

# Labor Occupational Health Program

# MONITOR



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**THE UNSEEN HAZARD:**

**STRESS ON THE JOB**



**On the Cover:**

Shoe factory worker in Nelsonville, Ohio. Break time is important for relieving stress, a hidden hazard of many jobs. (See pages 7-9.) (Photo: Ken Light.)

# Labor Occupational Health Program MONITOR

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Stress is the suspected cause of a wide variety of occupational illnesses, from headaches to heart disease. New techniques are helping workers reduce stress, however, and the Workers' Compensation system is increasingly recognizing stress diseases as job-related.

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INCURABLE  
CHEST  
COMPLAINTS  
WARD



## Committee for Fair Treatment of Injured Workers

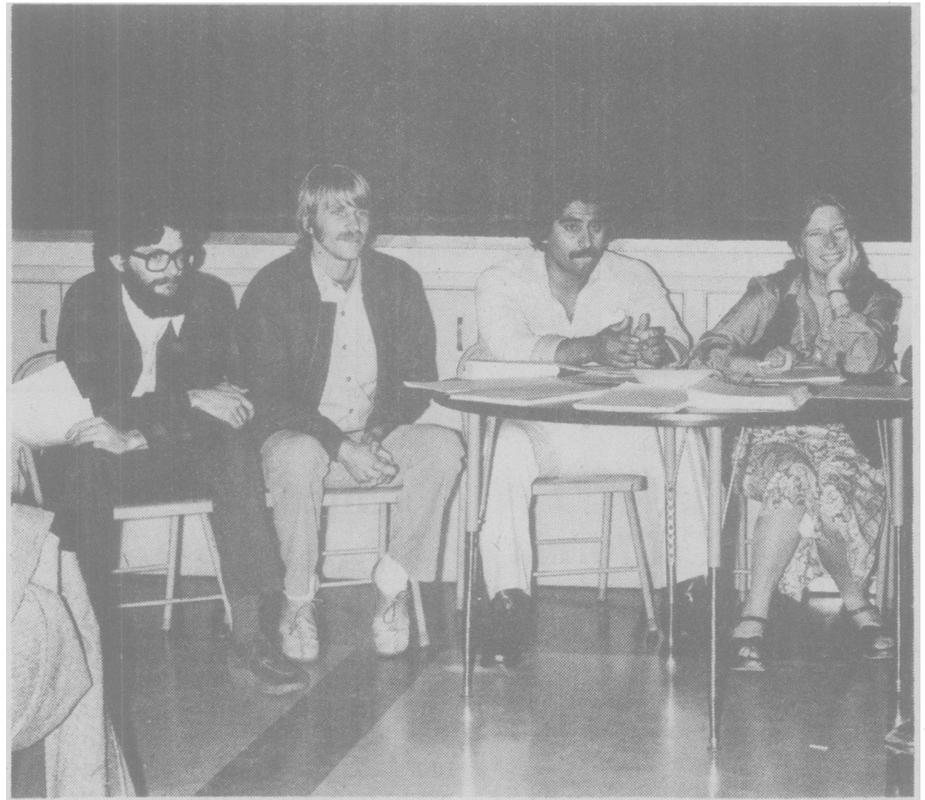
*By Kate Caldwell*

Due to an industrial accident, injured workers can face a future of unemployment, loss of seniority, wages, and other benefits that they have earned through previous years of hard work. For those unfamiliar with the procedures for qualifying for Workers' Compensation, the process of obtaining full disability benefits and re-entry rights can be tedious and wearing. The Committee for Fair Treatment of Injured Workers (CFTIW) is a San Diego-based group, recently formed, which has developed an advocate system to provide technical and legal information for individuals seeking Workers' Compensation disability benefits. The Committee also provides legal assistance to workers who find themselves discriminated against when attempting to return to the job market after recovering from an injury.

Mary Quartiano, contact person for the Committee, points out that there are several obstacles which can prevent a worker from receiving full benefits under Workers' Compensation law. Lack of understanding of administrative requirements and procedures, for instance, can hinder an applicant's chances. Locating adequate legal assistance is another such problem. It is difficult to locate lawyers with expertise in worker injuries and compensation law since the profits are comparatively low and the time involved can be lengthy, sometimes extending over several years. CFTIW has located lawyers who are willing to handle such cases, and acts as a referral service.

Another sensitive area which the worker may confront and which the Committee has begun to explore is locating medical professionals with specialty training in work related injuries and diseases.

When a worker has sustained an injury serious enough to require extended medical treatment, Mary points out, that person will most likely also have



*Panelists from Committee for Fair Treatment of Injured Workers lead discussion at San Diego premiere showing of *Song of the Canary*. Left to right: Greig Robinson, Machinists Local 389; Mike Doering, former shipyard welder; Reynaldo Inchayregui, Business Agent, Iron Workers Local 627; and Ruth Heifetz, M.D., U.C. San Diego School of Medicine. (Photo courtesy of CFTIW.)*

undergone serious emotional and financial stress. The Committee provides moral support along with technical assistance in filling out and filing forms, developing documentation, and legal procedures. "It can be a lonely battle," Mary says. "We try to provide encouragement as well as help for these individuals."

Through its efforts, CFTIW has roused the interest of community leaders, local health organizations, and unions, and has stirred response from Sacramento. Its list of sponsors includes the Iron Workers, ILWU, AFSCME, and AFT, along with several San Diego health and safety professionals.

The group's future aim is to "spotlight the growing problem of health and safety on the job." "People are

hungry for health and safety information," Mary says. The Committee hopes to extend its efforts into the worker community through educational and self-help information. "Our efforts are divided between health and safety concerns and legal struggles." Recently it has begun to research the licensing of employee clinics.

"We're still new," says Mary. "But there is a need for this kind of information and we can only work to answer the need. The right to work and the struggle against discrimination is ongoing."

The Committee may be reached by writing: Committee for Fair Treatment of Injured Workers, c/o Mary Quartiano, P.O. Box 99011, San Diego, CA 92109.



## OSHA 'New Directions' Program Roundup

*With this issue, Monitor begins a series of regular reports on the activities of various health and safety projects in the West which have received funding from the OSHA 'New Directions' program. The program, established in 1978, provides funding to unions, universities, public interest and management groups.*

### Federated Fire Fighters of California

Firefighting is considered the most hazardous occupation in the United States, with an occupational fatality rate higher than that for mining, construction, agriculture, or police. Statistics show that the firefighter has less than a 50-50 chance of making it through the year without being injured on the job.

Realizing the need for a well-organized information and training program for its members, the Federated Fire Fighters of California is setting up a Center under a New Directions grant from federal OSHA. The center will develop a library of resources including audiovisual materials. These materials will cover safety hazards, toxic chemical exposures, and physical fitness (diet and exercise). Eventually the Center will have an OSHA Hotline information service.

The Federated's program, the only one of its kind in the country, may serve as a model for other firefighter organizations. For more information, contact Robert Griffin, Federated Fire Fighters of California, 1713 J St., #3, Sacramento, CA 95814. Phone: (916) 441-7650.

