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OCAW LOCAL PRESIDENTS RESPOND TO OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COMPLIANCE SURVEY

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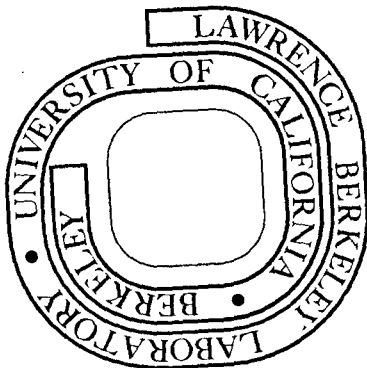
S. Kirk Collins

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OCAW LOCAL PRESIDENTS RESPOND TO
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COMPLIANCE SURVEY

Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory
University of California
Berkeley, California

October 29, 1973

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Greetings from California. My assigned topic has been an interesting experience. It brings back pleasant memories of years spent at the Center for Safety at N.Y.U.

During my university years, study about attitudes occupied much of my time. Attitudes are studied for two reasons. The first: social scientists study about attitudes to learn how the mind reacts to itself and to stimuli from the external environment; the other reason is to predict behavior of individuals under specific circumstances.

I surmise that your program committee is more interested in predicting behavior of union leaders during contract negotiations than they are in study about attitudes. The best way to study an individual's attitude is to live with him and to make note of his behavior in response to specific stimuli. This method has a high degree of validity but has the disadvantages of being costly in terms of both money and time. Interviews of a representative sample of the population is another effective method for measuring attitudes. The method is widely used and can be quite valid if the sample is carefully selected. It is also expensive. I used two other methods. A questionnaire was mailed to an unselected sample of union local presidents. Union newspapers were studied and articles related to the question were recorded. These methods provide us with information concerning content of union local presidents' attitudes toward employer safety. These methods give us little or nothing about the reliability, specificity, validity, intensity, importance, or strength of the attitude under examination. With these limitations in mind, which are significant, I will continue.

Selecting a union with a significant number of members engaged in research and development work proved to be impossible for me. With the

aid of the Directory of National Unions and Employee Associations, 1971¹, I selected several unions which may include research and development types in their memberships. They are:

American Federation of Technical Engineers,
International Chemical Workers Union,
Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union, and
Sheet Metal Workers International Association.

All of these unions published monthly papers. For each I reviewed the twelve issues ending with June, 1973. Results were generally meager.

The Technical Engineers did not mention occupational safety or health.

The Sheet Metal Worker's Journal had an announcement in one issue and a report in another about the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Council's Legislative Meet in Washington, D.C. Two days were scheduled for delegates to talk to Congressmen and Senators on safety legislation. This was not a Metal Trades sponsored activity. There were no other safety articles.

The International Chemical Worker has a monthly column by ICWU's medical consultant on industrial health topics. In addition, there were two articles indicating support for occupational safety and health legislation, and two others on occupational health.

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers' Union News was outstandingly different. It averaged five safety articles in every issue. OCAW was selected to be surveyed because it was thought to be the likely union for most research and development workers. The union is very aggressive in safety and health matters. Jeanne Stillman, PhD in Physical Chemistry is Assistant to the President and devotes full time to safety and health education and research. Other indications of strong, positive and continuing attitudes toward safety by OCAW officials are demonstrated by articles on the following topics.

1. "The Human Price of Doing Business," OSH Administration criticized for extending until July of 1976 the standard

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Dept. of Labor Directory of National Unions and Employee Associations, 1971 Bul. 1750 U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1972

which permits five asbestos fibers per cubic centimeter of air for an eight hour exposure.

