

# LABOR SAFETY AND HEALTH INSTITUTE

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*"To assure safe and  
healthful working conditions  
for working men and women..."*

FRANK GOLDSMITH, Director

GUIDE #1

## AN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH LIBRARY

### FOR A LOCAL UNION

It is essential for local unions to have materials on occupational safety and health on a moments notice. Requests are received from staff and local leadership on many issues which require an immediate response. Usually a request to the International Office of the Union would be in order, since they have a greater capacity to gather facts and information on safety and health issues. However, the immediacy, often, does not allow for any delay.

The purpose of a local union library, therefore, is more functional, with the direction application of materials as a basis for collection of library resources.

There are basically two types of information which a local union should gather: 1) General information which all unions are interested in ;  
2) Specific information on safety and health issues directly concerning workers in your local union.

#### 1) General Information

- a. Guides to proper use of the Occupational Safety and Health Act;
- b. Proper and effective use of Federal and State (if any) inspections;
- c. Proper and effective use of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), i.e. "Health Hazard Evaluations", "Criteria Documents", and other NIOSH resources;
- d. Subscribing to key national newsletters from other unions, scientific and medical groups, and other groups---which are written for, by and with trade union participation;
- e. Clipping and filing of news stories from: newspapers, magazines, and other public media sources --- which informs the general public on workers' safety and health problems.

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2) Specific Information

- a. Correspondence with key information organizations: The Labor Dept., Nat'l Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Environmental Protection Agency, etc.;
- b. Development of correspondence with key scientific/medical experts who specialize in solving and researching safety and health problems of workers. These experts work on both local and national basis and are sometimes available for meetings, as speakers, if the local unions pays expenses of travel;
- c. Development of the local union's own individual reports on the safety and health hazards which occur within the workplaces of the local's membership. One copy should be kept for the local's records; one copy sent to the International Office for their records. This is necessary to establish precedents in the pattern of safety and health problems of the local union.

Cost of Library

The cost of the local union library is more in terms of the time and local union commitment---than in actual finances required. A safety and health committee established by the local union is necessary to:

1. Write the letters;
2. Make the follow-up phone calls;
3. Do the filing and clerical work.

Too often materials are collected and thrown together so that they are not useful. An organized method of collection and filing is required.

It will be necessary to spend around \$400 to get the library started, but on a yearly basis only around \$200 is required.

Key Publications

Federal Government Publications:

1. U.S. Dept. of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (Office of Information, Washington, D.C. 20210)
  - a. Job Safety and Health (Monthly; \$9.00 per year), very valuable;
  - b. OSHA Standards, as Reprinted in Federal Register, essential;
  - c. OSHA Press Releases, mailed to their key contact list.

2. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)  
(Old Post Office Building, Room 536, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202)
  - a. "Criteria Documents" on Health Hazardous Substances;
  - b. Protective Equipment Ratings;
  - c. Safety and Health Manuals for Particular Hazards & Industries.

These materials from NIOSH, free of charge for one copy.

Individual State Government Publications:

A number of States have occupational safety and health departments in their Industrial Commissioner's Office, in their State Department's of Labor or within their public health departments.

To receive information from both the Federal and State Agencies, the President of the local union should send a formal letter on local union stationery requesting to be informed, through press releases and other methods, of all relevant safety and health matters. The letter should specifically request to be placed on the Agency mailing list.

Trade Union Publications:

These publications carry a minimum charge of \$3-5 to cover the costs of handling and printing, but if your local union has its own newspaper, an exchange of publications is usually sufficient to be sent these key publications. The President of the local union in his letter might request to be sent all back issues which deal with the safety and health problems of that local.

1. Facts and Analysis, Occupational Safety and Health (IUD)  
Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO, 815 16th Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20036
2. Health and Safety Bulletin  
Int'l Union of Electrical Workers, 1126 16th Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20036
3. Lifelines  
Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, Occupational Health Dept.  
PO Box 2812, Denver, Colorado 60201
4. Occupational Safety and Health Newsletter  
United Auto Workers, 8000 East Jefferson Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan 48214

5. Shield  
Int'l Brotherhood of Teamsters  
25 Louisiana Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20001
6. Spotlight on Health and Safety (IUD)  
Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO  
815 16th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036
7. UAW-Washington Report  
United Auto Workers  
1125 15th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005
8. United Mine Workers Journal (semi-monthly)  
900 15th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005

Other Key Publications

These publications would give the local union library a broader perspective on safety and health issues. With the new discoveries taking place, a union never knows when a substance or chemical it had been using for a long time turns up to be dangerous. These publications would help inform the local union concerning these potential hazards to their membership.