### Pacific Studies Center

The Pacific Studies Center in Mountain View, California, has received a grant from the federal OSHA New Directions program to support PHASE—its Project on Health and Safety in Electronics. PHASE, which has several paid staff members and numerous volunteers and consultants, was created to research hazards in the electronics industry; to provide information about these hazards to electronics workers, who are largely unorganized; and to develop community concern and involvement in health and safety problems in the electronics industry. PHASE's offices are on the Santa Clara peninsula, known as the "Silicon Valley", where the electronics industry employs over 100,000 area residents.

The group has an "Electronics Hazard Hotline" and encourages workers to call for information on hazards. It is organizing a medical and legal workshop for local health practitioners and Worker's Compensation lawyers to acquaint them with occupational health problems in the industry. PHASE is also writing fact sheets on specific electronics hazards, with an upcoming one on trichloroethylene. Direct training of workers will begin in the summer of 1979.

For more information, contact: PHASE, Pacific Studies Center, 867 West Dana #201, Mountain View, CA 94041. Phone: (415) 969-SAFE.



*PHASE members testified at federal OSHA's regional public hearing on worker access to medical records in San Francisco in December.*

### UCLA

The Center for Labor Research and Education at the University of California, Los Angeles, has hired a full-time occupational health nurse to work with Jack Blackburn, Labor Center Director, on OSHA New Directions grant activities. The UCLA program plans an initial health and safety conference on May 4, 1979, in Los Angeles. Labor, community groups, and vocational teachers will be involved in the program in order to broaden the interest in health and safety in the Los Angeles area.

The UCLA program also expects to be involved in providing safety and health training to employees working on construction of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS). This training is part of the Joint Voluntary Cal/OSHA self-inspection program established between the California Building and Construction Trades Council and the National Constructors Association.

Address for the UCLA program is: Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024. Phone: (213) 725-3537.

## University of Oregon

The University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) sponsored an all-day workshop on occupational safety and health for 40 union representatives in February in Portland. Participants included construction workers, needle trades workers, bakers, woodworkers, machinists, millwrights, teachers and other public workers.

Jim Lapping, Director of Safety and Occupational Health, AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department, urged that the labor movement exert pressure to assure the proper functioning of state plans in safety and health. Some program panelists, including Quinton Rahberger of the International Woodworkers of America, joined LERC staff in stressing the need for effective union education on how to exercise workers' rights on safety and health.

LERC, a statewide labor education program established by the Oregon Legislature in 1977, hosted the Western Regional Meeting of the University and College Labor Education Association (UCLEA) in December, where Berkeley's Janet Bertinuson described some of the experiences of LOHP and how Berkeley could work with other UCLEA members—especially UCLA and the University of Oregon. That cooperation was exhibited in the recent Western Occupational Lead Exposure Conference in San Francisco, as well as in the Portland staff training session.

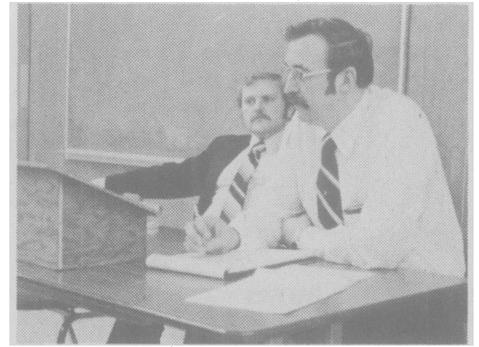
LERC staff members have benefited from professional training programs and sessions with LOHP and at the School for Workers at the University of Wisconsin, as well as a series of governmental programs (OSHA and others) and labor organization training efforts. The most recent training experience was a program organized by the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades in Portland.

Occupational health and safety problems for women workers will be the subject of a May workshop to be co-sponsored by LERC and the Oregon Coalition for Labor Union Women (CLUW).

Safety and health training is becoming a regular part of LERC's courses offered statewide on such subjects as



*Jim Lapping. (Photo courtesy of Oregon Labor Press.)*



*Oregon safety and health workshop participants included Quinton Rahberger (left) of the Woodworkers and Roger Lyons of the Machinists. (Photo courtesy of Oregon Labor Press.)*

basic union leadership and contract negotiations, which LERC has presented this year with the: Molders; Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union; Bakers; Nurses; American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees; and other groups. Residential programs this summer with a variety of unions will have safety and health components. Job safety and health will be an expanding part of the over-all effort by the University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center as it continues to serve the labor movement in Oregon.

LERC is offering short direct training courses with Oregon labor organi-

zations. Also, LERC is beginning an intense effort to train labor representatives as trainers on occupational safety and health for other workers. This latter program, to begin in April, will mix classroom instruction with field experience. Trainees will spend three days per month over three months in the pilot project. University credits are available for the limited enrollment program, and interested individuals and labor organizations are invited to contact LERC (University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403; phone: (503) 686-5054).

—Steve Deutsch

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## Pacific Northwest Labor College

An OSHA New Directions program planning grant has been awarded to Pacific Northwest Labor College in Portland, Oregon, for the development of a training, service, and education program for labor organizations and their members in the Pacific Northwest.

The region encompasses Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, as well as western Montana and northern Utah. This area has about one million members in labor organizations. There are few international or national union headquarters located in the area. PNLC plans to perform a study on the needs that would be involved in a concerted and concentrated training, service,

and educational effort in job safety and health for all of the workers of these states.

During the course of the next several months, the project coordinator, John Lund, will be in the field contacting officers and members of labor organizations to attempt to determine their OSHA service needs. As examples, these might include the areas of enforcement, standard setting, appeals processing, or forming and using safety committees.

Lund will also ask what kinds of training and educational programs labor organizations see as being necessary to help meet their needs. Some

*continued on p. 15*



## A Contract Negotiation Checklist: Part 2

by Paul Chown  
LOHP Labor Coordinator

*(In the last issue of Monitor, Shoptalk presented sample checklists which local union negotiators or negotiating committees could use in preparing to argue for health and safety improvements in the contract. Part 2, which concludes this series, offers a checklist for an inventory of the workplace, a useful supplement to the analysis of the old contract and the employer's practices which were described in Part 1.)*

### Inventory the Workplace

*Housekeeping and specific work area conditions:*

1. Does the employer furnish cold drinking water in enough locations to satisfy worker needs?
2. What wash-up facilities do you have? Are there hot and cold running water, towels, and soap? Is wash-up allowed on company time? Before lunch? Before going home?
3. Does the employer furnish a lunch room or cafeteria? Is it sufficient for the needs of workers? Is it kept clean and well-ventilated?
4. Are there shower facilities?
5. Are lockers furnished for the convenience of the workers?
6. Is the lighting at the workplace satisfactory?
7. Is the ventilation satisfactory? Is there sufficient air conditioning and/or heat?
8. Is the janitorial service adequate? Does the employer keep the workplace clean? Is the general housekeeping of the plant good? Are traffic aisles kept

clear? Are emergency exits kept clear? Are floors kept clean of oil, grease, and other debris?

