

# IMMIGRANT WORKERS' HEALTH & SAFETY 1-HOUR HAZARD IDENTIFICATION TRAINING FOR THE CAR WASH INDUSTRY

**GOAL:** This training is designed for a one-hour session with immigrant workers in the Car Wash industry. The material was developed with assistance from various resources produced by OSHA, including from OSHA's Heat Illness Prevention Campaign and its Hazard Communication page/resources on the OSHA website. At the end of the training, workers should (1) be able to identify hazards in the car wash workplace (2) to learn about heat stress and its potential serious effects as well as heat illness prevention and (3) to learn about new revisions to the hazard communication standards and (3) know of their basic right to a safe workplace, regardless of immigration status.

## 1) INTRODUCTION 2 MINUTES

Introduce ourselves and what we will be talking about: worker health and safety / seguridad y salud laboral.

*Make the Road New York builds the power of Latino and working class communities to achieve dignity and justice through organizing, policy innovation, transformative education, and survival services. With over 10,000 members at our four community-based centers, we organize around workers' rights issues – including helping workers fight for workplaces that are safe and healthy.*

Review the goals of the day:

Goal: For this group of **car wash workers** to learn about workplace hazards in their industry; workers' legal rights to a safe workplace; and tactics and strategies workers can use to minimize risks in the workplace.

## 2) ICEBREAKER – STAND UP ACTIVITY 5 MINUTES

**GOAL:** This activity is designed for the group to get a sense of how common unsafe working conditions are in the industry. You will read a series of questions and ask those answering "yes" to physically signal their response without speaking.

- Step In/Step Out format. Ask everyone to stand in a large circle. Those answering "yes" to the question should take one step into the circle, while those answering "no" remain where they are.
- Stand Up/Sit Down format. If you do not have a lot of room, ask participants to simply stand up if their answer is "yes," or to remain seated if "no."

### Questions

- 1) I have had to do work that I thought was unsafe at least once in a job.
- 2) I have seen others do work that I thought was unsafe.

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- 3) I have been hurt on the job.
  - 4) I have seen someone else get hurt on the job.
  - 5) I have been hurt on the job so badly I had to go to the doctor.
  - 6) I know someone who has been hurt so badly on the job they had to go to the doctor.
  - 7) I have had to use dangerous chemicals without any training
  - 8) I have had to use dangerous chemicals without proper protection
  - 9) I have gotten sick from too much heat while working
  - 10) I know someone who has gotten sick from too much heat while working
- 
- 1) He tenido que hacer trabajos que considere peligrosos
  - 2) He visto a otros en el trabajo hacer trabajos que yo considere peligrosos
  - 3) Me he lesionado en el trabajo
  - 4) He visto a otra persona lastimarse en el trabajo
  - 5) Me he lesionado en el trabajo tan gravemente que tuve que ir al doctor
  - 6) Yo conozco alguien que se lastimó tan gravemente en el trabajo que tuvo que ir al doctor
  - 7) He tenido que trabajar con químicos peligrosos en mi lugar de trabajo sin entrenamiento
  - 8) He tenido que trabajar con químicos peligrosos en sin equipo de protección personal adecuado
  - 9) Alguna vez me he enfermado en el trabajo por el exceso de calor
  - 10) Yo conozco a alguien que se haya enfermado en el trabajo por el exceso de calor

**Reflection:**

How do participants feel having done the exercise? What do they think about it?

**3) HAZARD IDENTIFICATION ACTIVITY 15 MINUTES**

Depending on the audience size and the room set up, you can either divide participants in to small groups or ask people to partner with their neighbor for the next activity. Project the Car Wash Drawing (*Hand Out 1*) on the wall and distribute copies to participants. [If you do not have projector, simply distribute paper copies to participants.]

Ask each group to identify all the possible hazards they see in the drawing. [5 minutes.]

Ask groups to volunteer examples of hazards. If projecting on the wall, have volunteers come up and mark on the white board or paper you are projecting on where they see a hazard. [5-10 minutes.]

Synthesize for the group that hazards are of different types: physical, chemical, biological, or other. Give examples of each, and ask for an example from the group of each. As the list of examples grows, point out that hazards fall in to different categories:

1. Safety hazards: these are physical conditions that can cause harm, such as slippery floors, broken ladders, or high heat.

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2. Chemicals exposure: hazardous chemicals (cleaning products, chemicals used in production, etc.) are common in many jobs.
3. Biological hazards: workers may get exposed to viruses or bacteria, blood, insects, or other biological hazards on the job.
4. Misc. hazards: this can include things like workplace violence.

Ask group, what workplace hazards have they seen that are not apparent in the image and continue to record answers. Some potential car wash industry hazards include:

- 1) Electrical Hazards (ex. Poorly protected electrical sources close to water)
- 2) Slips, Trips and Falls
- 3) Chemical Exposure Hazards
- 4) Lack of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)
- 5) Struck By Hazards (ex. Vehicle accidents)
- 6) Noise (ex. From high pressure hoses)
- 7) Unguarded Machinery
- 8) Heat Stress
- 9) Ergonomic hazards (ex. Bending, squatting for long periods)
- 10) Wastewater exposure
- 11) Water extractors that remove water from towels with missing or disabled feature that keeps them locked until spinning stops

**4) LEGAL RIGHTS AND OSHA**

**5 MINUTES**

Review some of the hazards the group identified today. Ask for a volunteer to name the law or governmental agency that protects workers' health and safety on the job. Write up on the board "OSHA," and ask participants what year they think OSHA was created. [Answer: 1970.]

