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INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA – UAW

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DENNIS D. WILLIAMS, *PRESIDENT*      GARY CASTEEL, *SECRETARY-TREASURER*  
VICE-PRESIDENTS: CINDY ESTRADA • NORWOOD JEWELL • JIMMY SETTLES

June 15, 2016

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

This letter is to inform all local unions of an urgent health and safety issue in need of attention. Just today we received another heartbreaking report of a Brother who received life threatening injuries when a press cycled during a servicing task. He is in serious condition and may lose his arms or worse, his life; and this is not an isolated incident.

There is an epidemic of injuries across the country and our membership is on the front lines. As of January 2015 new regulations require notification of OSHA in the event of an amputation or hospitalization. Since the requirement went into effect, there have been many thousands of injuries reported. Many locations are facing OSHA inspections because of these serious accidents.

In the last 24 months, five UAW members lost their lives because of faulty energy control procedures (Lockout/Tagout), machine guarding failures and failure to follow safety procedures. These issues need our Union's collective and concerted effort to safeguard our members. To that end we must:

- Involve the union safety committee in Lockout/Tagout review.
- Consult every worker who conducts servicing tasks on how to improve the lockout system and robot cell entry procedures. Ask the question, "Which tasks involve risk and what tasks make the hair on the back of your neck stand up?"; then eliminate those risky activities.
- Production workers who must unjam equipment or interact with robotics must have control measures and guarding in place to protect them. No one should be entering a robot cell without being fully protected. No body part should be placed in machinery unless lockout is performed.
- Push management for updated controls such as inherently safe circuits on logic controllers, up-to-date e-stops that meet the latest ANSI standards and inherently safe robot cell entry procedures.
- Use effective energy control procedures and stop the inappropriate use of light curtains, presence sensing devices or gate interlocks for lockout.

I am calling on all Locals to work with your health and safety reps to ensure that workers who are involved in operating, servicing and doing maintenance tasks be protected. OSHA requires specific lockout procedures for each machine and robot cell. These lockout procedures must be reviewed annually. Let's make this annual audit count by gathering information from workers who are exposed and work to change any procedures that constitute a hazard to the membership.

Remember, it is the responsibility of all members to first follow safety procedures.

UAW represented facilities take great pride in efficiency and continuous improvement. But the Union's support of modern operating agreements that include flexibility and team work does not mean that we eliminate safety resources. If lockout takes time away from production so be it; we cannot cut corners and perform unsafe work. The cost of life and limb is too high.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis D. Williams".

Dennis D. Williams  
President

DDW:kmt  
opeiu494/afl-cio