*Safety equipment furnished by the employer:*

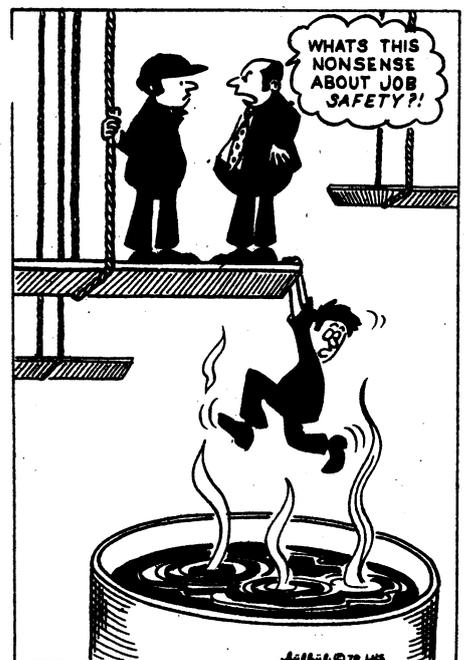
1. If safety shoes are needed or required, does the employer pay the full cost?
2. Does the employer pay for prescription glasses for workers requiring safety glasses of that type?
3. Does the employer furnish work clothes? Does the employer pay for laundering them?
4. Does the employer furnish goggles, respirators, and/or hearing protection equipment which is made to fit the individual worker?
5. Does the employer furnish special equipment such as welding gloves, rubber boots, rain gear, and other special protective equipment?

*Health protection and medical treatment:*

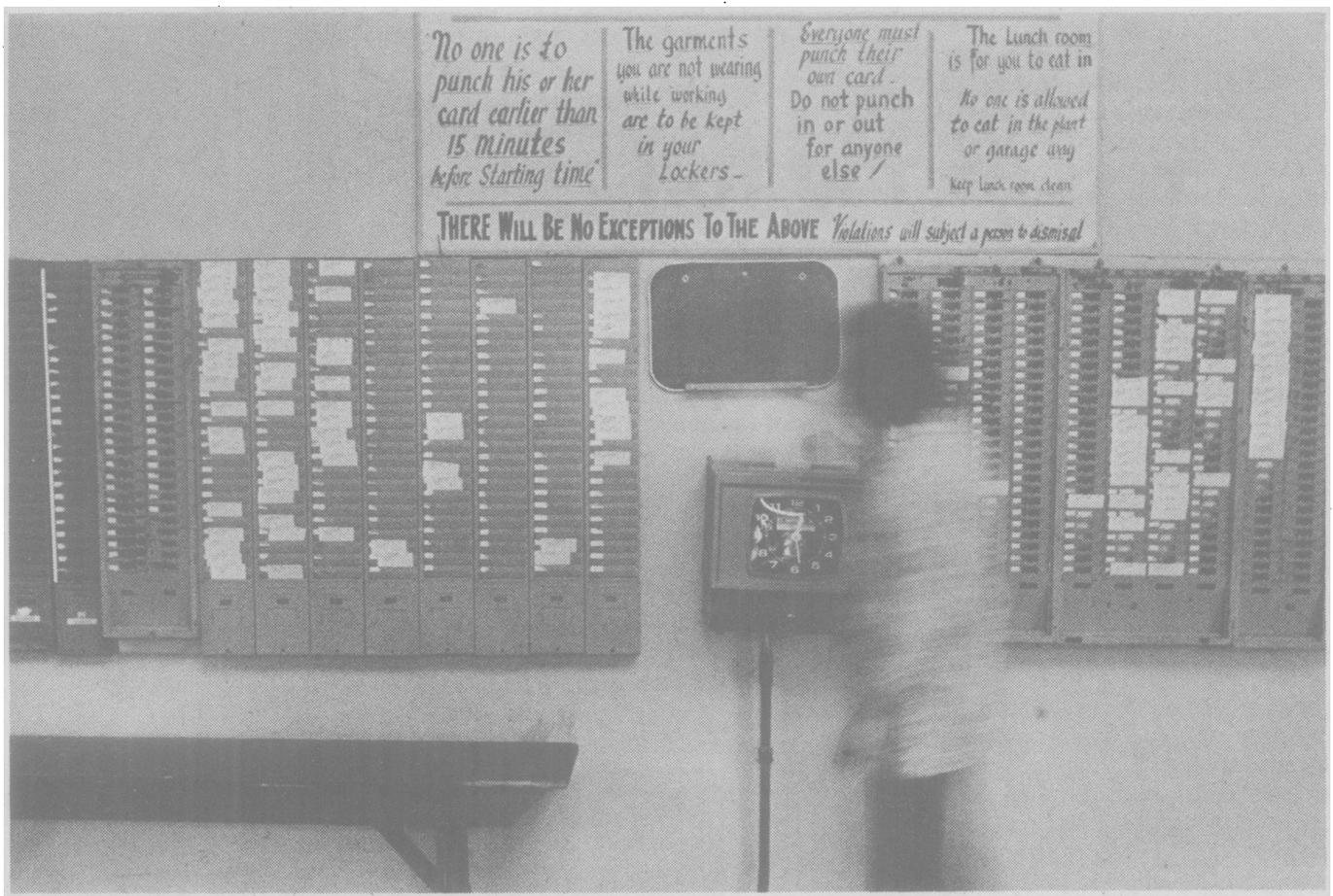
1. Does the employer have a medical department? Is a nurse in the plant on one or more shifts? A medical doctor?
2. If not, are there first aid facilities available with trained personnel to handle emergencies in each department?
3. Is transportation readily available to take injured or ill workers for treatment?
4. If toxic substances, radioactive materials, or other dangerous substances or processes are in use by the employer, are all exposed workers notified of the hazards, what medical symptoms to be aware of, and other cautionary information?
5. Are workers exposed to hazardous substances such as lead given regular

medical monitoring by the employer? Are these workers told the results of the monitoring?

6. Does the employer regularly monitor the workplace in order to protect and guard the health of workers?
7. Does the contract and/or employer provide for breaks from the work routine to relieve problems of stress?
8. For workers whose jobs expose them to excessive noise, does the employer provide a "quiet" or soundproof room for breaks and lunch, so as to enable workers to get relief from the excessive noise levels?
9. Are workers trained in safety and health procedures when hired? When upgraded or transferred to other work either permanently or temporarily?
10. Does a worker or group of workers have the right to refuse work under unsafe conditions?



Liberation News Service



## *The Unseen Hazard* **Stress on the Job**

By Janet Bertinuson

Photos by Ken Light and Andrea Hricko

Phones ring. . . customers complain. . . the production line speeds up. . . quotas have increased. . . your job bores you. . . the machines around you are constantly noisy. And off the job a family member is ill. . . your car breaks down. . . you win the lottery. . . you get married. . . or as a woman worker you juggle work, home, and child-care responsibilities. While all this goes on outside your body, internally changes are taking place to help you cope with increased demands created by the situation you are facing. The demands are called *stressors* and the response of your body is called *stress*.

### **WHAT IS STRESS?**

Stress is the response of the body to

any demand put on it. It is not simply nervous tension, although the symptoms of stress may include nervousness or irritability. In fact, the stress response is your body's way of gearing up to protect it from harm. When faced with a demanding situation, the body starts a series of internal reactions which include increase in heart beat and breathing rates, increased secretion of stomach acid, and release of hormones that affect metabolism. Emergency release of adrenaline occurs, as well as a rise in cholesterol and energy-rich sugar levels in the blood. More energy goes to your muscles, and the stomach becomes inactive. These are acute reactions to a stressor.

