

## 10. Take Action

Deciding what action to take depends on worker commitment to solving the problems, the responsiveness of management, how long the problems have been unresolved, and how serious and widespread the problems are. Workers and the union, if there is one, should strategize about mobilization of workers and allies for collective action.



### HOW TO PICK PROBLEMS TO TACKLE?

Ideally, each problem will be:

- **Winnable:** The problem must be some health and safety condition that can be improved if the employer acts. Workers' first effort should be one that ensures victory – even if that victory is modest.
- **Widely felt:** Many people should be affected.
- **Deeply felt:** People should care about the problem and see it as very important.
- **Easy to understand:** People should have experienced the problem firsthand.
- **Result in a real improvement:** When the problem is corrected, it will truly make a difference in working conditions.
- **Regulated:** ideally, there should be a law in place that can help force the employer to take action on the problem.
- **Able to win community support:** If necessary, the problem should also provide the opportunity to win community support.

## INFORM WORKERS AND ALLIES

Effective communication is critical for winning safer and healthier workplaces. Creating and distributing notices and flyers and holding meetings and presentations are good ways to accomplish this. Informed workers and allies can make a much stronger case for improvements.

## APPROACH MANAGEMENT

A necessary step is to meet with management about hazardous conditions and present possible solutions. A worker should never do this alone! It is always best to work with co-workers, through the health and safety committee, and the union, if there is one.

When meeting with management:

- Show documentation of the dangers such as walkthrough notes, surveys, and photos, if available.
- Provide concrete solutions, explaining the proposed control measures.
- Remind them that preventing injuries and illnesses may save them money in workers' compensation costs and lost time.
- Note applicable OSHA/NJPEOSH or other government standards. Remind them they can be cited and fined by OSHA or NJPEOSH if they fail to comply with health and safety standards.

And remember, when discussing how to decrease hazards, don't let personal protective equipment (PPE) be used as a substitute for engineering controls – such as local exhaust ventilation – unless better controls are not possible.

## HELPFUL HINT



See the related topics in this guide:

- PART TWO, Section 4 – Media Coverage.
- PART TWO, Section 7 – OSHA/NJPEOSH Inspections.
- PART THREE, Section 2 – OSHA/NJPEOSH Standards.