

Faurecia parts workers launch Rank-and-File Safety Committee in Saline, Michigan

Faurecia Saline Rank-and-File Safety Committee
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Faurecia auto parts workers in Saline, Michigan, have launched a rank-and-file safety committee in response to the explosive spread of COVID-19 at their plant, which has been facilitated by the collusion of the UAW with the company in concealing outbreaks at their sprawling factory 40 miles west of Detroit.

Autoworkers in Saline, like their brothers and sisters at Faurecia Gladstone in Indiana, join a national network of rank-and-file committees that is fighting for a complete shutdown of the auto industry with full compensation for workers to halt the pandemic. It is especially urgent to stop non-essential production now, stemming the needless loss of life and the spread of the often crippling contagion, when a vaccine may become widely available in just a matter of months.

Below is the statement and demands by workers who have launched the rank-and-file safety committee at Saline. To learn more about joining this committee or organizing one at your plant, contact autoworkers@wsws.org.

We are risking our lives every day we go in the plant. When we call the UAW about safety, they say they cannot do anything about it. We need to take action because the virus is everywhere. We are constantly discovering cases that the company and the UAW do not want us to know anything about.

In a private memo the plant manager named four cases: one each on line 702, PC&L, Shogo and Tesla. Those are just the ones that he named in the memo; there is no telling how many more cases there are that he did not even mention. He told the supervisors to keep these new outbreaks “hush-hush.” Don’t copy this memo, he said, and don’t let other employees know what is going on.

They sent all the workers on the 702 line home to quarantine for two weeks as of that Monday. They loan

workers between different departments to keep lines running. Without ever shutting down to sanitize, they brought operators from different parts of the plant to keep that line running. They claim they are sanitizing while the plant is running at full production. That is an outright lie!

The operators that are transferred into a contaminated line to keep it running after other workers were sent out on quarantine are being exposed to the virus. Now everybody is scared.

The company does not pay us to quarantine, so workers may feel they are forced to conceal the symptoms when they are sick. We cannot know who is a carrier. COVID-19 is out of control at Faurecia Saline. It is spreading faster and faster.

Faurecia does not care about us. All they want is the profit from our labor. If somebody dies, they just fill their spot with another worker. They don’t support the family. They don’t go to the funerals. They just treat us so wrong.

Last year before the 10:00 p.m. shift started, a woman died on the line. She had asked to go to medical, but the supervisor had refused. When she died, all he did was cover her up with a sheet and told the other workers to keep going. They were just stepping all over the woman and still running that line. They should have shut the plant down. We were beside ourselves and didn’t know what to do. **IT WAS JUST VICIOUS.**

Now we are all facing the same brutality. More than a thousand people are dying every day from COVID-19 in the US. Nearly 200,000 are testing positive. More and more hospital systems are overwhelmed from coast to coast, and it’s going to get worse. The new center of the pandemic is the Midwest, with factories like ours one of the main sources for the spread.

This year, even with a pandemic that killed more than

80,000 over the summer, the North American auto industry raked in billions of dollars in profits.

Elon Musk, owner of Tesla, gained \$112,000,000,000.00 himself in the past year. To profit off of mass death is disgusting and a social crime. All such accounts must be frozen, seized and redistributed to fund the measures needed to protect the lives and livelihoods of the working class.

Brothers and sisters at Faurecia Saline, with this declaration, we urge you to join our committee to prepare emergency action to stop this madness. How is it possible to justify profits which cost the lives of hundreds of thousands?

We formed this committee alongside our brothers and sisters at the Faurecia Gladstone plant in Columbus, Indiana, and other auto plants in Detroit because the unions, the companies, the media, and the government don't care if we die, as long as the parts and cars keep getting built. They won't protect us. We have to do it ourselves.

We need to know the whole truth about the pandemic. To do so and to get it under control, we are fighting for the following demands:

1. All workers must be immediately notified of every case of COVID-19, including the work area and shift that is affected. This information cannot be kept from us by the company or the union. Faurecia must provide a complete database of positive and potential COVID-19 cases, updated in real time.

2. Every worker must be tested at least weekly. The current practice of casual temperature checks and surveys for symptoms has proven to be worthless. Any worker who quarantines must receive full pay, without any bureaucratic red tape slowing down the payments.

3. Every worker must receive professional grade PPE, not these flimsy paper masks that tear apart halfway through your shift.

4. We will not be targeted, pointed, terminated or harassed in any way for taking necessary precautions, or for voicing our concerns about safety.

5. When there's a case confirmed, the factory must be shut down for at least 48 hours for deep cleaning, not just the affected area, but the whole plant, under our rank-and-file supervision in consultation with independent medical and scientific experts.

6. Social distancing must be implemented at all times—at workstations, when entering and leaving the

plant and during bathroom, lunch and other break times. If social distancing is impossible at some workstations, they should either be redesigned, or the plant should be closed, with full compensation for every worker.

7. If the company can't ensure the necessary safety measures, we have the right to collectively refuse to work, without any threat of retaliation by management or the UAW. Our lives are more important than Faurecia's profits.

If you agree with this statement, join the Faurecia Saline Rank-and-File Safety Committee! Now's the time to take a stand and fight to keep ourselves and our families safe.

To learn more about joining the Faurecia Saline Rank-and-File Committee, contact autoworkers@wsws.org.



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