In normal circumstances the body

returns to a balanced state after the stressful situation has been dealt with. But constant demands keep the body off balance, so that protective mechanisms actually become destructive. On a long-term basis this can contribute to serious diseases.

### **WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF STRESS?**

No one really knows all the diseases to which stress contributes, but workers in stressful job situations do have a higher rate of certain diseases. Studies of air traffic controllers found higher than normal rates of peptic ulcers, high

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## The Unseen Hazard

# Stress on the Job

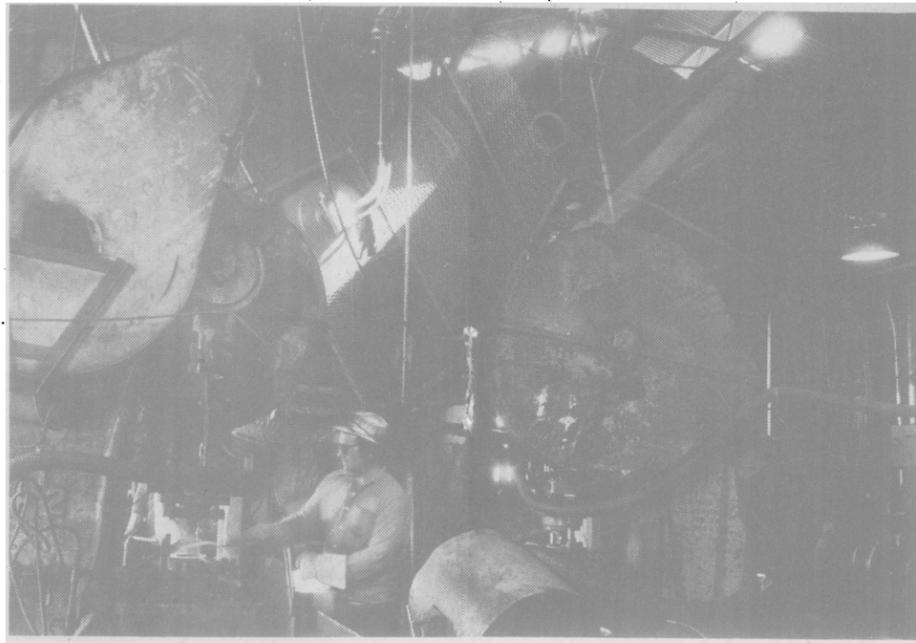
continued from p. 7

blood pressure, and diabetes. In addition, stressful job or life situations have been linked to high cholesterol levels, an increased risk of arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), heart attack and stroke, migraine headaches, and skin rashes. If a worker has a preexisting medical problem, such as emphysema, stressful job situations may aggravate the illness. In California, the Industrial Welfare Commission is considering a study on the relationship between overtime and injuries with special emphasis on relatedness to job stress.

Effects of continued stress on mental health are not as well-documented or understood. However, studies show that persons in stressful jobs do develop mental health problems or emotional illnesses such as: chronic anxiety and worry; depression, possibly to the point of psychosis; and psychosomatic ill-

nesses. In addition, alcohol and drugs are often used as a reactive method of coping with job pressures and demands.

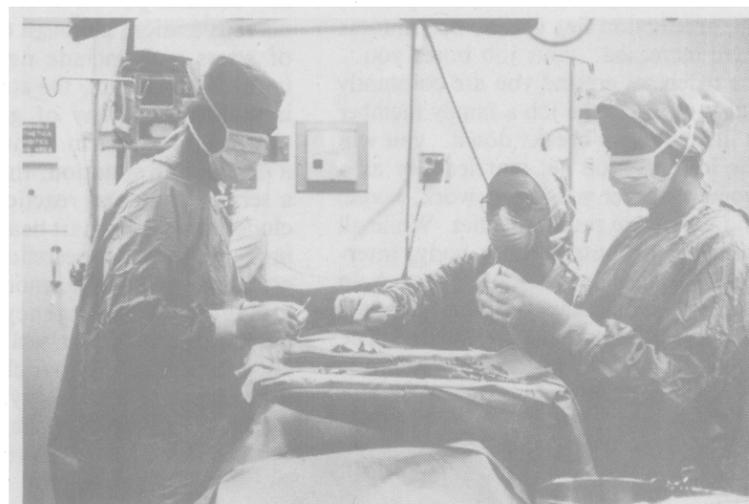
Many of the above illnesses are now compensable (under Workers' Compensation) in major industrial states, and in several instances there is a *presumption of work relatedness* in the cases of some public employees, i.e. firefighters and police officers. This means that after so many years of service certain illnesses (e.g. heart attacks) are presumed *by law* to be work-related and therefore compensable.



(Photo: Ken Light.)



(Photo: Andrea Hricko.)



(Photo: Andrea Hricko.)



(Photo: Andrea Hricko.)

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Stress reduction focuses on the individual and the work environment. Bio-feedback, stress reduction techniques, and meditation have all been used successfully to help people cope with demands or lack of satisfaction in their jobs. But there are other methods that can improve the worker's environment such as:

- Increasing worker participation in workplace decisions through work councils or labor-management committees;
- Letting workers change jobs and acquire new skills;
- Fitting the job to the person; that is, ensuring that the demands of the job can be met by the person and that workers' skills are not underutilized;
- Providing for exercise programs and adequate rest periods;
- Providing for more independence;
- Changing the style of supervision: providing supervisors with training in human relations;
- Lowering production standards;
- Redesigning the job;
- Making the workplace safe and healthy;
- Doing stress studies to determine the relationship between work requirements and effects on physical and mental health.

Section 12 of Norway's Work Environment Act emphasizes many of these methods for eliminating stressful situations on the job, and should serve as a model for this country. It contains several important requirements:

**"Employees shall be afforded opportunities for personal development and the maintenance and development of their skills. Monotonous, repetitive, and machine or assembly work that does not permit alteration of pace shall be avoided. Jobs shall be designed to allow some possibility for variation, for contact with other workers, . . . and for information and feedback to employees concerning production requirements and performance."**

## WHAT ARE COMMON JOB-RELATED STRESSORS?

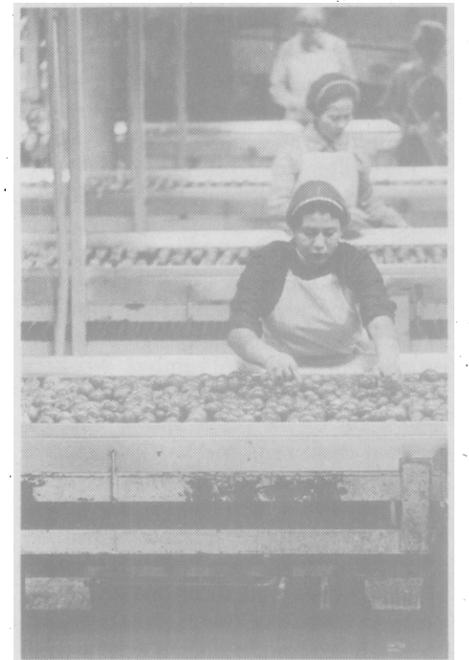
A complete list of stressors is hard to compile because the possibilities are almost endless, and people react differently to demands; that is, a stressor may affect one person only slightly, while another person reacts more strongly. For example, one person making a speech may get an upset stomach; another may get keyed up in anticipation of a pleasurable experience. However, some common stressors are:

- Lack of job security;
- Lack of participation in decision-making;
- Too much, or too little, work;
- Too much, or too little, supervision;
- Little job satisfaction;
- No opportunity to learn new skills;
- Monotonous or repetitive tasks;
- Too fast, or too slow, a pace;
- Confinement to the work area;
- Rigid work roles;
- Little positive support;
- Threat of physical violence;
- Working in an environment known to be unsafe or unhealthy.

