Workers Have Power

Regardless of how powerless your employer can make you feel, workers still have a lot of power. Workers decide what work gets done and when it gets done—management just directs you. You and your coworkers are likely already organized. You may already have some of the following:

- carpools
- Whatsapp/group chats
- Fantasy leagues
- Social Groups
- Shift exchange
- Sports teams
- Rumor mills
- Church

Use these as opportunities to build trust and to share common work and non-work-related experiences.

Take Action

Workers taking action over many decades won us better wages, better hours and safer working conditions. Many victories were won by workers who went on strikes, held work stoppages and/or took to the streets.

That level of organizing may take time, so here are some things you can do right now to take action:

- As a group, take your demands directly to the HR office.
- Write a letter or petition with your demands. Collect signatures from your coworkers and deliver it to leadership.
- Partner with community organizations and leaders to build support from the community to apply external pressure.

What's Next?

Review the Your Basic Rights section below.

Workers Have Basic Rights

Every worker has basic rights and ways to address issues but laws often protect employers instead of workers. This is why it is important to keep track of everything. Take notes on what took place at work. Have a notebook log.

You are protected from discrimination at work based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin. You have the right to get paid for your work, no matter your immigration status. If you have a disability, your employer is required to make reasonable changes to your work area to help you do your job. Your employer must provide you a workplace that does not put your health or safety at risk.

Write Down Everything

Every worker has basic rights and ways to address issues but laws often protect employers instead of workers. This is why it is important to keep track of everything. If a decision is made or a new policy introduced, if you file a complaint or a complaint is filed against you, ask for a paper copy. Make a copy of all documents if possible. Take pictures of unsafe working conditions if it is safe to do so. Every day after work, take 5-10 minutes to take notes on what took place at work. What did you observe? What did management say and do?

Retaliation

You are protected from retaliation if you speak up about workplace issues but protections are not strong and cases are hard to prove without strong evidence. Again, it is important to take notes on everything. Ask for copies of all disciplinary actions filed against you and make sure to keep records of any activities you engage in that may lead to retaliation against you.

If a decision is made or a new policy introduced, if you file a complaint or a complaint is filed against you, ask for a paper copy. Make a copy of all documents if possible. Having a timeline of events will be helpful.

Employers are more likely to retaliate if you are working alone and if nobody else is aware of the situation. Do not let this discourage you from taking action.

Contact info below.

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Your Basic Rights

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Reach out for more resources and support using the contact info below.

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