

JUSTICE 2024

**Raising the Bar on
Women's Health
and Safety—for
delegates who
identify as male**

Participant Materials

Guidelines for being a health and safety ally

Take others' concerns seriously. Just because you haven't experienced something doesn't mean it's not real or important.

Listen—a lot. Listen to the ideas women have to solve the health and safety problems they face. Respect those ideas and act on them, rather than rushing to solve the problems on your own.

Speak up but not over.

Amplify the voices of women workers. And use your voice when others can't. You may be worried about ridicule for raising a women's health and safety issues, but women may be afraid of physical and psychological backlash for saying the same thing.

Don't make it about yourself or how much you know.

Use your union position to increase safety. That could be by improving the way the local meets and consults with women workers as well as by reducing risks to women's health and safety.

Make room for women workers at decision-making tables and on committees.

Learn. Read the Action Guide for Raising the Bar on Women's Health and Safety and other resources found as usw.ca/raisethebar [metallos.ca/monterleniveau].

Know when to step back. Sometimes women workers will need time to meet and talk among themselves. Respect that need and don't feel threatened by it.

Apologize when you make mistakes.

Case Study A

The employer has agreed that a worker, who is a new mother, can use her break time to express breast milk for her new baby. But there's no clean place to do that and no suitable refrigerator to store the milk.

In your group, discuss and record your answers to these questions:

If you learned about this situation, what could you do to be a good health and safety ally?

What should you NOT do?

Case Study B

A worker has been given a one-day suspension. She is a bus driver and has been refusing to turn the heater on in her bus, even though it's November. "I'm going through menopause," she explains. "When I get hot flashes, I feel like I'm going to vomit or pass out if I can't cool down."

In your group, discuss and record your answers to these questions:

If you learned about this situation, what could you do to be a good health and safety ally?

What should you NOT do?

Case Study C

A worker has never had a properly fitting respirator in the ten years she has been on the job. At the start of her career, none of the mask sizes available fit properly so the employer's health and safety rep picked the "closest" one and recorded it as a "pass". Since then, every time a fit test is done, she says the mask doesn't seal properly and that she can smell the scent tube that workers were required to break for the testing. Her respirator is always passed.

In your group, discuss and record your answers to these questions:

If you learned about this situation, what could you do to be a good health and safety ally?

What should you NOT do?

Case Study D

There are no toilets for any workers assigned to a large outdoor work area. In the past, everyone was just expected to “go” in the woods. Recently a woman has been promoted into the work area. She is told she can get a lift with a supervisor to the washroom by the office. But the supervisor isn’t always available when she needs to urinate or change menstrual hygiene products.

In your group, discuss and record your answers to these questions:

If you learned about this situation, what could you do to be a good health and safety ally?

What should you NOT do?

Case Study E

The employer isn't providing a co-worker with properly fitting work pants as required in the plant. The pants she's given are in a men's size that is too large. The excess fabric bunches up, rubs, and breaks the skin at the small of her back and behind her knees.

In your group, discuss and record your answers to these questions:

If you learned about this situation, what could you do to be a good health and safety ally?

What should you NOT do?