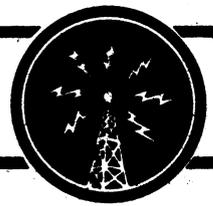
Adopting these same principles may be difficult because of the nature of certain jobs, or because management is likely to fight many of these changes. But there are other avenues. Developing contract language related to stress reduction and adequate staffing patterns is one way to approach the problem. And using union grievance procedures can also be effective.

And what about using OSHA? Although neither Federal nor California OSHA have regulations covering stressful job situations, in California it is possible to request a special order to protect workers if it is demonstrated that standards do not address a recognized problem. (A request for a special order on increased staffing requirements in a mental hospital is an example.)

That stress is now recognized as a real occupational problem is evidenced by the increasing numbers of workers who have won compensation cases for both mental and physical stress-related conditions. However, when a worker reaches the point of filing a compensation claim, the damage has already been done. Reducing stress-producing conditions in the workplace through concerted action will help prevent stress-related illnesses before they occur.



(Photo: Ken Light.)



## Court Action on the OSHA Lead Standard

On March 1, 1979, a federal appeals court ruled that the Labor Department could go ahead with much of its new lead standard while the court proceeds with challenges to the regulation. (See January-February *Monitor* for details of the regulation.) The standard had been issued in November, 1978, and was scheduled to go into effect on February 1st; OSHA had delayed the effective date of the standard, waiting for this initial court decision.

In the ruling, the court allowed the Labor Department to go ahead with enforcing the exposure limit of 50ug/m<sup>3</sup>. But it delayed requirements for engineering controls at the workplace, thereby allowing employers to meet the standard by the use of respirators. The court let stand provisions that require employers to conduct monitoring to determine air lead levels and to provide medical tests to lead-exposed workers. But it stayed (that is, removed), at least for the time being, provisions giving workers the right to have a second and third doctor review their medical cases if the workers did not agree with the findings of a company physician.

Very significantly, the court kept intact the lead standard's "medical removal protection" provisions. Although two earlier OSHA standards contained limited versions of these rate retention protections, the lead standard is the most far-reaching in that it requires employers to remove workers with high blood lead levels from high lead areas of the plant and to guarantee that these removed workers receive all the benefits (pay, seniority, fringes) that they would have received had they not been removed. Labor organizations had fought very hard for inclusion of such a provision in the lead standard, arguing that otherwise workers would be reluctant to have medical tests performed for fear they would lose their jobs if they had high blood lead levels.

In its order, the Court stated that it was delaying the effective dates for those parts of the standard that would

require expense in terms of engineering controls, revision of work practices, and construction of new hygiene or lunchroom facilities, while allowing other parts of the standard that would provide protection to employees to be implemented.

Other parts of the standard delayed by the court order include: (1) dates for employer submission of written compliance plans; (2) the requirement that employers provide powered air-supplied respirators whenever employees request them (the court said that these need only be supplied when others do not fit properly to provide protec-

tion); (3) requirements to provide protective clothing and equipment and to implement housekeeping practices (the court granted employers until March 30, 1979, to meet these); and (4) the requirements for conducting biological monitoring of zinc protoporphyrin (ZPP tests).

The effective date of the OSHA lead standard is March 1, 1979, with the exception of the sections noted. The District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals will hear arguments on the lead case in the fall of 1979.

*Andrea Hricko*

## Work Refusal Upheld by Circuit Court

The OSHA regulation permitting employees to refuse to work under dangerous conditions has recently been upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. In a unanimous decision (*Marshall v. Whirlpool Corp. and Detroit Steel Corp.*) issued February 22, the court stated that OSHA regulation 1977.12(b) was "consistent with the Occupational Safety and Health Act and Congressional intent."

This regulation was originally issued because the OSHAct does not specifically entitle workers to refuse dangerous job assignments. The objective was to avoid placing workers in the position of choosing between performing a job and possibly incurring serious injury or even death.

The court concluded that nothing in the OSHAct or its legislative history prevents the refusal to work regulation. The court felt especially justified in its view since the recently enacted Mine Safety and Health Act permits workers exposed to toxic substances to refuse to work.

Prior to this recent decision, another Circuit Court (5th) determined that since the OSHAct does not explicitly give workers the right to refuse, the Secretary of Labor had no authority to issue 1977.12(b). OSHA appealed that decision, but the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case. Now the stage is set because of two contradictory Circuit Court rulings, and the Supreme Court will have to resolve this conflict.

# Karen Silkwood Case Goes to Trial

Four years after the death of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union activist Karen Silkwood, trial has begun in Oklahoma City on an \$11.5 million personal injury suit filed by Silkwood's parents on behalf of her three children.

Defendant in the suit is Kerr-McGee Corporation, Silkwood's former employer, whose Cimarron plant near Oklahoma City, where she worked as a laboratory analyst, manufactured plutonium fuel rods for nuclear reactors.

The trial began March 6 before presiding U.S. District Judge Frank G. Theis.

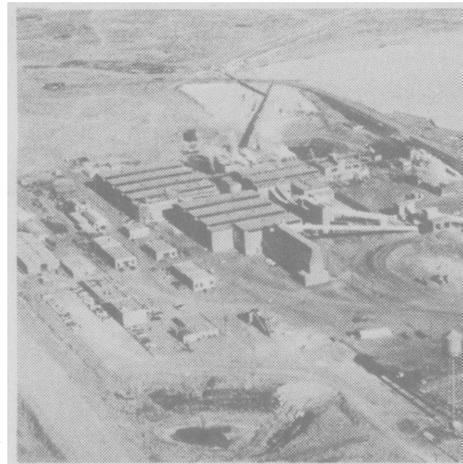
Silkwood, 28, was en route to a meeting with an OCAW representative and a *New York Times* reporter on November 13, 1974, when she was killed in an auto crash. She had spent the previous month investigating plant conditions and documenting allegations of falsification of plutonium fuel rod quality assurance records. The accident followed her mysterious contamination the week before by toxic plutonium found in her apartment—the highest level registering in the food in her refrigerator.

OCAW has charged, based on the report of an accident investigator hired by the union, that Silkwood was run off the road in an attempt to retrieve documents which she was known to have in her possession. A notebook and folder with which she was seen earlier in the evening were not discovered at the accident site and have never been found.

