



TUCAN Newsletter

October 2019 No.1

Air pollution – what about the workers?

The Trade Union Clean Air Network (TUCAN), has been set up to push for workers and trade unions to have greater recognition on air pollution issues. Alongside the dangers of climate change has been the damage caused by the unhealthy air that we breathe. With contaminants such as nitrous oxide, particulate matter from diesel fumes, ground level ozone and dusts such as silica from construction work, plastics and rubber, the workforce is being exposed to a toxic cocktail. This includes those who work in offices or shops with pollution that seeps into their workplace air, outdoor workers, and for the millions of workers commuting as part of their jobs.

TUCAN calls for all local, regional, national and international air pollution policies to include a commitment to address the occupational health dangers to both outdoor and indoor workers. Unions must be consulted on the risks and control measures needed.

Air pollution as a just transition issue

Workers' and unions' input is the only way to ensure that any changes made won't diminish the standard of living of anyone affected now or into the future. This type of change is called just transition and is necessary to prevent workers and communities being dumped into economic misery in the name of progress. The Greener Jobs Alliance has produced an on-line training package on just transition <https://bit.ly/2oBKDUT>

Trade union action is needed to ensure workers and their families don't suffer the consequences from bad air or solutions that unfairly penalise them.

Driver exposure

A study conducted by Kings College and funded by the Institution of Occupational Health, revealed that workers employed as drivers are at high risk. Testing was conducted on 141 professional drivers from different sectors, including taxi, truck, waste removal and emergency services drivers, in London for a continuous 96-hour period. <https://bit.ly/329QU8W>

This study is consistent with the work carried out by TUCAN in July 2019 which showed dangerous levels of nitrogen dioxide in the cab of a bus driver. It is vital that more monitoring is carried out to reveal the extent of the risk across the transport network and speed up the transition to cleaner vehicles. The 'Time to Breathe' campaign has launched an app for London based workers <https://bit.ly/2FIAhOs>

Lobby the WHO event at City Hall

The World Health Organisation is holding an international air quality conference:
Wednesday 23 October from 1.30 - 5.30pm
London City Hall, London SE1 2AA

TUCAN will be attending and lobbying outside from 1.00pm. Come and join us to make the case for worker protection.

Meet outside the entrance from 12.15 pm
<https://bit.ly/2ybwNvj>



News in brief

TUC seminar on Respiratory Health

On the 27 September the London, Eastern and South Eastern TUC held a conference attended by over 100 health and safety reps in the region. Hilda Palmer (pictured), Greater Manchester Hazard Centre, outlined the role of TUCAN and the need for unions to recognise the link between internal and external pollution risks.



Air pollution and pregnancy

The workplace contains potential reproductive risks. Particles have been found on the foetal side of placentas, indicating that unborn babies are directly exposed to the black carbon produced by motor traffic and fuel burning. Pregnant workers require a risk assessment to control their exposure levels.

The recent research is here: <https://bit.ly/2kRNlyf>

UK air pollution compliance data

The UK Government has submitted its compliance data for 2018 and Client Earth has analysed it here: <https://bit.ly/35qBU8A> 36 zones out of the 43 that make up the UK are not complying with legal limits that

should have been met in 2010. Additionally two zones still don't comply with the hourly legal limit: namely Greater London and South Wales

Air pollution and climate change

The United Nations report that countries are more receptive to tackling air pollution than climate change. A recent BBC report includes a short video that illustrates the link between the two.

<https://bbc.in/2IFuaG7>

How climate friendly is your community?

Local authorities are employers and have a key role to play in the geographical area where other employers are based. Friends of the Earth has produced a handy new tool helps you look up how climate-friendly your local authority is and what climate action is needed in their area. It includes how they are performing on transport related issues. <https://bit.ly/357wAH7>

Hazards Campaign silica e-postcard

The Hazards Campaign calls for an urgent cut to the killer silica dust limit. This ePostcard campaign is an initiative of Hazards magazine with the support of the Hazards Campaign.

<http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/silica>

Support for TUCAN increases

TUCAN was set up with the support of 13 trades unions representing the majority of union membership in the UK. We are pleased to welcome the Pharmacists Defence Association (PDA) as a new signatory to the TUCAN Charter along with the Scottish Hazards.



Contact us if your organisation would like to add its name. Details below.

Air Pollution Resources

- **TUCAN Clean Air Charter** - Unions representing the bulk of TUC membership have adopted a campaign charter <https://bit.ly/2vVDZZC>
- **TUCAN Air pollution guide for union reps** – contains a useful checklist to carry out an audit at work <https://bit.ly/313RVh9>
- **Air pollution course** – The Greener Jobs Alliance has produced a free online course <https://bit.ly/2M4viol>

Get in touch

If you would like further information about TUCAN then please contact Janet (email: janet@gmhazards.org.uk) or Graham (email: [gjacom@gmail.com](mailto:gjacoms@gmail.com))