**Review workers' basic rights:**

**OSHA:**

- Applies to basically all workers
- Protects worker regardless of their immigration status
- Requires employers to provide a workplace free of known hazards. This might mean there are specific rules (e.g., about handling asbestos) or just a general right to have a safe workplace.
- Protects workers' rights to complain to OSHA if there are unsafe conditions.
- Requires employers to provide workers training on how to do their job safely, and to provide workers with protective equipment for hazards on the job.
- Protects workers against retaliation if they report an unsafe condition.

Emphasize that workers facing unsafe conditions should meet with a member of the Make the Road New York legal team for specific advice and help filing an OSHA complaint.

Transition: Explain that we are going to spend the rest of the time exploring two hazards in further depth – Heat Stress and Chemical Exposure

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**5) HEAT STRESS/HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION**

**15 MINUTES**

**GOAL:** For participants to learn about heat stress and its potential serious effects as well as heat illness prevention

**Video – Heat Illness Prevention<sup>1</sup> – (8 Minutes)**

**Discussion:** After viewing the video spend a few minutes discussing with the large group. Important questions to ask include<sup>2</sup>:

- 1) What causes heat illness?
- 2) How do you know if you are having symptoms? What does heat illness feel like?
- 3) What can workers do to prevent heat illness? (Emphasize Shade, Rest, Water as well as having an emergency plan)
- 4) What if you don't have access to water, shade, rest and training? What can you do? (Some responses include, talk to your co-workers and together discuss your concerns with your employer; File a complaint with OSHA; or tell us at Make the Road about it! Emphasize again that workers facing unsafe conditions should meet with a member of the Make the Road New York legal team for specific advice and help filing an OSHA complaint.

Provide Info on NYS laws regarding breaks if need be:

- All employees working six or more hours in a shift must receive a 30-minute, uninterrupted, and unpaid meal period (20 minutes if evening shift)
- Your employer does not have to pay you for this lunch break but if any other breaks less than 20 minutes are provided they must be paid

**Hand out Heat Illness Prevention Materials:** Handout 2 - Illustrated, low-literacy fact sheets for workers and Hand out 3 - OSHA Quick Card: Protecting Workers from Heat Stress. Emphasize Water, Rest and Shade and that if they think that their workplace is unsafe OSHA and Make the Road are here to help!

**6) CHEMICALS & HAZARD COMMUNICATION STANDARD**

**15 MINUTES**

Overview:

Next explain that we are going to talk about chemical exposure and provide crucial information regarding worker rights. Explain that exposure to chemicals is one of the most serious dangers facing workers in the US today and that carwash workers are exposed to harsh chemicals during every stage of the carwash process. Many of the products in use at carwashes are eye and skin irritants. Makers of these chemicals recommend that individuals handling them wear protective clothing such as sturdy gloves, goggles, masks, aprons and rubber boots<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Cal/OSHA. Heat Illness Prevention – Spanish. Educational Materials.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7Wb1jmKA6I&feature=relmfu>

<sup>2</sup> Cal/OSHA. Heat Illness Prevention DVD Guides. [http://www.99calor.org/downloads/dvd\\_guide\\_eng.pdf](http://www.99calor.org/downloads/dvd_guide_eng.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Carwash Workers Organizing Committee of the United Steelworkers. Cleaning Up the Carwash Industry. March 27, 2008 p. 10

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Explain that chemicals can pose both *health hazards* (i.e. irritation, sensitization and carcinogenicity) and *physical hazards* (i.e. flammability, corrosion, and reactivity)

### Examples of Harmful Chemicals:

- Carnauba wax – contains the carcinogen quartz. Improper exposure can cause damage to the central nervous system as well as to the lungs, liver and kidneys
- Hydrogen Fluoride (HF) – can be found in products used to clean wheels or for pre-treating cars before shampooing. HF is highly corrosive and toxic and is powerful enough to etch glass. It irritates the skin, eyes and mucous membranes and can cause respiratory irritation and hemorrhaging. When skin is exposed, HF quickly penetrates the skin and can cause destruction of deep tissues and even damage bones by dissolving calcium before the victim feels any symptoms. In some cases exposure has led to amputations<sup>4</sup>
- Other common carwash products can irritate the respiratory tract, skin, and eyes, and may cause liver, kidney and heart damage. If inhaled, some products can lead to headaches, convulsions, blindness or even death<sup>5</sup>

### HCS Intro

Pass out Handout 4 on OSHA's Hazard Communications Standard (HCS). Read through the document highlighting requirements for manufacturers and employers and the new revisions. Explain that the HCS protects workers rights to know about hazardous chemicals in their workplace and that the new revisions allow workers to better understand through SDSs and better labeling. Emphasize that employers have until Dec. of 2013 to provide workers with training related to the HCS regulations.

### Safety Data Sheets:

Briefly review the definition of the SDS and turn to the sample (Handout 5). Have participants read aloud the title of each section. The facilitator should summarize each part. Make sure to highlight that employers must have this information at least in English readily available to the workers to review for each chemical.

### Labels:

Pass out Handout 6 OSHA Quick Card for Pictograms and Handout 7 the sample label Quick Card. Review new pictograms with group.

## **7) EVALUATION AND POST TEST 5 MINUTES**

Distribute evaluation sheets for participants to complete. Collect sheets. If future trainings are scheduled, announce dates and times to group.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 17

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p.. 16