



**General Field Talking Points  
for  
Workers' Memorial Day 2021**

- Each year on April 28, Workers Memorial Day, working people throughout the world mourn for the people who were hurt or killed on the job. The best way to ensure that workplaces are safe is to make sure workers have the freedom to join a union. Let's fight for and pass the PRO Act to guarantee this right.
- Together, workers can fight to make their issues a priority. Together, workers can fight to keep and create good jobs in this country. Together, workers can fight for safe jobs.
- Today—broadcasting virtually in town squares and union halls, in front of manufacturing plants and memorials, in community after community -- we have organized actions and observances to do just that -- to fight for safe workplaces and good jobs -- jobs that pay decent wages and provide health care and pensions.
- Today we see an overall decline in the quality of jobs unlike any we have seen in decades. Lower-paying jobs, gig economy workers with lousy benefits are just the beginning. The increased push for production, growing use of subcontracting and outsourcing, rampant worker misclassification, mandatory overtime, and work process changes take a significant toll on workers.
- During the COVID-19 Pandemic, many workers have experienced stress concerning limited workplace safety and health protections, issuance of weak non-legally enforceable agency guidelines, a lack of enforcement of current OSHA regulations, weakened anti-retaliation protections, and concerning return to work policies that offer little or no health and safety protections that recognize the airborne transmissibility of the virus.
- The latest 2019 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) fatal, non-fatal injury and illness data details:
  - There are approximately 3 million non-fatal injuries each year – including injuries experienced by truck drivers, sanitation workers, and warehouse workers who suffer epidemic rates of repetitive motion injuries and musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).
  - 5,333 workers were killed on the job;
  - An estimated 50,000-60,000 workers died from work-related illnesses;

- This is the fifth consecutive increase in annual workplace fatalities;
  - **A worker died every 99 minutes from a work-related injury in 2019;**
  - Transportation incidents remained the most frequent type of fatal event at 2,122, accounting for 40 percent of all work-related fatalities;
  - Driver/sales workers and truck drivers had the most fatalities of any broad occupation group. Among all detailed occupations, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers had the most fatalities;
  - Fatalities to Black or African American (non-Hispanic) workers increased.
- If unions don't fight for safe workplaces, and to keep good jobs in the United States, then who will?
  - Union members have long pushed for safe jobs and for good jobs. We fought for and won the OSHA law 50 years ago, in 1970, and the federal laws to protect miners in 1969 and 1977. We have organized workers to fight for safe workplaces, to collectively bargain for contract language that protects us where federal laws cannot. We have also formed and worked on safety and health committees to improve our workplaces' safety and health. We fought for and won a 40-hour workweek. We fought for and won healthcare benefits and strong pensions.
  - We still have a lot of work to do to make workplaces much safer and ensure that significant standards are issued and enforced to protect workers.
  - Workers Memorial Day 2021 is a day when we call for an end to such injustices and rededicate ourselves to the fight to make workplaces safer and make our community stronger.
  - Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, the great labor leader of the turn-of-the-century coal mines, called us to "Mourn for the Dead, and Fight for the Living!"
  - We mourn, we remember, and we ***Renew the Promise for Safe Jobs for All!***