

It's for you to decide!

By the time you're reading this the first of two big industrial action ballots will be closing. The OCA ballots being run by Unite, GMB and RMT are due to close between June 30th and July 5th and as these ballots close, the COTA ballots run by Unite and RMT are starting. No matter what the outcome is of these ballots they will have a bearing on the industry. Downing tools and taking strike action is not what anyone wants, even threatening it is a major step. Yet, for many of our members, it appears there is no other option left for them after 2 bruising years of cuts to terms and conditions as well as thousands of pay offs while the inflation rate continues to rise. Everything now costs more, even the cost of getting to and from work.

Everything costs our members more and they have less to spend, but for the oil companies the costs have reduced by huge margins. Today the average cost of producing a barrel of oil has come down to around \$17 or less and almost all operators report significant savings have been made. Despite this fact though many of the contractors continue to squeeze our members on everything from stand-by pay to holidays, sickness pay to travel costs, training time to leave time, the attacks are relentless! It is little wonder we are in the mess we are, something has to give.

As the title suggests, it will be for you, the members, to decide what happens and no matter how the votes come out there must be a change in the attitudes of industry leaders or else the future is bleak!

Remember a couple of things though if industrial action happens, important things which have come up during our road shows and our webinar sessions; if you don't work for an OCA or a COTA company you cannot and must not take part in strike action as you will not be protected; if you are not working in a job category listed in the OCA or COTA agreements the same rule applies; and if you are unsure about anything contact your Union rep onshore before you

act, you can get us at the email addresses listed below.

Another question that has come up is what happens if the 50% thresholds aren't met or if the vote is against strike? Well again that will be for you the members to decide. The anger and frustration isn't going away, but it may be that insecurity and fear have influenced your decision so we'll have to deal with that, and we will. We are committed to engaging workers, to educate and to organise workers across the energy sector because there is a future worth fighting for. The engagement so far has served to confirm what we have always known, that fairness and security are at the heart of everything you want and these issues must be at the forefront of our efforts going forward. Welfare, work/life balance, justice, bullying and discrimination all featured as well and again we must organise and educate to address these issues. A strike ballot may not come out the way you had hoped or anticipated and strike action may be rejected, but it doesn't end our struggle to improve all aspects of your working environment.

It's for you to decide the direction we take in the coming days, weeks, months and years in our industry. The pending ballots are just a part of that process. Knowledge is power, unity is strength and you will need both to secure a future in this industry. The OCG Trade Unions are committed to protecting your future.

If you are unsure about any decision in the coming days around industrial action contact:

Tommy Campbell, Unite;
tommy.campbell@unitetheunion.org

John Boland, Unite: john.boland@unitetheunion.org

Jake Molloy, RMT: j.molloy@rmt.org.uk

Alan Ritchie, GMB: alan.ritchie@gmb.org.uk

Pee power? Really!

Reduce costs; improve efficiency; increase production; lower for life; you get the script. These terms and many more like them are circulating across the industry right now and central to them all, according to Oil & Gas UK, is another well versed statement – “Workforce engagement”. Apparently the oil companies want to take the workforce on the journey as they strive to attain their objectives, good luck with that then!

However, we stumbled on a ‘wee’ article which might actually deliver on all of these elements – “Pee Power”! Scientists at the Bristol Bioenergy Centre at Bristol University have developed ‘Pee Power’ urinals which turn urine into electricity. The article reported that these ‘Pee Power’ urinals were being used at the Glastonbury Festival where, through the magic of science, they would power ten information panels. Apparently the technology uses microbial fuel cells to turn the pee from two “40 person Pee Power urinals” into useable electricity.

Could this be something worth exploring for our hard up oil companies? There’s a lot off ‘pee’ produced daily on offshore installations, most of which ends up in the sea, imagine if it could all be recycled to power equipment. Reduce electricity/production costs, improve efficiency and engage the workforce all in one go! Then again, the system would need maintenance which probably makes in a non-starter, or to coin another well versed phrase – ‘a load of p###’!



Go sick, get ‘managed’

Petrofac are ‘sick’ of workers being ‘sick’ so they have decided they need to ‘manage’ the situation. In a letter sent to staff they report that sickness absence on their offshore labour supply contract is currently running at an average of “7% of working days per month” compared to a company average of 4.5%. They state this level of absence is “unsustainable” and is having an effect on the company’s - “efficient delivery of the labour supply contract.”