2. "President Gropiron Blames Republicans for Failure to Implement OSH Standards."
3. "Don't Be Industry's Guinea Pigs" on cancer and carcinogens.
4. "Bargaining Policy in 1972-73" Every contract shall have a safety clause which:
 - a. establishes a meaningful joint union and management safety committee,
 - b. requires each company to contribute 2¢ per hour of labor employed for health and safety research, the fund to be jointly administered,
 - c. provides for hiring qualified industrial health consultants to determine if health hazards exist and to measure exposure levels of toxic materials,
 - d. provides for periodic physical examinations, and
 - e. provides for regular wages for safety committee members' time spent on committee work.
5. "Negotiation not Arbitration" is the proper solution of health and safety problems.
6. DOL to blame for OSHA failures. The ACT is tough and fair. Compliance officers may be a little green, but generally are doing a good job.
7. Union emphasizes need for a quiet work place at DOL hearing.
8. Program to train union leader in how to use OSH Law.
9. Union asks DOL to ban ten carcinogens.
10. Safety and health clause in contract is breakthrough in labor and management relations.
11. Union official asks management to change attitude and to humanize the work place.
12. OCAW contracts with Polytechnic Institute for use of absorption spectrometer for the measurement of mercury and mercury compounds in workers' hair. Members are urged to participate in survey by filling out a form and sending in hair sample.

From these few excerpts of news articles, OCAW union officials may be said to hold such attitudes as:

1. Management needs to change its attitude and humanize the work place.
 - asbestos levels are too high
 - mercury levels are too high
 - noise levels are too high
 - carcinogens should not be used
2. Management needs to be forced by contract clauses to:
 - arbitrate safety and health problems
 - pay for health and safety research
 - hire health and safety consultants
 - provide more physical examinations.
3. The Department of Labor and Republicans are not enforcing OSH Act as intended by Congress.
4. Union people need more health and safety training.

If you are interested in this union's attitudes, the Union News is available for \$2.00 a year. The address is:

Post Office Box 2812
Denver, Colorado 80201

After completing the newspaper survey, it was clear that OCAW would be a good group for the mail survey. B. F. Schafer, Secretary-Treasurer was most cooperative in providing address lists.

Funds for the project were limited. It was decided to survey about 100 presidents of union locals in eleven heavily industrialized states. They were Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. Actually, 107 locals were canvassed out of a total of 602.

Response was disappointing. Fourteen returns came from 6 of 11 states. As mail surveys go this response of almost 14% is much better than that usually expected which is less than 5%. I had hoped for 25-50% because of the high interest in safety as shown in the Union News and because the topic is timely for union members. There are many possible explanations. The original mailings were bundled in zip code packets. No response was received from 27 locals in 5 states. They simply may not have received the material. The mailings were timed to give

minimum but ample time to respond. It was thought that this would create a feeling of urgency in the respondents. Airmail stamps were used for both directions to further indicate urgency. Survey results were offered to anyone who wanted them if the response was received before October 20th. All of these factors may have played a part.

There is another possible reason and that is union member attitudes at the local level may not be as well defined, as strong or as positive as are the attitudes of the international union leaders. You be the judge.

Responses came from locals in Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and West Virginia. Compliance with OSH Standards was selected as being a determinate of management attitude toward safety. Compliance is objective. It is readily observed and reported by an employee.

Copies of the survey form have been made available to you. As mentioned the respondents were presidents of union locals. They are usually employees of the companies on which they were reporting. As a rule they hold jobs below a supervisory level. The following responses reflect the attitudes of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled laborers and technicians as well as chemists, engineers and other professionals.

Summary responses follow:

Percent of members doing research: No answer = 10 Of the four who did respond, one gave 0%, one gave 1%, one gave 5% and one was 100%.

Most of our respondents were not in research and development work. The respondent from an R & D group reported the same kind of conditions as were reported by the others. The reasons for an unsafe operation are pretty much the same without respect for the type of employment.

Are employers complying with OSH Standards? Yes = 5, Yes & No = 1, No = 4, and N/A = 4.

Where are employers weak in compliance?