Scope of the Oklahoma City trial is limited to Kerr-McGee's responsibility for off-site nuclear contamination discovered in Silkwood's apartment. OCAW believes the case to be the first off-site nuclear contamination case ever heard in a U.S. court. The plaintiffs charge that Kerr-McGee is liable for injuries or damages which directly resulted from its operation, regardless of negligence or the exercise of due care, because the operation is inherently hazardous. Another charge is that the probability and gravity of harm must be balanced against the utility and social value of the industry, and that this balance will be shown to prove that

simply operating the plant constituted negligence. Finally, the plaintiffs charge that Kerr-McGee did not exercise a reasonable duty of due care sufficient to prevent injury.

Judge Theis, in a September, 1978, order, dismissed the first two counts of the original 1976 lawsuit, in which Silkwood's parents alleged civil rights violations and conspiracy between Kerr-McGee officials and FBI operatives.



(Photo: Atomic Energy Commission.)

## 300 Meet To Fight Job Hazards

In the largest meeting of its kind ever held in New York State, over 300 people from trade unions, universities, and public interest groups met to discuss workplace hazards, including industry and government efforts in the area.

The conference was sponsored by the newly formed Western New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health (WNYCOSH), a regional organization formed by labor and occupational health specialists. One major objective of the organization is to help international unions and other organizations to broaden the "fight-back" effort against unsafe working conditions and the organized right-wing

attack on the OSHA administration.

Meeting in the Buffalo, N.Y., Convention Center, leaders of locals from UAW, USWA, OCAW, IAM, Construction Trades, and many other unions chaired plenary workshop sessions. Representatives from Cornell Labor Relations School, State University of New York at Buffalo, and the Park Cancer Institute also attended.

WNYCOSH leaders called for conference participants to get active in WNYCOSH committees which will be formed around the list of program activities. A conference on lead exposure is being planned in the near future. For further information call (716) 642-0165.

## ASBESTOS SUIT

In one of the largest class action asbestos-related lawsuits yet filed, Local 9 of the Marine and Shipbuilding Workers, AFL-CIO, has filed a billion dollar suit on behalf of more than 5,000 workers at two Southern California shipyards.

The suit charges that because 15 major U.S. asbestos manufacturers concealed and distorted scientific and medical reports on the health dangers of asbestos, they did not take measures necessary for the protection of the health and lives of the plaintiffs.

The union has also asked for a grand jury investigation of the asbestos industry.

Don Vial, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations, said that the suit "illustrates how important it is that workers have access to full information on the hazards of substances they work with." Vial pointed out that the repository/alert system proposed for California would help to ensure that information on hazardous substances would be readily available to workers.

—Cal/OSHA News

# Around the Unions . . .

## Pacific Northwest Woodworkers Study Wood Dust, Chemicals

By **Quintin E. Rahberger**  
*Safety Coordinator*  
*International Woodworkers Region III*

Region III of the International Woodworkers of America, under the direction of Vernon C. "Red" Russell, has made significant progress in protecting and evaluating their members' safety and health. In the past year, Region III completed a study with NIOSH on the effects of exposure to wood dust; began two studies with the University of Washington on cutters in the woods and the effects of working with Pentachlorophenol; and developed a training manual on occupational safety and health for each state in the Region.

The NIOSH Wood Dust Study was a result of worker complaints about the health effects of exposure. Local 3-536, Longview, Washington, through their safety committee, had attempted to bargain for improved ventilation and disposal of wood dust to mitigate exposure. The employer used such arguments as that wood dust is only a nuisance and poses no threat to health. It was also argued that the conditions at the mill were in compliance with the nuisance dust standard. Not convinced by the company arguments, the Local sought help elsewhere.

The Local, with the Region, then attempted to negotiate a cooperative study with the company on the health issue. The company declined, leaving the Region with only one alternative, filing a NIOSH request for a health hazard evaluation.

NIOSH, through the University of Cincinnati, College of Medicine, spent a week conducting tests on the wood dust exposure. Employees involved in the study worked in a shake mill, planer mill, plywood plant, presto log plant, and Press-Tok (chipboard) plant. The findings help to illustrate the reason for many workers suffering

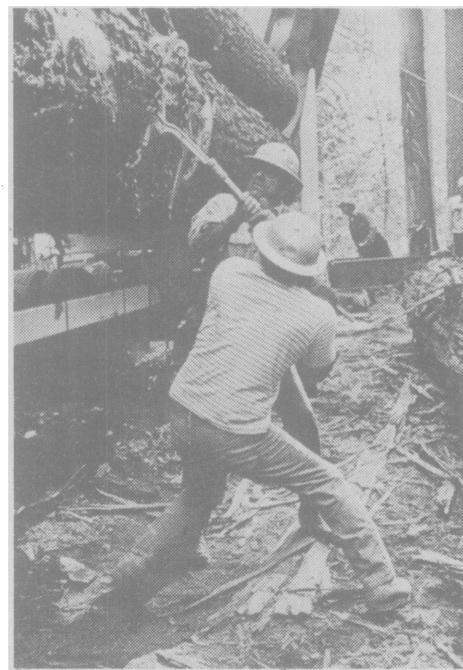
occupational asthma as a result of wood dust exposure. The recommendations of the NIOSH study will have a far-reaching impact on the health of all woodworkers. NIOSH recommends reductions of wood dust exposure limits to specific levels depending on the type of wood, lung function tests for the workers, extensive engineering controls to reduce exposure, and retention of medical records for at least thirty years after termination.

### CUTTERS AND POWER SAWS

Historically, loggers and their concern for safety were a leading factor in the formation of the I.W.A. That concern is now centering on the cutter in the woods and what happens to that individual as a result of working with power saws. Peter Bryese of the University of Washington is working with three Local Unions in the State of Washington to find out just that. A preliminary study is concentrating on lung function, eyesight, hearing, nerve damage due to vibration, and any other degenerative effects of woods work. While not all the results are compiled, there are definite patterns developing demonstrating detrimental effects of working with power saws, particularly nerve damage in the fingers, hands, and arms resulting in Reynaud's Syndrome (white finger) caused by vibration in the saw. Hearing loss is also common, due to high noise levels of the saw motor and chain. It is hoped that this study will point out where changes will have to be implemented, either in work practices; medical exams; machine redesign; or new safety laws protecting cutters in the woods.

### CHEMICALS

Toxic chemicals are becoming more prevalent in the workplace, and the



(Photo: Karen R. Preuss.)

woodworking industry is no exception. Far too many of these chemicals have had only cursory review and testing.

Region III and Locals in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia are working with the University of Washington Department of Environmental Health to study the long-term effects of exposure to Pentachlorophenol (a wood preservative). They will be looking at the total work force exposed to Pentachlorophenol with a special emphasis on the effects on reproduction in women. The on-the-job study has not yet gotten underway, but considerable preliminary work has been completed.

