

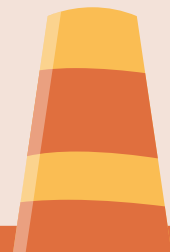


Adding Insult to Injury: Analysis of Workers Comp Experiences at GE Lynn

IUE-CWA Local 201

Maya Van Houten Armstrong, MSPH candidate at
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Sunnie Hodge, MPH candidate at Boston University



Background

IUE-CWA Local 201

- Founded in 1933
- Long organizing history in Lynn
- Represents a variety of workers in MA
- Has a Health and Safety Director and 9 Safety Reps who do injury prevention, training, safety committee meetings, and shop floor support

Workers' Compensation

- Laws and policies vary by state
- Releases employers from legal liability for injuries/illnesses that happened at work
- Used to cover medical care and lost wages



Objectives

Help Local 201 better understand members' experiences with injuries on the job and the workers' compensation system to inform campaigns and contract negotiations

Report interview results in a report, create an educational booklet for workers and safety reps, and write a newspaper article for the Local 201 monthly news



Methods



BACKGROUND

- Met with former 201 President and member of the labor council
- Met with attorney specializing in worker's comp law
- Literature review

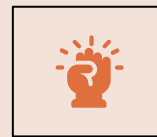
01



INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Brainstormed topics with Local 201 and mentors
- Used OHIP resources
- Conducted 2 pilot interviews

02



RECRUITMENT

- Contacted members referred by union officers
 - Developed recruitment flyer

03



DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

- Conducted interviews virtually and in person
- Analyzed themes

04

Recruitment




INJURED AT WORK... AND UPSET ABOUT THE OUTCOME?

DO YOU WANT TO SEE CHANGES IN WORKERS' COMP AND THE MEDICAL CENTER AT GE?
LET'S TALK.

ABOUT US

WE ARE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH INTERNS PARTNERED WITH THE IUE-CWA LOCAL 201. WE WANT TO GET TO KNOW YOU, AND HEAR ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH WORKPLACE INJURIES AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE'RE HERE TO HELP FIGHT FOR THE CHANGES YOU WANT TO SEE!

REQUIREMENTS:

- ✓ HAD A PREVIOUS WORKPLACE INJURY
- ✓ HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH WORKERS' COMP
- ✓ WANT TO SEE CHANGE IN THE CURRENT SYSTEM
- ✓ PARTICIPATE IN A 30 MIN INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW SIGN-UP :



ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL.

Interview Sign-up

All information provided will remain confidential and only be used to contact you to schedule your interview.

[Sign in to Google](#) to save your progress.
[Learn more](#)

* Indicates required question

Name *

Your answer

Phone number *

Your answer

Contact preference

Phone Call

Text

[Request edit access](#)

For More Detailed Changes To: IUE-CWA Local 201 News

Celebrating 91 Years as a Chartered Local 1893 - 2024

IUE-CWA Local 201 News

Local 201 is an amalgamated local representing approximately 1,600 members employed by GE River Works (Lynn), Ametek Aerospace (Wilmington), LWPT (Lynn), Aves Budget Group (East Boston), Aves (Boston/Cambridge), FleetLogix (East Boston), The Shaping Public Library (Gauguin), the NSU (Lynn) and thousands of lifetime former members across the country. www.local201.org

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IUE-CWA Local 201 REPRESENTING at CWA Legislative Conference

Market Based Wage Progression Schedules (Updated 07/01/2024)

Qualification	Rate	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Master	\$1.4	\$1.5	\$1.6	\$1.7	\$1.8	\$1.9	\$2.0

By Linda Martin, Local 201 FWO

Dear Local 201, Brothers and Sisters, My name is Linda Martin, and I'm a Liaison for the League of New Budget HQ in East Boston. Along with several of my fellow FleetLogix workers, I was a member of our Organizing Committee that led our campaign for union recognition and I'm currently serving on the Local 201 Benefits Negotiating Committee where we are negotiating for a strong first Local 201 union contract.

I recently had the opportunity to attend the 2024 CWA Legislative Conference as a representative of Local 201. I was asked to attend to speak on how recent changes at the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), currently controlled by a Democratic-appointed majority, impact FleetLogix workers who are union with Local 201.



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As of 7/10/2024 the Company has agreed to return to the old form. Thank you to all members who took action.



Conducting Interviews



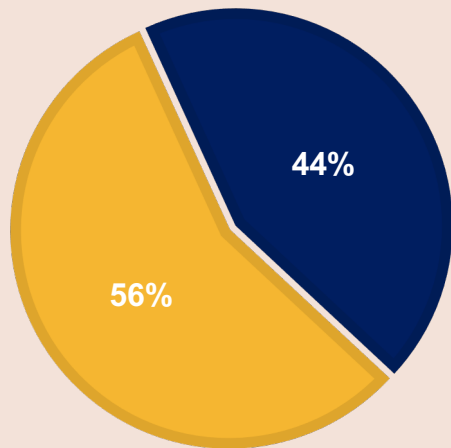
17 interviewees

- 12 interviews over the phone
- 5 in person at the Union Hall
- Most were welders, machinists, and carpenters
- Injuries occurred between 2010-2024