The following headings are subpart titles from the General Industry OSH Standards. Numbers are the number of responses for each.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | No areas of non-compliance | 6 | General environmental controls (sanitation, safety color codes, specifications for safety signs) |
| 5 | Walking and working surfaces | 6 | Medical and first aid |
| 3 | Means of egress | 4 | Fire protection |
| 2 | Powered platforms, lifts, etc. | 1 | Air equipment |
| 3 | Environmental controls (air contaminants, asbestos, ventilation, noise and radiation) | 4 | Materials handling and storage |
| 8 | Hazardous materials (compressed gases, flammable liquids and explosives) | 1 | Machinery and machine guarding |
| 2 | Personal protective equipment | 7 | Welding, cutting and brazing |
| | | 2 | Electrical |
| | | 5 | General duty clause (a safe place of employment) |

Other specific areas in which compliance is weak:

In this space were repetitions from the previous section. It may be the respondent wanted to emphasize the non-compliance OR he did not know the safety standards which were included under each title.

Specific compliance defects reported are:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 3 | Slow in making corrections and repairs | 1 | Inadequate illumination |
| 2 | More ventilation to remove dust and fumes | 1 | Steam pipes should be insulated |
| 2 | Noise levels too high | 1 | Chemicals, oil and water on floors |
| 2 | Provide safe equipment | 1 | Poor housekeeping |
| 3 | No response | 1 | No other weakness - this is same respondent who reported no non-compliance |

Are fines fair? Yes = 2, No = 5, and N/A = 7

Under the law citations must be posted near the violation. Fines need not be posted.

What is the most important thing employers can do to improve safety?

- 6 N/A
- 3 Provide more education for employees

- 2 Comply with Standards and practice safety
- 1 Place alarm close to hazard
- 1 Require employees to wash-up
- 1 Form union safety committees

What safety clauses do you expect in future contracts?

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 4 | N/A | 2 | More medical examinations |
| 2 | Right to monitor hazards | 2 | More involvement with union in safety matters |
| 2 | OCAW safety clause | | |
| 1 | Employees should have investigative powers | 1 | Right to refuse to do unsafe job |

What else do you want to say about safety?

- 5 N/A
- 2 Union members should school themselves in safety so that they can make more constructive suggestions.
- 2 Employees should be educated about the hazards and safety precautions for chemicals they work with.
- 1 Employer has made some improvement.
- 1 Unions push safety, but employees are interested only in incentive awards.
- 1 Employees should be given enough time to do work safely.
- 1 This plant has too many heart and cancer cases.
- 1 Our company safety director has established a very good safety program. Which of you wrote that?

Seven respondents requested copies of survey results.

Two responses received in November.

What are the attitudes expressed by union local presidents as compared to those expressed by the Union Worker? A comparison will show that the paper reported high levels of carcinogenic and toxic materials as well as high noise levels were allowed by management. Eight respondents reported weak compliance with standards for hazardous materials and 6 reported weak compliance with general environmental standards. These appear to indicate agreement between editors of Union News and local presidents. Responses for the question on other weaknesses such as,

need for lower noise levels,
need to remove dusts and fumes,
chemicals, oil and water on floor, and
poor housekeeping

serve to confirm agreement between the two.

The newspaper reported the need for safety clauses in the contract. Local presidents agreed completely except for the language used. Only two respondents mentioned the OCAW safety clause specifically. Others mentioned more medical exams, monitoring hazards, management involvement with union and need for investigative powers. Again, there is agreement between the two sources.

The last attitude held in common is the need for more safety education of union members. Local presidents felt that this should be done by employers. The international union is educating its local leaders and promoting the idea that they, in turn, educate the membership. In all fairness we should remember that employers are doing a lot of safety educational work. I regret that such a question was not included.

The size, composition and distribution of the sample of union members does not permit wide generalizations about union attitudes toward safety in the research and development organization. However, their responses have an amazingly familiar ring. Did any of you feel that we might have been talking about your plant? Perhaps there is some degree of reliability in their responses but I hesitate to state with what level of confidence. The Union News certainly voiced quite well attitudes expressed by local presidents.