1. Environmental News  
Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C. 20460 (no charge)
2. Occupational Health and Safety Letter (semi-monthly)  
1097 National Press Building, Washington, D.C. 20004 (\$75 yr, worth it)
3. Occupational Safety and Health Reporter (weekly or more)  
Bureau of National Affairs, 1231 25th Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20037 (\$400 yearly and worth it if union large enough)
4. OSHA Report. Man and Manager, Inc. (Monthly or more)  
799 Broadway, New York, New York (Insight in Management thinking; \$30 yr.)
5. Occupational Hazards (Monthly)  
614 Superior Avenue W, Cleveland Ohio 44113 (There is no charge for this monthly publication; it requires a formal request for Local Union President)
6. Survival Kit (Monthly)  
Industrial Health and Safety Group, Urban Planning Aid,  
639 Mass Avenue, Cambridge, Mass 02139 (Also ask for other pamphlets which they have published, the publication is no charge.)
7. MONITER. (Monthly)  
Occupational Health Project, Institute of Industrial Relations  
University of California, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720

Other Key Organizations:

These organizations are often very helpful to trade unions. They publish materials occasionally. The Local Union President should send a letter requesting samples of their literature and to be placed on their mailing list. A brief mention should be made of the particular hazard the union is facing, and if the organization has any information pertaining to it.

1. American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH)  
1014 Broadway, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
2. American Occupational Medical Association (AOMA)  
150 North Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60606
3. American Public Health Association, Occupational Health Section  
1015 18th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036
4. Chicago Area Committee for Occupational Safety and Health  
Room 508, 542 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60605
5. Health Research Group  
2000 P Street, NW, Suite 708, Washington, D.C. 20014
6. Labor Safety and Health Institute  
381 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016
7. National Safety Council  
425 North Michigan, Chicago, Illinois 60611
8. Occupational Health Project, Institute of Industrial Relations  
University of California, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720
9. School for Workers, University of Wisconsin  
432 North Lake Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706
10. Society for Occupational and Environmental Health  
c/o 3713 "W" Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20007
11. Southern Institute for Occupational Health; Box 861; Cayce, S.Carolina 29033

Organization of the Library

The organization of the local union OSHA library must be molded to fit the needs and convenience of the membership. Loose leaf binders are the best way to combine newspapers and pieces of paper (clippings, etc.) Stay away from using file drawers. Each binder must be clearly marked so that members need only go directly to the shelves and NOT THROUGH A CARD FILE.

The library should be placed in a highly accessible part of the union office, and be open during convenient hours. In some locations, the local union might use a local public library for the OSHA Local Union Library. This can be done by asking the public library to reserve a special section.



Suggestion of Shelving Space for Library

1. U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration
  - A. Federal Registers, Regulations
  - B. Enforcement Notices
  - C. Press Releases
  - D. Other sections which relate to the Local's Problems
2. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
  - A. "Criteria Documents"
  - B. Protective Equipment Ratings, respirators, masks, etc.
  - C. Health and Safety Manuals for Particular Industries & Hazards
3. State Industrial Commissioner, Labor Dept or Other Responsible State Agencies
4. Union Publications
5. Materials from other Key Organizations
6. Publications from other Key Organizations
7. Local Union Safety and Health Cases: grievances, arbitrations, medical test results, industrial hygiene results, lists of chemicals, minutes of safety and health committee meetings
8. The International Union's Materials on Safety and Health
9. Misc.

While its very important to make the materials easily accessible to the members, special efforts should be made to keep the binders, booklets, and other materials in the library. Each piece of material should have a card so that accurate accounting can take place in the event some documents disappear. Generally its easier to replace the document, newspaper, etc, than to try and impose restrictions on library use which usually only discourages membership use of the facilities.