

International Workers' Memorial Day

28 April 2019



ASBESTOS
CANCER



FLOUR DUST
ASTHMA

PUT HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES OUT OF WORK



DETERGENTS
DERMATITIS



DEEF
CANCER

**Health
& Safety**

**Remember the Dead:
Fight for the Living**

Usdaw
Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers



Workers' Memorial Day is the day when the international labour movement remembers those who have been killed or injured in workplace accidents and those who have died from occupational diseases. The event started in Canada and the US in 1986 and has been supported by Usdaw since 1995. Since then it has been taken up by the TUC and is supported by the Health and Safety Executive and by the British Government.

This year the theme for IWMD chosen by the International TUC is **'TAKING CONTROL — REMOVING DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES FROM THE WORKPLACE'**. Every year in Britain there are tens-of-thousands of early deaths from exposure to hazardous substances at work. Thousands more suffer disabling illness such as dermatitis and chronic lung disease. This toll of death and illness could be prevented by proper control of the hazardous substances. Workers in all sorts of workplaces can be exposed to risk. Here are some of the more significant ones that can affect Usdaw members:

DIESEL ENGINE EXHAUST FUME (DEEF)

It has been known for a long time that exposure to high levels of DEEF can cause irritation and breathing difficulties. Recently scientists have identified DEEF as a carcinogen. Over 600 lung or bladder cancer deaths a year are caused by DEEF exposure. Members at risk include delivery drivers and workers in warehouses where diesel engine vehicles load or unload.

To protect workers vehicles need to be well-maintained and regularly serviced. Where possible engines should be turned off when vehicles are stationary. If engines do need to be kept running then the vehicle should be located in an open area or local exhaust ventilation should be used to remove fumes. Improved filtration on air intake systems for cabs is needed to protect drivers on the road.



ASBESTOS

Asbestos is one of the biggest killers with at least 5,000 cancer deaths a year. Workers who come directly into contact such as tradespeople or building workers are most at risk but others can also be exposed if they work in the vicinity of damaged asbestos-containing material (ACM). The risk has increased for Usdaw members because many more now work in small shops in older buildings. Any workplace more than 20 years old may have some asbestos present. If there is asbestos then there should be an asbestos register that identifies where it is. There should be regular inspections to make sure the ACM is safe and in good condition. Any contractors who come to do work on the building should be informed of the register and should not start work until it is safe to do so.

CLEANING CHEMICALS

Even household chemicals such as bleach and detergent can cause problems at work. Cleaners are at higher risk of lung disease from breathing irritating fumes given off by some products. Skin irritation can cause dermatitis. Cleaning chemicals should only be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Where necessary, gloves should be provided to protect cleaners' hands. If there is a risk of splashing, face or eye protections may also be needed.

FLOUR DUST

For bakers and other food industry workers, breathing in flour dust is a major cause of asthma. Other ingredients can also cause serious lung disease. Just because something is safe to eat it doesn't mean it is safe to inhale. Dust exposure should be minimised by enclosing dusty processes or using extraction. Use of masks should be a last resort and not the main line of defence.

Sunday 28 April 2018
International Workers'
Memorial Day



WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY?

GIVE OUT COPIES OF THIS LEAFLET TO MEMBERS AT WORK ON THE DAY

If you can, organise a display in the canteen and organise a minute's silence for those who can take part at noon.

WEAR A PURPLE 'FORGET ME KNOT' RIBBON

The purple, knotted ribbon has been adopted as a symbol of Workers' Memorial Day.

Ribbons can be bought from:

Greater Manchester Hazards Centre
Windrush Millenium Centre
70 Alexandra Road
Manchester M16 7WD

Tel: 0161 636 7557

email: mail@gmhzards.org.uk

Order form: www.gmhzards.org.uk/gmhc-and-hazards-campaign-resources-for-wmd

Greater Manchester Hazards Centre can also supply posters and car stickers.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH WMD EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

Visit 28april.org to keep in touch with events being held worldwide.

FIND OUT IF THERE ARE ANY EVENTS IN YOUR AREA

Contact your local trades council or log on to the TUC Workers' Memorial Day web page for details of events – www.tuc.org.uk/wmd

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR TO ASK WHAT YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY IS DOING TO MEET ITS ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Local authority environmental health officers are the enforcers for health and safety law for the vast majority of Usdaw members who work in shops, warehouses and offices. Ill health prevention has been identified as the main priority for health and safety regulators by the Health and Safety Executive. Yet many local authorities are failing to give it the resources it needs.



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Visit Usdaw's Health and Safety website: www.usdaw.org/healthandsafety

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