### DEVELOPING THE UNION PROGRAM

All this work in safety and health has been a result of worker education and increased awareness of the job environment. Training manuals in safety and

health have been developed to be used in Local Unions for educational purposes. With the assistance of the Region III Safety Coordinator, Local Union safety committees are educated in how best to structure a safety committee based on whether it is a joint labor-management committee or a labor committee only. From there, discussion continues on the functions of a safety committee. Emphasis is placed on job evaluation, hazard recognition, written work procedures, and job redesign; what to look for in a survey of industrial injuries/illnesses at your plant site.

However, no safety and health program is complete without a basic knowledge of workers' rights under the state and federal OSHA laws. The committee members gain familiarity through their training with the law, including walk-around inspections, closing conferences, and the right to appeal the abatement dates on a citation. There is also em-

phasis placed on the need to participate in appeals proceedings should the employer contest a citation; and if under a state plan, the state's relationship to OSHA, and CASPA (Complaint About State Program Administration) procedures. State and federal discrimination complaints are also covered.

Another topic of these sessions is achieving health and safety goals through collective bargaining on a day-to-day basis, and at contract negotiations. Care is taken to define when an issue becomes a matter for the Local Union and its standing committee or negotiating committee. It is necessary to make sure the employer does not try to play the safety committee against the standing committee. Each Local is asked to evaluate the safety and health language in the contract and discuss how it could be improved to provide greater protection for the membership. Collective bargaining is stressed as a key tool to achieve the goal of safety and health.

The success of any safety and health program depends on education and a dynamic committee. Through education, it is possible to change lax attitudes on safety and health into a greater awareness of the work environment. Through a dynamic committee that gets results, you reinforce positive attitudes, create worker interest and activism.

Any program must also have the support of all levels of the organization. In this, the I.W.A. is indeed fortunate. Region III has received wholehearted backing in its health studies and training from the International and from all the Locals. What the I.W.A. has done, anyone can do.

The job to be done is long overdue and any reluctance or delay on the part of workers can only result in an undermining of what we as workers have gained. Safety and health is a labor issue, and we are going to have to do it ourselves; no one is going to do it for us.

## Chemical Workers Win Stronger Safety Provisions

Improved safety conditions were among several major gains won by the International Chemical Workers Union, Local 111, after a 52-day strike at the American Cyanamid chemical plant in Bound Brook, New Jersey. Cyanamid is the nation's seventh largest chemical manufacturer.

The new two-year contract contains a number of health and safety improvements, such as posting the results of environmental monitoring for fumes, gases, and noise. A major breakthrough also included the listing of generic names for chemicals used in the plant and the safety and health precautions for each.

Another contractual improvement is that the union will now have the right to have its own industrial hygienist sit in on meetings with plant representatives. Finally, in regards to assuring access to information, workers will now have the right to receive written results of medical examinations taken at the plant.

## Steelworkers Fight Foundry Closing

A delegation from United Steelworkers Local 65 recently filed discrimination charges against the U.S. Steel Corporation for threatening to close its South Works foundry in the Chicago area.

Led by union president John Chico, the local has charged that U.S. Steel is retaliating against foundry workers for pressing demands for better health and safety conditions. Nearly a score of workers are disabled with silicosis, and conditions in the foundry have been the subject of widespread publicity in the Chicago media.

"U.S. Steel is prohibited from discharging employees for using OSHA, and they should be prohibited from shutting down the foundry," Chico said. The union's charges were made under Section 11(c) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. The Local 65 complaint is the first time a union has tried to use the clause in the case of a plant closing. If successful, it could set an important precedent in the fight for safe jobs.

—CACOSH Health and Safety News

## STAUFFER CHEMICAL RATE RETENTION DISPUTE

OCAW Local 7-765 and Stauffer Chemical in Chicago Heights, Illinois, are still deadlocked over the company's expansion of medical testing without a guarantee of rate retention.

Workers at the plant, where two men died in an August, 1978 explosion, balked when management added lung and heart tests to the regular medical exam. Since workers in several departments must wear respirators but the company refuses to give a reason for the practice, the union fears that Stauffer is preparing to transfer workers with impaired health out of these areas and cut their pay in the process.

Stauffer refuses to promise that no one will suffer a pay cut, and has been telling workers to have their family physicians request the results of the company tests. Local 7-765 President Osborn Tinsley is holding out for a written guarantee of rate retention and worker access to all medical tests performed by Stauffer.

—Chicago Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health

# Teamsters Continue Health and Safety Push

In late January, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters announced proposed new safety and health standards for its members covered under the National Master Freight Agreement, which expires March 31. The revisions are part of a continuing effort by the union to upgrade standards in the contract, as well as through governmental regulation and enforcement.

Included in the new proposals are provisions for specified cab dimensions and sleeper berths; prohibitions against driving certain types of trucks; driver information on weight distribution; quality and load requirements for tires; additional brake requirements to help prevent jackknives; new requirements on steps, handholds, and catwalks; specified maintenance of seats and air conditioners; and periodic cleaning and sanitizing of the cabs.

Also included are new procedures for settling certain disputes which may arise over interpretation of the requirements. These include providing drivers with the maintenance history of the vehicle, a calibration sticker for the speedometer until it can be calibrated within 3 mph of accuracy, and compulsory arbitration of disputes between company and union doctors.

A complete ban on driving the so-called "cab-under" truck would be instituted under the proposals. These relatively new trucks are configured so that the driver actually sits under the trailer.

The Teamsters Union is also pro-

posing that employers and unions set up a joint safety and health committee at each terminal to ensure safe and healthful working conditions.

## SAFETY AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

This year, the Teamsters Safety & Health Department celebrates its fifth anniversary. With its establishment in 1973, the Teamsters became one of the first International Unions to maintain a separate department to deal with occupational safety and health.

General President Frank E. Fitzsimmons acknowledged how difficult the task of representing two million Teamsters would be when he appointed R.V. Durham, president of the IBT Local 391 in Greensboro, N.C., to head the young department.

With George Menick as assistant and Norma Bartus as secretary, Durham's department was given the mandate to help Teamster affiliates in three vital areas: to aid locals in dealing with OSHA and the Department of Transportation (DOT); to help in the formulation of contract language that deals effectively with safety and health problems; and to work on safety issues on a national level by monitoring OSHA and DOT actions.

One of the new department's first major undertakings was the development of a comprehensive training text on the Occupational Safety and Health

Act—the *Teamsters Safety and Health Manual*—which has since been distributed to all Teamster local unions and is periodically updated.

Each month thousands of workers, Teamsters among them, are killed or seriously injured on the job. The safety department's job includes monitoring those accidents and seeking remedies to the problems causing them.

Teamsters involved in *lead smelting*, for example, last year were brought to Washington to participate in hearings on lead's danger.

When a series of *grain elevator* explosions shocked the nation several months ago, Teamsters quickly became part of the team looking for answers—with the help of members in the field.

## HEALTH HAZARDS

The department is just as concerned with job health hazards as it is with safety.

Last year, the department hired its own industrial hygienist, Stephen McDougall, to help analyze the mountain of statistical information coming out of Washington and to put into perspective the health needs of the union's members.

McDougall is charged with helping write testimony concerning carcinogens and toxic substances, monitoring the latest research, and keeping an eye out for ailments among members, such as increased numbers of deaths by cancer, heart attacks, or respiratory failure, which may indicate serious trends or potential health hazards.