We are justified in saying that OSHA was largely a product of union efforts and OCAW is doing its best to make the most of it. If you have an OCAW contract, it appears that good relations lie in the direction of complying with the safety and health clause in the contract.

In conclusion I would like to publicly thank Mr. B. J. Schafer and his staff at the International Headquarters of OCAW in Denver for the cooperation which made this report possible.

Mr. Selander, thanks to you and your program committee for inviting me to participate in this meeting.

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SAFETY SERVICES DEPARTMENT BUILDING 4

OCTOBER 6, 1973

DEAR SIR:

THE ENCLOSED PUBLIC SERVICE SURVEY IS BEING MADE WITH THE COOPERATION OF MR. B. J. SCHAFER. IT IS AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH EMPLOYERS ARE COMPLYING WITH FEDERAL OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS. RESULTS WILL BE REPORTED TO THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SECTION OF THE NATIONAL SAFETY CONGRESS IN CHICAGO ON OCTOBER 29, 1973. ANONYMITY IS PROVIDED. ONLY THE NAME OF YOUR STATE IS REQUESTED. IN THIS WAY WE HOPE TO ENCOURAGE FRANK AND COMPLETE RESPONSES.

YOU CAN HELP BY PROMPTLY COMPLETING AND MAILING THE SURVEY FORM. THE DEADLINE DATE FOR RECEIPT OF RESPONSES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE FINAL REPORT IS OCTOBER 20, 1973. IF YOUR RESPONSE IS RECEIVED BY THAT DATE AND YOU SO DESIRE, YOU WILL BE SENT A COPY OF THE REPORT FOR USE IN PROGRAM PLANING.

YOUR CONCERN AND ASSISTANCE IN PREPARING THIS PUBLIC INFORMATION REPORT IS APPRECIATED.

SINCERELY,

S. Kirk Collins

S. KIRK COLLINS,
ENGINEER

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS COMPLIANCE SURVEY

IN WHICH STATE IS YOUR LOCAL? _____

WHAT PERCENT OF YOUR CONTRACT COMPANIES ARE DOING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT? _____

ARE YOUR CONTRACT EMPLOYERS GENERALLY DOING A GOOD JOB OF COMPLYING WITH THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS? _____

IF NOT, WHAT ARE THE AREAS IN WHICH COMPLIANCE IS WEAK? CHECK WEAK AREAS:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> WALKING AND WORKING SURFACES | <input type="checkbox"/> MEDICAL AND FIRST AID |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MEANS OF EGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> FIRE PROTECTION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> POWERED PLATFORMS, MANLIFTS | <input type="checkbox"/> COMPRESSED GAS AND COMPRESSED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AND VEHICLE MOUNTED WORK | <input type="checkbox"/> AIR EQUIPMENT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PLATFORMS | <input type="checkbox"/> MATERIALS HANDLING AND STORAGE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND | <input type="checkbox"/> MACHINERY AND MACHINE GUARDING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS | <input type="checkbox"/> WELDING CUTTING AND BRAZING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HAZARDOUS MATERIALS | <input type="checkbox"/> ELECTRICAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> GENERAL DUTY CLAUSE: A SAFE PLACE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS | <input type="checkbox"/> TO WORK |

ARE THERE ANY OTHER SPECIFIC AREAS IN WHICH COMPLIANCE IS WEAK? PLEASE LIST:

ARE FINES FOR VIOLATIONS IN PROPORTION TO THE MAGNITUDE OF THE HAZARD? _____

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING EMPLOYERS SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THEIR EMPLOYEES? _____

WHAT SAFETY CLAUSES DO YOU EXPECT TO BE IN FUTURE CONTRACTS? _____

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY ABOUT EMPLOYEE SAFETY? _____

NOTE

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A COPY OF SURVEY RESULTS, PLEASE ENCLOSE A SELF-ADDRESSED # 10 ENVELOPE.

PLEASE FOLD THIS FORM SO THAT MY ADDRESS IS ON THE OUTSIDE. SEAL WITH TAPE AND MAIL.
THANK YOU

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