Results: Injuries

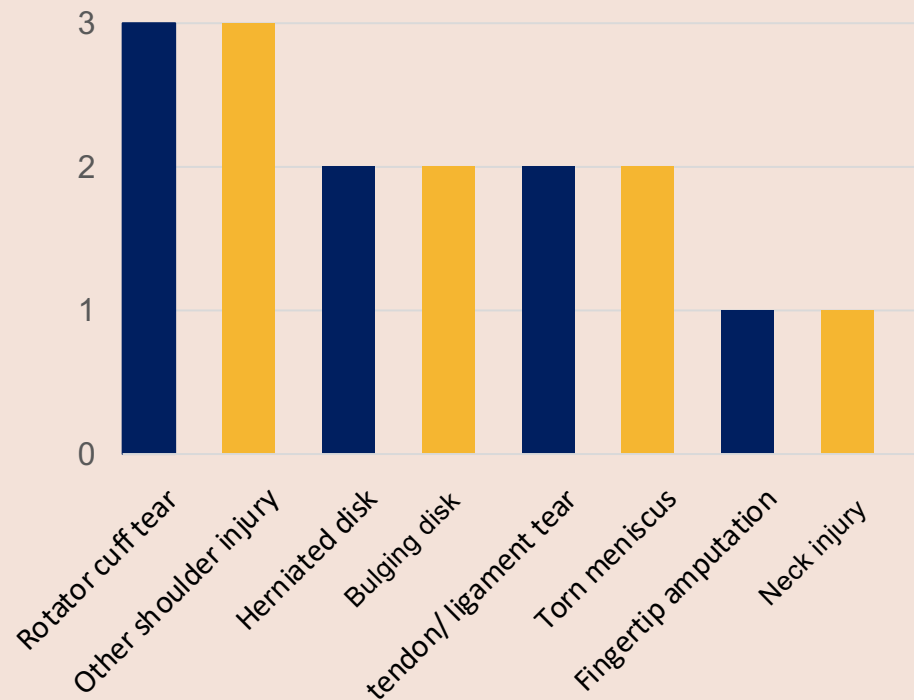
HAZARD TYPE



■ Ergonomic ■ Physical

“I feel like my whole life changed because of it.”

INJURY TYPE



Results: Injury Reporting and Medical Center



REPORTING

"I think people are afraid to report injuries because of the repercussions." - Pipe welder



TREATMENT DELAY

"They'll just massage you to death" - Electrician



DISRESPECTFUL

"its like you're getting treated like a criminal" - Machinist



CHANGE OVER TIME

"Anyone who does right by us doesn't last long" - Servicer

Results: Company Doctors and Independent Medical Examiners (IME)



LOW QUALITY CARE

"[physicians] treat you differently if you're a comp case"
- Union Officer

"the doctor they send you to doesn't have your interests in mind, they have the company's interests in mind"
- Miller



IME VALIDATES WORKER

"Out of several IME only one defended my legitimate workplace injuries" - Union Officer



IME DISCREDITS WORKER

"The IME wrote in his report that it looked like I was faking being in pain which wasn't true" - Machinist

Results: Third Party Administrator



COMMUNICATION

“Some people on the phone are so uneducated about the process they are put there to stop you.”
- Machinist

“I don’t feel like anyone cares. They ghosted me.” - Carpenter



AGGRESSIVE TECHNIQUES

While processing their claim...

- 4 - Felt someone was watching them to try and disprove their injury
- 1- Had family photos taken from social media to try and disprove their injury

“If you don’t know your rights and you’re new here, they’re going to smoke you.” - Miller



PAPERWORK

“I got a folder 4 maybe 6 inches thick” - Spot Welder

- 4 - felt paperwork was confusing
- 3 - Had trouble accessing their medical files/documents

INFO LEAKED

After processing their claim...

- 4 - Felt more people had access to their personal information than was necessary
- 1 - Had another employee’s name on case related documents

Results: Return to Work



RUSHED TO RETURN

"[Company] tried to force me to work."
- TIG welder on returning to work

"I felt like I was at the end of my rope" -
Machine Repair Worker on pressure to
keep working while injured



LACK OF ACCOMMODATION

"Wanted to find out what my stressors
were at when I got back to work"
- Spot welder on returning from
surgery without restrictions



ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS

In response to injuries...

- 3 - Safety meetings were held
- 1 - Steps in process were changed
- 1 - Stopped engaging in the task
aggravating the injury



ENGINEERING CONTROLS

In response to injuries...

- 3 - Machines were altered to
prevent injury from reoccurring
- 1 - Broken machine was replaced

Successes and Challenges



SUCCESSSES

- Recruitment support from union officers
- Mentorship from site coordinators



CHALLENGES

- Not allowed into the plant
- Understanding nuanced workers comp laws
- Time management





Next Steps

Unions can positively impact the workers' comp system through bargaining

- Injury reporting and response at the medical center
- Communication with the third party administrator
- The impact of the contract between the employer and the third party administrator
- Return to work process

Navigating workers' comp is a working condition and subject to bargaining!

Reflections



A big thank you to...



- Our interviewees who shared their stories with us
- Our hosts Carmen DeAngelis, Adam Kaszynski, and Jeff Cruz at IUE-CWA Local 201
- Our site coordinators Elise Pechter and Nancy Lessin
- NIOSH and AOEC for financially supporting our project