The Teamsters' Washington safety staff is augmented by five area coordinators, who keep in touch with hundreds of local unions around the country. They include: Michael Markowitz (East); George Chiavola (Central); W.C. Smith (South); Robert Robichaud (Canada); and Warren Morse (West).

Hundreds of local unions have appointed their own safety representatives to coordinate activities within the local union with those on the joint council, area conference, and International levels. They, too, are an important part of the Teamster safety team.

—Compiled from Teamster sources including *International Teamster*

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## PACIFIC NORTHWEST

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options include leadership training in OSHA, increasing the number of OSHA-related courses at labor schools, offering safe work training for apprentices and other workers, and a consultancy service to assist labor organizations in the area of hazard identification and correction.

Another option is to establish a resource library, to include films, tapes, books, and safety and health publications. Many of these have already been ordered.

Questionnaires will be used to record responses and ideas from organized labor. They will help to organize these ideas into a set of preliminary proposals. Lund will visit workers and labor leaders in cities throughout the Northwest, including Boise, Salt Lake City, Missoula, Lewiston, Seattle, Fairbanks, Anchorage, Coos Bay, and many others.

The next stage of the project will be to conduct a series of regional conferences, to be held in Spokane on April 28; Twin Falls, Idaho, on May 5; and Portland on May 12. At the conferences, preliminary proposals will be presented for critique by labor participants and further ideas, strategies, and approaches will be discussed.

PNLC will also be providing classes for safety committee persons for public employee unions, and safety and health training for several apprenticeship programs. Information requests are handled from rank and file and leadership ranging from the status of 11(c) discrimination complaints, to Complaints About State Program Administration (CASPA), to questions about safety committees, protective equipment (e.g. respirators), and OSHA standards (e.g. Threshold Limit Values.)

PNLC already has a number of standards and resource materials on file. They invite inquiries from labor organizations with questions and problems in occupational safety and health, and are available to help with safety committees. A 4½ day school in occupational safety and health will be offered the week of June 25-29, 1979, at the Marylhurst Campus, on the Willamette River ten miles south of downtown Portland. For more information, contact: John Lund, Coordinator, Safety and Health Planning Project, Pacific Northwest Labor College, Marylhurst, Oregon 97036. Phone: (503) 245-1315.

—John Lund

# Clearinghouse



## 'The Politics of Cancer'

*The Politics of Cancer.* By Samuel S. Epstein, M.D. Sierra Club Books, 1978. Hardbound; \$12.50.

Cancer has risen from eighth place in 1900 to the second leading cause of death in the United States. Statistically, one of every four Americans will now develop some form of this disease. And although cancer rates have increased dramatically, particularly over the last ten years, the survival rate has remained substantially unchanged. One out of every five Americans can expect to die of it. As a nation we can expect to spend over \$25 billion a year dealing with cancer.

Dr. Samuel Epstein is an internationally known authority on the toxic and carcinogenic hazards of chemical pollutants. His book, *The Politics of Cancer*, is a powerful and explicit documentary of the factors which have created this epidemic situation. "A series of epidemiological studies have concluded that environmental factors cause from 70 to 90 percent of all cancer." Notably, the bulk of the carcinogenic substances are physical agents and industrially produced chemicals. *In fact, most cancers are not inevitable and can be avoided.*

The book is intensely provoking. Epstein sketches on page after page a picture of fraud, deception, misrepresented facts, altered statistics, and manipulation of data. The research for identifying and classifying toxic substances as potential carcinogens and the process for establishing safe use limits is fraught with conflict of interest and indifference toward worker and consumer alike. "Most regulatory decisions are based on benefit and risk data from the industries being regulated. These data are either generated and interpreted by in-house commercial laboratories, or by commercial laboratories and universities under contract to industry." Industry consistently minimizes the reality of risk, and exaggerates the social benefits of its

products and the cost or difficulty of regulation. Interestingly, the governmental agencies responsible for providing some kind of regulatory and safety standard for the public have shifted the burden of proof to the public rather than the manufacturer.

The book is divided into three parts and is extremely readable. The first deals with the laboratory techniques, their advantages and weaknesses, used in the detection of potentially toxic substances. The second, which if the subject matter were not so deadly, reads like a gripping mystery story, reviews in detail several case studies of the testing, assessment, and dispensation of widely used consumer products which have subsequently been recalled as potential carcinogens. And the last section analyzes the role of government regulatory agencies in standard setting for known and suspected toxic substances.

Currently more than 6,000 new chemicals are introduced into our lives every week. They are being released with scanty or no understanding as to their long range toxic potential on the environment or on human health. *The Politics of Cancer* is a huge reservoir of information crucial to our efforts to control and eliminate the irresponsible use of these hazardous substances. Trade unions, community and public interest groups, and health and safety professionals should all steep themselves in this material as a basis for developing strategies for political and community action.

Cancer is not a necessary disease. And its cure is attainable through the implementation of serious and responsible safety regulation of industrial production, and through education of the public towards informed consumption.

Kate Caldwell



(Photo courtesy of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union.)

## Health and Safety: Your Life, Your Right

As part of its efforts to bring scientific and technical information to local union members and interested individuals, LOHP has developed both audio-visual materials and publications. All are available for sale from LOHP. Prepaid orders are requested. Prices shown include shipping and handling. Please indicate the number of copies you wish. Make checks payable to: The Regents of the University of California. Address orders to: Labor Occupational Health Program, Institute of Industrial Relations, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720.

### AUDIO-VISUALS

**Health and Safety Hazards of Construction**, a 136-slide, 29 minute show, depicts these potential hazards through several phases of construction work; discusses dangers and possible controls. \$100.

**Hazards of Noise in Construction**, an 80-slide, 13 minute show, describes the general hazards of exposure to too much noise; noise sources; effects of noise on the body; and control measures. \$65.

**Chemical Hazards for Building Trades Workers**, a 125-slide, 24 minute show, explores specific chemical hazards encountered in construction, demolition, or remodel work; routes of entry; effects on the body; and appropriate controls. \$90.

**Walking/Working Surfaces**, a 56-slide, 9 minute show, describes accident and injury potential of such working surfaces as ladders, scaffolds, and stages, which are typical of construction work areas; discusses safety measures. \$45.

*All slide shows are offered with a tape cassette and lesson script. All four shows available for \$300.*

### PUBLICATIONS

**Occupational Hazards of Construction: A Manual for Building Trades Apprentices** describes the main chemical, physical, and safety hazards to which building trades workers may be exposed. Includes information on OSHA law, record keeping, health and safety contract language. Lists possible

chemical exposures and their effects on the body. \$3.50.

**Occupational Hazards of Construction: An Instructors' Guide**, prepared for use with *Building Trades Manual*; expanded to aid in teaching. Ring binder. \$7.00.

**A Workers' Guide to Documenting Health and Safety Problems**, a 69-page handbook on documenting for an effective health and safety program, compiled from union health and safety committee experiences. \$2.00.

**Toxic Substances Regulated By OSHA: A Guide to their Properties and Hazards**, a 79-page alphabetical listing of over 400 OSHA-regulated toxic substances. \$2.75.

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