

Indiana Faurecia auto parts workers launch Rank-and-File Safety Committee

The Faurecia Gladstone Plant Rank-and-File Safety Committee
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The WSWS *Autoworker Newsletter* is ready to assist autoworkers and other workers to organize rank-and-file safety committees at workplaces across North America and beyond. Email the WSWS *Autoworker Newsletter* at autoworkers@wsws.org to learn more.

The Autoworker Rank-and-File Safety Committee Network is a national organization of workers throughout the auto industry who have organized to oppose the unsafe return to work enforced by the auto companies, the United Auto Workers and other unions. Workers have launched rank-and-file safety committees at Fiat Chrysler's Jefferson North and Sterling Heights plants in the Detroit area, at FCA Toledo Jeep Assembly in Ohio, at the Ford Dearborn Truck Plant and the Ford Chicago Assembly Plant.

Facing appalling treatment and the indifference of management and the union, workers at the Faurecia Gladstone Plant in Columbus, Indiana—roughly 40 miles south of the state capital Indianapolis—have formed their own rank-and-file safety committee in order to fight for safe and humane working conditions. Faurecia is a French-based transnational auto parts manufacturer, with locations in 35 countries, over 120,000 employees, and sales exceeding 17 billion euros as of 2019.

This is the rank-and-file safety committee's statement:

Brothers and sisters at Faurecia: Our lives are in danger every day we come to work. We all know coworkers who have been infected with the deadly coronavirus here at the plant or exposed to someone who has it.

Management and the IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union) won't tell us how many people have COVID-19. They refuse to tell

us the truth. How many have been infected? How many more have been exposed? We share what little information there is and we know it's spreading.

They put on a show of safety procedures at the entrance: they take your temperature, make you wear a mask, sanitize your feet and your belongings. We know they're just going through motions.

We're supposed to social distance, but we're so close together on some lines that we bump into each other. When someone gets sick at work, they just pull them off the line and move someone else in, and production doesn't stop.

The bathrooms aren't cleaned enough. The temperatures can be unbearable. How many of us have gotten sick from the heat? We get no extra break. They even turned the air off in the restrooms so people wouldn't try to cool off in them.

Every honest doctor will tell you that working people on 12-hour shifts seven days a week will destroy your health. It's even more dangerous to do that to us during a pandemic. Now they're limiting which days we can take off. We are so exhausted coming to or leaving work that we risk getting into car accidents.

Faurecia doesn't want anybody to have a life or have time to relax. They don't care about workers.

They have sped up the lines, making unrealistic targets, then blame us for not hitting the numbers and threatening to write us up. The intimidation and hostility in their working environment is toxic for anyone and everyone. When workers try to blow the whistle, they're harassed.

The IBEW is just as bad as the UAW, and lets Faurecia do whatever they want to do. That is why we the workers must act and organize on our own.

These are our just demands:

- Faurecia must notify all workers of any new cases

of COVID-19 and what areas have been affected. The total number of cases must be tracked in real time and made available to workers. This vital information cannot be concealed from us for one day longer.

- We demand daily testing for everyone on site, rapid results and the highest-quality health care paid by the company for any one of us or any family members who become ill. Combined with thorough contact tracing, this is the only scientifically proven method to effectively control the spread of the pandemic.

- When a case is confirmed, the factory must be shut for no less than 24 hours to sanitize the entire facility and all of its mechanical systems. Regular, daily maintenance and sanitizing must be implemented under our direct supervision. The union and the company have forfeited their responsibility to supervise safe working conditions.

- The inhumane work hours and schedules must stop. We cannot maintain good health and effective immune systems if we are exhausted. We demand a return to an eight-hour day, with adequate breaks, and at least two days off per week for rest and leisure, with no loss of pay.

- Heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems must be upgraded and reconfigured with the necessary air distribution and filtration systems. Management brags about the company being a multi-billion global corporation. They can afford to guarantee safe and comfortable working conditions at all times.

- PPE and social distancing procedures must be reviewed and implemented under the direct supervision of the independent representatives of the rank-and-file, consulting with public health experts. All necessary disinfectants and cleaning supplies must be provided by the company.

- All production must be stopped for no less than 10 minutes every hour for workers to take off masks, stay hydrated and cool down. It is absolutely unacceptable to have workers drop from heat exhaustion in a multi-million-dollar, state-of-the-art facility.

- Whether for taking time to get tested, for speaking up for the fellow workers, or for implementing any of these other safety measures, we will not accept that workers face retaliation, harassment, layoffs, write-ups or other forms of intimidation. Workers who feel ill or have to quarantine for whatever reason must receive full pay and not be penalized for missing work.

- Whenever conditions are not safe, we have the right to collectively refuse to work without any threat of retaliation by management or the union.

If you work at Faurecia and agree to these demands, join us and build our rank-and-file safety committee. We are the only ones who will fight for our safety. Everybody knows the company and IBEW won't do it. And neither will the government.

If you work at another plant, form a rank-and-file safety committee to link up with ours. Whether you work at Faurecia in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in Michigan, or in Mexico: This is our fight, we the workers are the only force that can stop the virus and save lives around the world!



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