

National Day of Mourning



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It's been 24 years since CUPE initiated the National Day of Mourning and instead of improvements for workers, the situation is getting worse. More workers are being injured, made sick and killed on the job.

Canadian workplaces are consistently one of the worst offenders in terms of killing workers compared to most other industrialized countries. For example, out of 29 countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Canada has the fifth highest incident rate of worker fatalities. Rounding out the top five countries are Korea, Mexico, Portugal and Turkey.

Since 1984, there have been 19,805 workers killed on the job in Canada. This appalling and obscene number does not even give the true picture of how many workers have been killed as it doesn't include all of the workplace fatalities that go unrecognized by compensation boards across Canada.

Three CUPE members were killed on the job in 2007:

- Sister Donna Carbone, 52, from CUPE 2838, Edson, AB.
- Brother Doug Prysiazniuk, 36, from [CUPE 500](#), Winnipeg, MB.
- Brother Richard "Butch" Gallant, 63, from CUPE 1190, Shediac, NB.

Every workplace death can be prevented but choices are made that allow fatalities to happen. Those choices are not made in the interests of workers but in the interests of employers. We have to take back power so that better choices are made in the first place. It's time for health and safety solidarity among all workers.

We need to tackle the growing tide of asbestos-related illnesses and deaths; the insidious harassment, bullying and violence directed at workers; and the harmful effects of privatization on our health and safety. We need to reclaim our rights!

On April 28, please take part in your local's activities to mark the day. We must mourn the dead but we must also fight for the living.