The company tells staff they will now hold “absence review meetings” where any worker has had two instances of absence in a rolling 12 month period. Not only that, if a worker expresses – “any concern which makes the line manager feel that there is an underlying health problem that needs to be addressed” - the worker will be summoned to a meeting. Well here’s an “underlying health problem” for Petrofac – **3 and 3 rotas!** Depression, anxiety, stress, and get this Petrofac, **sickness absence**, have all increased since the introduction of the dreaded 3:3 and it’s time the industry took notice!

The fact is, instead of dealing with the all too obvious problem, Petrofac are instead using the ‘big stick’ as a threat tactic. Not so say Petrofac, they are committed to the good health and well being of staff. An obvious means of demonstrating this is the demand you attend a “Return to Work meeting” after any period of medically certified absence. Employees are told the meeting is to – “ensure that your return to work is managed effectively and that you received the correct level of support and guidance during your period of absence.” On the positive side, you will get any reasonable expenses reimbursed, although this will not include travel other than a taxi fare from your hotel!

So you’ll see the occupational health specialist for your return to work medical, then you’ll be required to nip in to the office (taxi paid) and see the ‘HR/Good Health and Wellbeing Officer’ or whatever convoluted title they come up with. This is purely for the HR/etc officer to ensure you got all the support and guidance you needed when you were ill really? And you wonder why we are in a mess!

Diesel exhaust can kill - Report it!



Exposure to diesel fumes at work can cause cancer and even kill you!

Please take a couple of minutes to fill out the Unite diesel exhaust emissions register [HERE](#) - your responses will help us draw up a map to measure the level of diesel fume exposures in workplaces.

The data that you provide will be stored on a database and may be shared with others, including law firms instructed by Unite. The use of this information will be utilised for the purposes of providing evidence of exposure with employers and Government bodies.

Unite Legal helpline

By completing the form you are not registering a legal claim. If you have suffered significant symptoms caused by exposure to diesel emissions you should contact Unite's Legal service helpline without delay on 0800 709 007.

All workers have a right to safe working environment.

There are detailed regulations in place intended to protect all workers from exposure to dangerous substances (such as diesel exhaust fumes) in the workplace and these are called "The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002" or COSHH for short.

Help inform workers about this important topic

- Put up one of our posters in your workplace.
- Hand out a flyer to colleagues at work
- Find out more about diesel fume risks on our website.

By raising awareness now we can protect the health of current workers and future workers!

BEWARE of bogus employment offers!

OCG Unions have been alerted to scams being run by bogus employment agencies where you will be asked to provide personal details (e.g. bank account or passport details) or payment to cover immigration fees or similar.

These scams are not new and these cowboys prey on vulnerable, desperate workers caught up in downturns experienced by the industry and especially the current one.



Please BEWARE and if you for one second suspect any dodgy communications, then please contact us / your union and we will do the digging and where possible, expose these scumbags to the press and the authorities.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The OCG are hitting the road once again and we are coming to see YOU in Hull and Middlesbrough.

Always wanted the chance to see your union officials 'face to face'?

Want to ask them those difficult questions?

Have you always wondered 'why' you should join a union?

Come along to see us and see what it's all about and why not take a friend or colleague.

Hull - Wed 02/08/17 6pm –

Holiday Inn Express (Hull City Centre)

Middlesbrough – Thurs 03/08/17 –

Holiday Inn Express (Middlesbrough)

Stay updated on all things OCG by registering your details with Nikki on ocg.project.coord@gmail.com

"Join a trade union?
I don't know if I can
afford it"

OCG

Can you afford
not to?



WHY JOIN A TRADE UNION?



WHAT ARE THEY ABOUT?



Representation at
grievances and disciplinary

Greater job security



Legal advice and
representation

Equal pay and equal
opportunities



Employment issues advice

Fought for NRB guidelines,
fighting blacklisting



Protecting pay and
conditions

Fighting zero hour
contracts



Campaign on
the issues that
matter to you

Fighting
social
dumping



Giving you a
voice

Pension
provisions



Help when
things go
wrong

Bullying &
harassment /
discrimination
policies



Health &
Safety support
and advice

Holiday
Entitlement



The typical cost of a solicitor
in the UK for ONE HOUR is
more than the annual
subscription cost of a union.
That works out at the same
cost as your daily
newspaper.

Flexible working, family
friendly policies



Workplace learning and
better benefits

