

Dana workers must prepare common action to halt contract violations

Dana Workers Rank-and-File Committee
19 May 2022

Dear fellow Dana workers:

At all Dana plants, the company is violating the terms of the contract and the unions are letting them do it. While the violations differ at each plant, our response at all plants must be the same: we must unite and take action ourselves, or things will only get worse.

It is not clear that we even *have* a contract, seeing as the unions refuse to give us copies. If a contract does exist on paper, the UAW and USW are letting the company violate it so much that it no longer exists in reality. This is not only intolerable, it is also completely illegal. We are human beings and we have rights!

In some plants, like Dry Ridge, Kentucky, the UAW has allowed the company to force us to work mandates even after telling us during last year's contract vote that mandates would not be allowed under the new Alternative Work Schedule. That promise was the only reason why the contract passed at Dry Ridge. The company is also refusing to pay us the overtime we were promised would be a part of this "contract."

In other plants, like Warren, Michigan, our hours have been slashed so much that the wage "gains" in the contract have been rendered totally meaningless, while some of us have been forced to get second jobs to make ends meet. Nobody would have voted for this contract if we knew it would result in our hours being cut and our wages being slashed!

Adding insult to injury, the company refused to pay us profit-sharing this year, even after making huge profits. Union and company representatives told workers at a number of plants that this was "punishment" for our voting down the first contract last year. Are we supposed to let this insult stand?

The UAW and USW said last year that the main issue in the contract was the wage gains. But inflation in just the last year has already erased all of the wage "gains"

promised in the contract over the next several years. Official inflation rates are 8 percent, and the reality is likely much worse. The company saw this coming and forced us to accept a pay *cut* which the UAW and USW falsely presented as a gain.

Nothing has been done about health and safety at the plants. In Dry Ridge, there is a cockroach and bedbug infestation which the company refuses to fix, which is not only disgusting but also a major health risk and risks spreading bugs into our homes and local school system.

In Fort Wayne, Indiana, the plant is just as dirty and dangerous as before, with floors covered in oil slick that makes falls inevitable.

In Warren, the company just announced that they will not be opening the roof in the summer, even though there is no air conditioning. The company is far more worried about protecting the machines from rain than they are about protecting us from heat stroke.

At all plants, grievances go nowhere and the company takes small liberties in violation of the contract, which add up over time. The company is not implementing promised COVID-19 safety measures as a new wave of the pandemic is growing across the country. This will only continue to worsen if something is not done.

Dana workers have never been in a stronger position. The company needs us more than ever, with global supply chains breaking down and with massive fines if the company misses a delivery to the Big Three. The UAW and USW try to keep us isolated to weaken us, but the contract fight last year showed what our power is if we are united, if we are acting in unison, and if we are informed of what is taking place at all the other plants.

The labor shortage has forced Dana to beg for new

hires. In St. Clair, Michigan, the company is so desperate that it has put up advertisements telling workers to ask college student relatives to work for Dana for the summer. In Fort Wayne, workers report that the company is so short of workers that it is hiring prison labor to work in the plant. The company is making massive profits. If they are so desperate for extra help, they can afford to pay us what we deserve and to improve conditions at our workplaces.

In addition, the ongoing strike of agricultural implement workers at CNH across the Midwest as well as Detroit Diesel workers in Michigan provides wind at our sails. The working class is fighting back against inflation and increases to the cost of living, and we are stronger as a class if we all fight together.

This means we have never been in a better position to stand up for ourselves. We know we are going to get no help from the UAW and USW, which have been shown time and time again to be agents of the company. It is time to consider common action.

Workers at many plants have reached out to the Dana Workers' Rank-and-File Committee (DWRFC) to discuss plans for protests and common action.

We agree: such action would be entirely justified as well as legal. It is the company, and not the workers, who violated the contract first.

But common action must be well organized and well-prepared. This requires a fight for unity across plants in advance of any walkout. It must be prepared through democratic discussion to determine what the demands are in each of the plants. It means building a network in each plant comprised of workers who will speak to their coworkers, explain the reasons for fighting, and win the broadest possible support for common action.

Speak to your coworkers, contact the DWRFC and join this network to organize a common fight.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact