

Air Pollution – all in a day's work?

Having decent work means being able to breathe clean air at work. The reality for most workers is that the air they are exposed to at work and on the way to work is polluted wherever they are working. There is very little acknowledgement of this in most government and local authority clean air policies. Government strategy is essentially an exercise in kicking the can down the road by delaying vital measures or passing it over to local authorities to sort out.

It needn't be like this.

There is rightly a public outcry about air pollution as a public health emergency. But it is also an occupational health emergency.

Most air pollution is caused by work-related activities.

Yet you wouldn't think this was the case if you read all the consultation documents and public policy pronouncements on the subject. Even many of the environmental organisations who are campaigning for clean air fail to properly acknowledge this fact.

Why set up a trade union network?

The worker voice needs to be much more prominent in the public debate on this issue. We have the example of asbestos, another workplace killer, to show how more effective unions can be when they co-ordinate around a single issue. The Joint Union Asbestos Committee (JUAC) shows how this can be done.

What would a network do?

The adoption of a charter will provide a set of demands which unions can prioritise in campaigns at local, regional, national and international level. The network can also support the development of resources like pollution checklists for health, safety and environment reps who want to monitor the level of risk to their members. It can promote best practice case studies and training that unions can use to raise awareness.

The trade union movement has a central role to play. We need to make sure our voices are heard. That's why a planning meeting has been called to discuss our response. All unions and supporting organisations are invited to attend a meeting to,

Launch the Trade Union Clean Air Network

Wednesday, 6 February, 2019 2pm - 4pm
ITF Head Office,
ITF House
49-60 Borough Road
London, SE1 1DR

This meeting is supported by the University and College Union, National Education Union, Greener Jobs Alliance and the Hazards Campaign.

For further information and to register your attendance please contact Janet Newsham at:

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