



**Workers' Memorial Day, 28 April**

# **HEALTH & SAFETY CONVERSATION STARTER PACK**



# MOURN THE DEAD, FIGHT LIKE HELL FOR THE LIVING

Mother Jones, 1902

## WHAT IS WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY?

**On 28 April, we stop work to take a moment to remember workers killed and injured because of their work.**

Everyone expects to come home safe at the end of the day, but:

- On average, 71 workers are killed on the job, and a further 750—900 die because of work-related diseases every year.
- That equates to 17 workers being killed every week because of their work.
- Every 15 minutes a worker suffers an injury that requires more than week away from work.

**Taking a moment's silence commemorates those workers.**

**It's also an opportunity to reflect on our workplace health and safety.**

- Are there any live workplace health and safety issues? What action could we take collectively to resolve it?
- Work through the checklist provided (below) to see if we can get some quick wins for better health and safety in the workplace:
  - **Do we have enough Health and Safety Reps?**  
Now is a great time to elect them if we don't.
  - **Are Reps properly trained?**  
Elected Reps are entitled to training. To make sure they get work-focused training visit Worksafe Reps ([worksafereps.co.nz](http://worksafereps.co.nz))
  - **Does our workplace have a health and safety committee?**  
Are workers on them? Do we hear from them?
  - **Do we have bargaining coming up?**  
How about negotiating a worker participation agreement?

*Things to consider*

# 17

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**WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY ALSO STANDS AS A REMINDER ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE TO WORKERS OF GOOD HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Why it's important to be aware of **good** health and safety.

- **Don't let anyone tell you that health and safety is just unnecessary red tape, or too confusing/unworkable.**
  - Health and safety done right means workers have a real say on how work is designed and how it functions to keep us safe and healthy.
  - **Workers know the best and safest ways of doing your job.** Workers should have a say in how to do it.
  - **Good health and safety empowers workers.**
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 is made to be used by workers and unions in the workplace. It provides enforceable rights and powers to protect from the risks of workplace harms.
- **We have strong rights under these laws, such as:**
  - The right to a safe and healthy work environment.
  - The right to cease unsafe work without getting in trouble.
  - The right to be involved in decisions that impact our health and safety at work.
- **These legislative rights are designed to ensure that we feel empowered to speak up.**
  - Health and safety should never just be about being told what to do, it's about having a voice in the operation of work.
- **Ask if anyone has any health and safety stories to share?**
  - The impact that poor health and safety has on people's lives shows us how important it is to keep fighting for improvements.

*\* You need to assess if there are any ongoing health and safety issues in the workplace.*

**Good health and safety practices empower workers and give a voice in shaping work environments.**

# NOW MORE THAN EVER WE NEED TO FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS



- The Minister of Workplace Relations and Safety, Brooke van Velden, has signalled she wants to make changes to health and safety laws, on the basis that they're unclear and too confusing for businesses.
- Based on other recent changes, such as the rollout of 90-day trials and removal of Fair Pay Agreements, there is a trend towards stripping back workers' rights. It follows they want to continue to take away power from workers.
- **We don't want to let the Minister take your rights or your voice away.**

## INTRODUCE CORPORATE MANSLAUGHTER LEGISLATION IN NEW ZEALAND

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, Justice Minister Paul Goldsmith, Workplace Relations Minister Brooke van Velden

Tēnā koutou,

We believe every working person has the right to return home safely at the end of the day. The health and wellbeing of all workers must be a top priority for the companies they work for.

Businesses that cut corners to save costs at the expense of workers' lives, bosses that repeatedly disregard risks that kill their employees, and directors that take unacceptable risks with workers' lives must be held accountable.

Between January 2022 and January 2023, 64 people have been killed at work.

Currently, there is no corporate manslaughter legislation in New Zealand to hold companies accountable when their negligence leads to a person being killed at work. This is unacceptable. An effective deterrent is long overdue.

Companies have a responsibility to ensure the safety of their workers, and the lack of consequences for companies that fail to do so perpetuates a culture of negligence and disregard for human life.

We urge you to introduce corporate manslaughter legislation for New Zealand. We want to see New Zealand become a world leader in workplace safety, joining other countries like Canada, United Kingdom, France, Spain, and Australia who have developed legislation to protect their workers.

This legislation would ensure negligent companies are held accountable for workplace deaths, and send a clear message that the safety and wellbeing of workers is a top priority for New Zealand.

*Sign the  
open letter*

visit  
[together.org.nz](https://together.org.nz)  
today

**NOT ONE MORE**



Health and Safety Quick Checklist		Yes/No
<b>Does your workplace have the following structures for engaging on health and safety?</b>		
Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs)		
Do workers know who their HSRs are?		
Are HSRs elected by the workers? Have they received training (incl. Unit Standard 29315)		
Are elected HSRs included in all matters that involve worker health and safety?		
Are HSRs able to raise and discuss health and safety matters with PCBU decision makers?		
Health and Safety Committees (HSCs)		
Are workers (and unions) included on HSCs? Is there a balance of worker and employer voices?		
Are HSCs given all information needed?		
Is there proper communication between the HSC and the workers?		
Agreed Procedures – were these created in agreement with the workers and their union?		
Any other agreed engagement processes?		
Do the engagement structures involve <b>all</b> workers at the workplace (including contractors) who are a part of the PCBU's workforce?		
<b>Does the PCBU use the engagement structures when it:</b>		
Identifies hazards and assesses risks?		
Makes decisions to implement controls for risks?		
Proposes to make changes to how work is done?		
Develops, implements, and reviews safety policies and procedures		
<b>When the PCBU does engage workers on any matter that impacts worker health and safety, does it:</b>		
Include workers and their union to fully understand the issues?		
Inform workers of what they intend to do?		
Share all relevant information including all information the workers and union asks for?		
Provide reasonable opportunity for workers to respond?		
Consider the expressed views of workers and their union?		
Advise workers of the decision and provide the reasoning for that decision		
<b>Are Health and Safety Representatives:</b>		
Included in all engagement that involves worker health and safety?		
Able to raise and discuss health and safety matters with PCBU decision makers?		