

Unionise and know your rights in the heat wave!

Each summer the same story: bus drivers driving 10 tonne vehicles around the streets of London at the point of collapse. For a few weeks each year, cab temperatures now exceed 40C, putting drivers at extreme risk of heat stroke. This is not only a health and safety risk for individual drivers but a potentially catastrophic accident for every pedestrian and road user in our city.

Each year drivers come close to collapsing at the wheel. Last year, at least 3 drivers were hospitalised due to heat exhaustion: stopping their buses, collapsing on the pavement and leaving work in a bluelight ambulance.

For many millions of workers across London and many billions workers across the world, summer temperatures are becoming increasingly dangerous. The technology exists to ensure safe workplace temperatures in our buses, hospitals, schools, etc., especially in the relatively mild climates of northern Europe. But even here in the



sixth richest country in the world, employers would rather risk catastrophic loss of life, than invest in climate resilient adaptation.

The government's Climate Change Committee finds climate adaptation is either "too slow, has stalled or is heading in the wrong direction" across all sectors. If our bosses will not voluntarily sacrifice their profits to make our workplaces safe, then we must use our collective strength to force them.

Know your rights

Workers have many hard won rights under health and safety law to refuse unsafe work. We should use them. For instance, under section 44 and 100 of the Employment Rights Act we can refuse work if we "reasonably believe" it involves "serious and imminent danger". Our employers are bound by section 2 and 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to not expose workers or the public to avoidable risks.

Unite the union has committed to supporting bus driver who refuses to drive a hot buses this summer.

On London Underground, it is the norm for a driver to refuse to drive an unsafe train and they have confident union reps behind them if management attempt any push-back. We need bus drivers across London to develop the same culture - for their own safety and the safety of London's travelling public. To win this battle will require workers to organise in their unions and encourage each other to refuse to work in hot buses this summer.

There are further rights that we can use if we are well organised in our unions. When temperatures reach 30 degrees celsius, health and safety reps can demand that buses without air conditioning are taken out of service. Through trade union organisation and collective action, we can force the employer to invest in the necessary air cooling technology and we will be keeping ourselves and our communities safe while we do it.

Beyond the immediate question of safe cab temperatures, climate change is not going to stop while the world's natural resources and large-scale industry are owned as private property and exploited for profit. To stop global heating we need to take capitalist property into public ownership and run industry under social control for human need. The only social force capable of taking control of our workplaces and of economic life is the organised workers movement. Through rebuilding strong workplace organisation, and linking up across industries and internationally

we are building the only social force that will keep us safe in an increasingly unsafe world and ultimately we are building the force that can win social control of economic life. Workplace heat is an issue affecting billions of workers around the world and can unite the international workers movement.

As trade unionists and members of the travelling public, we call on our fellow workers, the London buses drivers, to use your rights to refuse unsafe work this summer. As climate change accelerates, we need to rediscover the collective strength as workers. This will be vital to win timely adaptation in the here and now and it will also be vital for rebuilding the workers movement we need to take control and avoid piling up catastrophe for future generations.

Heat Strike: Open Meeting!

Want to get involved and help us organise around the heat strike? Join us to discuss the campaign, how we grow it and what we do next.

**Tuesday
July 7th
7-9pm**

