

STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
CONTRACT SIGNATURE SHEET

☐ Sectarian
☒ Non-Sectarian

HEALTH AND SAFETY WORKSHOP
WOMEN'S TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
REPORT

Seven women attending the Women's Trade Union Leadership Conference in May chose the health and Safety Workshop led by the TCLC. They were from five area unions representing both public and private sector workers. Acting as co-leader of the two-hour workshop, along with the TCLC Health/Safety Trainer, was a member of UAW 1326 who is Chair of their Health/Safety Committee.

The session was organized as follows:

Introduction: name, union, job, knowledge/concern about any hazards at work, previous experience with health/safety

No More Victims video - first section

LF introduces focus questions:

What tools do workers at Bill's plant have to identify exposure problems?

How can they tell if their exposures have caused or could cause disease?

Discussion of video - large group - list on board (LF); RW make sure all brought up (see attached list)

Rest of video, then break into groups and discuss

What would you do if you were as angry as Lisa

How could you involve your co-workers?

Reports from groups - focus discussion on formalizing H/S in union structure and contract language

Summing up to include limits of OSHA and push for support of OSHA Reform

A very extensive packet of materials was given to each workshop participant. The materials were also distributed to many other of the 60+ Conference participants.

Evaluations were very favorable about the use of the video to help stimulate the lively discussions. Also noted was the value of the materials distributed. One evaluation criticized the limited emphasis on safety (as compared to health), but noted that we had covered a lot in a short time.

For future: try to arrange preregistration for workshops of this type and do preconference survey to try to narrow areas to cover, since time is so short.

WORKERS COMPENSATION WORKSHOP
REPORT

Thirty-nine people, representing 18 trade unions, 8 non-unionized workplaces and one COSH group attended our Workers Compensation Workshop held on June 30. Union members came from 10 public sector and 7 private sector workplaces, with one union representing workers in a dual sector workplace. Non-unionized workers came from one public sector and 5 private sector workplaces.

Tony Gaenslen, a local attorney, led the two-hour workshop. A 45-minute opening presentation was followed by more than an hour and a half of questions.

Each participant received a packet of material including the NYCOSH handbook; brochures from IWONY, RESPECT, CNYOHCC and the Workers' Compensation Board; an Attorney General's report on Occupational Disease; and a statement on the Workers' Compensation system from the Labor Coalition.

Evaluations were extremely positive about the packet of materials and the examples and particular cases Tony cited in dealing with specific questions. A number of participants, though, cited the lack of structure and organization of the lecture portion as problematic (as well as the stuffy, hot room!).

Suggestions for follow-up included formation of a 'watch-dog' group to monitor state-wide issues on workers' comp; additional in-depth training in order to assist co-workers; holding a mock hearing; more workshops, to cover: an occupational physician's experience with the workers' comp system, toxics, OSHA, disability and death benefits; a newsletter updating workers on legal or award changes and problems with on-going comp cases.

Workshop participants in their evaluations, were extremely positive about the workshop, the exercises and exchange of information, and the packet of materials. The cultural segment received mixed reactions.

Suggestions for follow-up activities included:

1. Produce a quarterly health and safety newsletter for school personnel and parents.
2. Write articles on health and safety topics that could go in Union or OSA newsletters.
3. Form a Districtwide Schools Health and Safety Committee.

HEALTH HAZARDS IN OUR SCHOOLS REPORT

Thirty teachers, support staff and parents from 18 area schools attended. Participants came from 8 unions and a few nonprofit organizations.

TCLC Health/Safety Trainers helped participants generate a list of health/safety problems, which included , and workers' eye, nose or throat irritation, nausea, dizziness or headaches while in the schools. Greg Siwinski, Industrial Hygienist from CNYOHCC (Central New York Occupational Health Clinical Center) then explained the causes and effects of poor indoor air quality (IAQ), and ways to investigate and correct it. Following this, everyone worked to devise strategies for resolving an IAQ problem in a hypothetical school.

Discussion followed with the lead taken by staff from Boynton Middle School in Ithaca who have recently succeeded in getting the school district to begin to 'clear the air.' Complaints at Boynton date to 1989. Although complaints were filed and the school district did take a few air tests during the next few years, nothing improved.

This spring the Boynton Environmental Team (BET) circulated and tabulated a health questionnaire to which 75% of the staff responded. Over half are suffering from headaches, sinus congestion, lack of air circulation and/or eye irritation and 'experience relief upon leaving school'. Close to 75% are so bothered that they either take medication before coming to or while at work.

BET and the ITA (Ithaca Teachers Association) then called on the Superintendent to hire an Industrial Hygienist to evaluate the school environment and make recommendations. Management agreed and is allowing BET to determine who will be hired. It is also, finally, beginning to work on the Boynton ventilation system, replacing the fiberglass ducts.

Workshop participants, in their evaluations, were extremely positive both about Greg's presentation, the exercises and exchange of information, and the packet of materials. The cultural segment received mixed evaluations.

Suggestions for follow-up activities included:

1. Produce a quarterly health and safety newsletter for school personnel and parents.
2. Write articles on health and safety topics that could go in union or PTA newsletters.
3. Form a districtwide Schools Health and Safety Committee.

Workers Memorial Day events

are information on the health and safety language in our
ous contracts.

Hold another 3-hour workshop, or perhaps and all-day conference.

Memorial Service and OSHA Reform Rally

Despite rain and cold, 75 people gathered April 28 to attend a memorial service dedicated to the 75 workers who died in 1970, followed by a rally for OSHA Reform. David White, activist Dorothy Calton, a long associate of Martin Luther King Jr., and former Director of Community Education for the AIA, gave the invocation. The speakers told the story of a woman, "Twenty Five Dead, Fifty-Five Injured" by David White, Dr. Michael Lax, Medical Director of the Central NY Correctional Health Clinical Center spoke on worker safety. Captain Robert [United University Professionals, NAF, and Bob [OSHA Local 1300] had these present in slogans "Amnesty Grace," "More Than a Paycheck," "Coal Tailor," and "Unholy Trinity." There were OSHA Reform post cards were filled out, and we will be continuing this drive during May.

Unions represented included Bricklayers Local 17, OSHA Local 100, CSEA Local 835, Itasca Teachers Association 1987-88, Laborers Local 589, Machinists Local 1800, AFSCME Local 1210, Public Employees Federation Local 251, Teachers Local 127, and Locals 402, 1324, 1774 and 2300, United University Professionals and 37507.

Moment of Silence

In Itasca the moment of silence was observed for the 75 area residents by the city's fire horns. Fireworks at 7 PM on April 28 the horns sounded the traditional "death toll" 7-5. The 7-5-7-5 signal normally used for the death of a person. Also in Itasca, the Cornell University choir sang "Unholy Trinity Forever" and "Amazing Grace" in honor of the victims.