

The COVID-19 outbreak at Dana plants endangers our lives! Close the plants *now!* Full pay for time off!

Dana Workers Rank-and-File Committee
13 September 2021

The Delta variant of COVID is spreading rapidly throughout Dana plants, putting our lives and the lives of our loved ones at risk of death or lifelong debilitation. The corporation will shut production when it runs out of parts but not for COVID outbreaks. In the eyes of the company, the UAW and USW, a dead worker can be replaced but a missing axle cannot be.

We should not be working at all right now. The UAW and USW continue to extend the old contract even after we voted 90 percent “no” to repudiate sweatshop conditions. They are forcing us to work mandatory overtime in the middle of a deadly pandemic to help the corporation stockpile parts. At many of our plants, we are stockpiling parts even though the assembly plants that use them are on shutdown due to microchip shortages.

The UAW and USW reached an agreement with Dana weeks or months ago. What they want to impose is not a “contract;” it is a five-year free pass for the corporation to do whatever it wants. There is a growing feeling among workers that a strike is necessary. The company is vulnerable, and supply lines are so interconnected that we have tremendous potential power. The company and unions are playing for time and making us risk our lives to build up a stockpile to weaken our position.

The spread of COVID within the plants makes our situation all the more urgent! We workers must take the initiative, or workers will die! The Dana Workers Rank-and-File Committee calls for workers everywhere to build rank-and-file strike committees to mobilize all workers in each plant in support of:

- An immediate shutdown of all plants to stop the spread of COVID.

- Immediate publication of COVID case information daily, at every plant.

- Payment of full wages during any quarantine.

- A contract with a 40-hour week, 8-hour day and 75 percent wage increase.

The UAW, USW and Dana are withholding information about the number of COVID cases to keep us working, just like they withheld the contract to try to get us to accept it. But here is the deadly reality:

Cases are on the rise in many Dana plants. Workers report 63 active cases at Dana’s facility in Dry Ridge, Kentucky. There are currently 9 active cases at the plant in Warren, Michigan, and cases are rising inside the plant at a faster rate than in the surrounding city as a whole. There are also reports of rising cases and community spread at Fort Wayne, Indiana; Danville, Kentucky and Crossville, Tennessee.

By keeping the plants open, Dana and the unions are putting our families and the entire community at risk. In almost every county where a Dana plant is located, COVID cases are on the rise like never before. Cases are at an all-time peak in Dry Ridge, Henderson, Louisville and Danville in Kentucky, as well as in Paris, Humboldt and Crossville in Tennessee. Cases are increasing in Lima and Toledo in Ohio; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Columbia, Missouri; Pottstown, Pennsylvania and Warren, St. Clair and Auburn Hills in Michigan.

The health care system cannot withstand more cases. At seven Dana plants in Kentucky and Tennessee, ICU bed utilization within a 30-mile radius of the plants is well above the national average of 82 percent. For the Louisville plant, ICU utilization is 110 percent. For three plants—Danville, Kentucky; Gordonsville, Tennessee; and Crossville, Tennessee—there are fewer

than 10 available ICU beds within a 30-mile radius.

The company and unions are sacrificing us for profit. Working overtime means overlapping with the next shift, drastically increasing the likelihood that infections will spread across all shifts and departments.

Efforts to “mitigate” the spread of the pandemic, including through mask wearing and vaccination, are not enough to protect our lives. As long as the plants are open, the virus will spread. Our plants are poorly ventilated, without adequate air conditioning, meaning particles sit in the air and spread to every production line and every part of the plant. Only a shutdown will protect us from infection.

The ruling class—including its political representatives Biden, Trump and the Democratic and Republican parties—has been waging a campaign to force us workers to die for corporate profit. They are reopening our schools, where our children will get infected. They are cutting off unemployment and ending the moratorium on evictions, all to increase pressure on us to stay on the job. This is an attack against the entire working class, at Dana and beyond, regardless of race, nationality or gender. Meanwhile, the stock market soars, and billionaire wealth reaches new heights.

However, even if we succeed in forcing Dana and the unions to shut down the company’s plants, this by itself will not be enough to alter the trajectory of the pandemic, under conditions where both parties are reopening schools and eliminating all remaining restrictions. For that, a new strategy is needed, based on the mobilization of the working class against the sacrifice of lives to profit. The pandemic, which does not respect national or racial boundaries, can only be brought under control if the working class organizes to force the adoption of a strategy, which includes vaccinations, contact tracing and the shutdown of nonessential production, to finally eradicate the virus.

The UAW and USW have tried to convince us that we are isolated and that we can do nothing to fight the concessions that management is demanding. In reality, workers all around the world are looking for ways to fight back against the decision by the corporations and governments to allow the virus to spread unchecked in their workplaces, schools and communities. We can and must make our own movement the tip of the spear of a broader movement, drawing the support of teachers, John Deere workers, autoworkers at the Big

Three plants and others.

Enough is enough! We have the power to save our lives and the lives of our loved ones. To enforce shutdowns and prepare for a strike, workers must establish rank-and-file strike committees to share information, ensure democratic discussion and prepare common action within each plant and across all plants. We call for the **immediate shutdown of all Dana plants with full quarantine pay for every worker! We must not be forced to choose between infection and eviction.**

Join the Dana Workers Rank-and-File Committee by emailing us at danawrfc@gmail.com or texting us at (248) 602-0936.



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