

As safety protocols vanish, Fiat Chrysler advises workers “protect your pets from COVID”

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The other day, a Fiat Chrysler worker in the Detroit area brought to the attention of the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* a management memo circulating at their plant providing some helpful information on halting the spread COVID-19.

It was titled “Pets and COVID-19 risk.” At first, we thought this was a spoof, a well-aimed satire of management disconnect. But we have been assured it is genuine.

The memo advises “The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented concern over all facets of what used to be our normal daily activities and interactions. For some, reaching for the comfort of a hug or a smooch from your best friend, may cause you to hesitate or question whether your cat or dog may present a COVID-19 risk.”

What is some of the helpful advice to keep pets safe from COVID?

“Just as we practice social distancing, keep your pets at a safe distance from other animals and people.

“If someone is sick with COVID-19 keep your pet away from the patient.”

It advises to clean and disinfect leashes, water bowls and toys.

It takes a lot of gall for management to pretend to show concern for pets when it is pretty evident they don't give two hoots about protecting workers. No offense to our pets, but do they really think workers are that stupid?

As readers of the *Autoworker Newsletter* know, the auto companies and their United Auto Workers flunkies played down the threat of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic from the beginning.

It took job actions by workers at perhaps a half-dozen

FCA plants in March to enforce a temporary shutdown and for even minimum safety protocols to be implemented.

The token safety protocols implemented by auto companies last May, with great fanfare from the UAW, have been steadily disappearing.

At first, the auto companies put on a good show—hand sanitizer, COVID-19 daily health surveys, masks and eyewear, extra cleaning, thermal imaging, extra break time for social distancing, and paid time off for quarantining.

But this was a front, and most workers quickly realized it. While FCA advises cleaning pet toys, cleaning in the plants is atrocious. Cleaning went away along with extra break time, and paid time off for self-quarantine. Worse, the UAW and management imposed a blackout on all information about COVID-19 outbreaks in the plants, making it impossible for workers to know if they might be exposed.

Workers more and more have awakened to the basic truth that as far as management is concerned, their lives are disposable. All that matters is the holy dollar. When it comes to safety, anything goes—as long as the auto companies can meet their production and profit goals.

The slogan of management might be summed up as “no cost is too small to bear” when it comes to protecting workers' lives. Most people treat dogs and cats better.

The threat of COVID-19 is deadly serious. While there is little documentation on animal transmission of COVID-19 to humans, the transmission of the virus in workplaces, schools and colleges is well documented. Cases are on the rise in the US and around the world as governments push to reopen schools and abandon any

efforts to control the virus and adopt the unscientific and homicidal policy of “herd immunity.”

If you don't have a rank-and-file safety committee at your plant, it is time to build one. Workers shouldn't leave their health and lives in the hands of management, who could care less about safety, or the corrupt pro-company UAW. Follow the example of workers at auto factories, parts plants, schools and transport facilities. Take the initiative to fight back to protect yourself. For more information on building rank-and-file safety committee at your plant, contact the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter*.



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