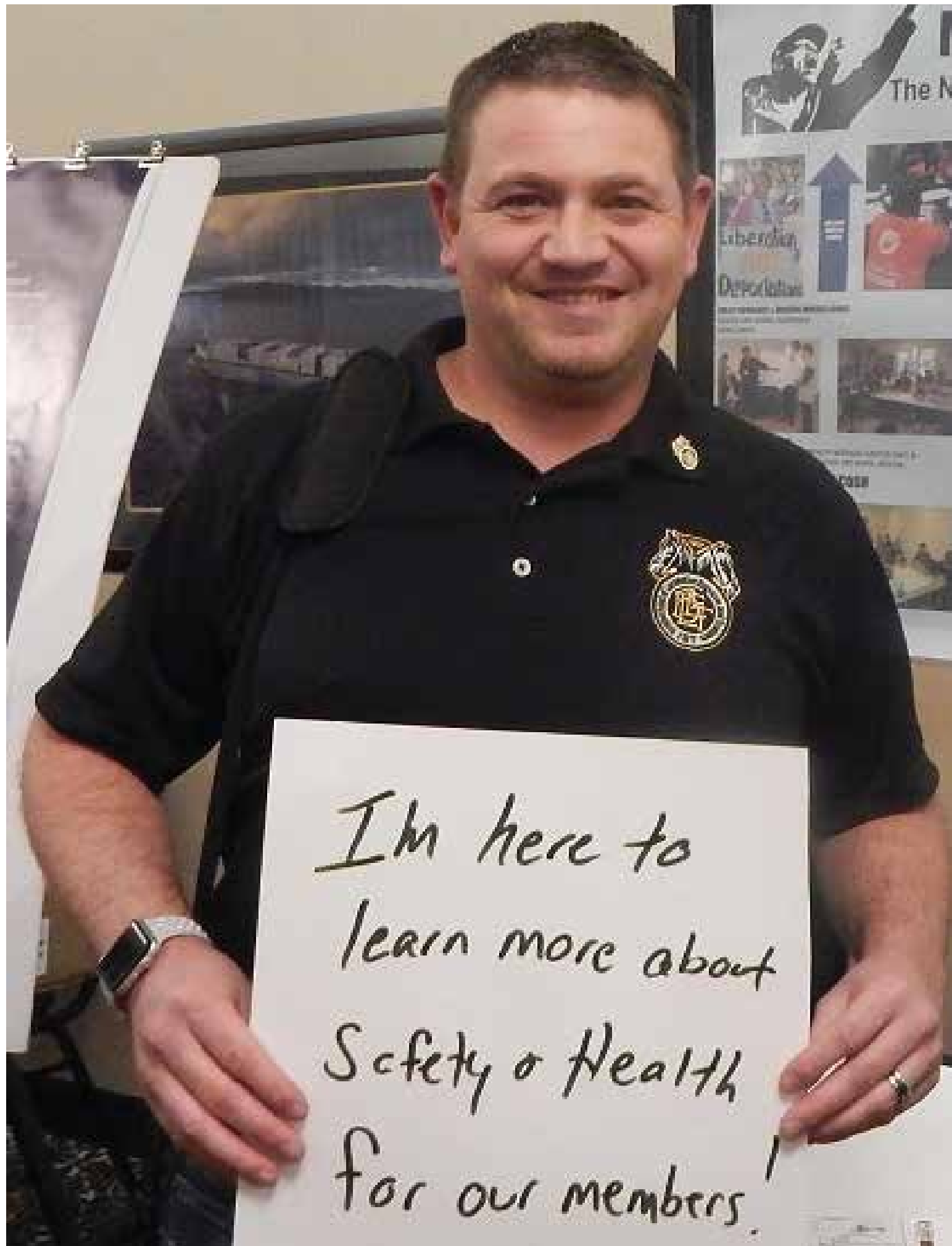
Dumas O, Varraso R, et al. Association of hand and arm disinfection with asthma control in U.S. nurses. *Occup Environ Med*. 2018 May;75(5):378-381.

Dzhambov A, Dimitrova D. Occupational noise exposure and the risk for work-related injury: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Ann Work Expo Health*. 2017 Nov 10;61(9):1037-1053.

Engel CL, Rasanayagam MS, et al. Work and breast cancer: Recommendations to address research needs. *New Solut*. 2018 May;28(1):79-95.

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- Fox MA, Spicer K, et al. Implications of applying cumulative risk assessment to the workplace. *Environ Int*. 2018 Mar 29;115:230-238.
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- Griffin SC, Bui DP, et al. Risk management interventions to reduce injuries and maximize economic benefits in U.S. mining. *J Occup Environ Med*. 2018 Mar;60(3):226-233.
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