



Safe Journey to Work

A leaflet to support reps

Have a
SAFE JOURNEY
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Usdaw
*Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers*
www.usdaw.org.uk

Usdaw wants to ensure that our members feel safe

Travelling to and from work can be a real pain – rush hour traffic or having to stand on a crowded bus can get your day off to a bad start.

But for many Usdaw members, their journey to work isn't just a hassle – it can be a real source of worry.

Thousands of our members, particularly women, have told us they feel unsafe on their journey to and from work.

Usdaw wants to tackle this and there are a number of simple measures that we think can help.

This leaflet sets out what worries women about their journey to work and what Usdaw reps can do to help.

What worries women in Usdaw

Usdaw has just completed a major study into women's journeys to work. We asked women members to tell us what, if anything, made them feel unsafe when travelling. We focused on women for two reasons:

1. We know our women members feel particularly vulnerable travelling to and from work.
2. Women are more likely to be travelling to work when it's dark and therefore feel less safe than men.

But anything we can do to make women's journeys safer will help to make men's journeys safer too.

The four most common worries about journeys to work are:

1. Car parks are often dark and deserted when women arrive at or leave work.
2. Staff entrances can be around the back of a workplace so they are isolated and badly lit.
3. Shifts don't finish on time or are re-arranged so women miss the last bus home.
4. Bushes and tall trees on the approach to a workplace which can make women feel unsafe.

Taking action

Start by finding out if members in your workplace feel safe on their journeys to work.

You can do this by using the survey. Extra copies can be ordered from Usdaw Central Office or it can be downloaded from the Usdaw website at www.usdaw.org.uk/safejourney

Once you have a clearer idea of what worries members in your workplace, you will be in a much stronger position to convince management that this is an issue they should take seriously.

Use the checklist opposite for tips on what you can do to help members feel safer on their journey to work. This will also show members and non members that the Union is not just there for when things go wrong.

when travelling to and from work.



Here's what reps have done

If the problem is...

Car Parks

Car park lights are being turned off once customers have left.

The car park is badly lit.

Staff have to park too far away from the entrance to your workplace.

The car park is deserted by the time staff leave or arrive for work.

Got management to agree that the lights can be left on until all staff have gone home.

Used the journeys to work survey to find out how many members are concerned about car park lighting. They have then taken their evidence to local management and pressed them to act.

Where there are rep team meetings, asked their Store or Personnel Manager to attend to discuss members concerns about car parks and lighting.

Arranged for staff to be allowed to move their cars nearer to the entrance once customers have left.

Made sure that security staff escort women to their cars late at night.

Set up car shares and helped members with similar start and finish times link up with each other.

Linked in with the Health and Safety Rep to press for a car park risk assessment to be carried out.

Staff Entrances

Staff have to wait outside the store to be let in when they arrive for work.

The staff entrance is isolated and badly lit.

There are trees and bushes near to our workplace and staff don't feel safe.

Negotiated set times for the doors to be opened so staff can arrive to coincide with this.

Reps have arranged for staff to use the customer entrance instead.

Used the Journeys to Work survey to get evidence that this worries members. Where bushes/trees are the employer's responsibility, pressed them to take action. Contacted their local councillor where not the employer's responsibility.

Hours of Work

Shifts don't finish in time for staff to get the last bus/train home.

Members have had hours changed and this makes their journey to and from work more difficult.

Got management to agree that shifts can finish 15 minutes earlier so that staff can travel home safely.

The Union may have negotiated that transport issues can be taken into account when shift changes are being agreed. Reps have made sure they are familiar with their Staff Handbook and any company – Union agreements on how shift changes should be handled.

Put the Have a Safe Journey poster on the Union noticeboard so members are clear this is an Usdaw issue.

Convenience Stores

Members are opening or locking the store by themselves.

Members have to walk past gangs when they leave work.

There is only one person on the shop floor towards the end of the night.

Checked the Company Policy on this and ensured it is being followed. Used the grievance procedure if not being followed.

Invited the local police to take a tea/lunch break in the store as a deterrent.

Kept a diary of specific concerns. Used this to press the manager to get a security guard allocated to the front of the store.

Local Transport

The local bus/train service does not meet the needs of members at your workplace.

Contacted their local councillor to raise their concerns.

You can also contact the Usdaw Politics Section for advice on how to lobby your councillor, MP and local transport users body, telephone 0161 224 2804.



"There have been a couple of issues at my workplace. One of my members wasn't finishing her shift until between 10 and 11 at night. She was feeling very vulnerable on her journey home alone. A couple of times she felt she was being

followed by someone and on one occasion she started to run. She fell and was helped by a passing police car. She came to me the next day to say what had happened and to explain how scared she felt going home from the station at that time of night. She was young and hadn't been with the company long. I spoke to personnel and they agreed she could change her shift to finish at 8.30pm. There were also real problems with the staff entrance at work. It was dark and close to where the lorries park. The staff entrance only had a normal door bell that often couldn't be heard over the noise of the radio inside. This meant members were sometimes waiting a while to get in. I spoke with the company who agreed to install a bell that was 'fit for purpose' as well as a sensor light. This has resolved the problem at very little cost to the company."

Sonia Foster, Usdaw rep, Southern Division



"We recently had some shift changes which meant some members might miss the last bus home. We have got a big whiteboard right by the clocking in machine and I started writing down when my shift finished and what my route home was to see if anyone needed a lift. Other members did the same and so now we can co-ordinate lifts to and from work. More members can now work the later shifts which means the company benefits too."

Sue Kenny, Usdaw rep, Midlands Division



To find out more about the work of the Divisional Equalities Forums and Usdaw's equality work contact:

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