

My supervisor stops me closing the window even when it is freezing!

I have to stand for my entire shift, sometimes with no break in 8 hours!

Fast food workers at Drive-thru's What do you need to know?

I nearly fell last week because the ladder was broken and the floor was wet

You can tell a McDonald worker by the burns on their arms.

A colleague was punched in the face through the window!

What are the health, safety and welfare issues that fast food workers at drive-thru's face?

What can we do to support these workers in challenging their unsafe and unhealthy working conditions?

**Hazards
campaign**

The fast food industry includes food giants like McDonalds, KFC and Burger King. McDonalds is one of the biggest global companies in the world and it has huge profits.

You would imagine that organisations which make large profits would employ workers on good pay and conditions. However, this is not the case. Many young, vulnerable workers work in the fast food industry. It is a sector which employs workers on zero hours contracts and often disregards their health, safety and welfare. They can do this because savage cuts to L.A. Environmental Health resources and officers; have resulted in a lack of enforcement of the health and safety laws. This means that those workers are potentially facing a future of ill health as well as a risk of injury on a daily basis, because of working conditions.

All workers have the right to be safe and healthy at work!

Employers have a general duty under section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the safety, health and welfare of their employees and under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of risks and to put control measures in place to either eliminate or manage the risks down to a level that avoids harm.

All the risks identified by fast food workers are preventable or easily controlled. No-one should be at risk of injury or ill health in this sector.

The drive-thru's are an additional risk to workers. They are at risk from air pollution, freezing cold, violence, musculo skeletal problems and other issues.

'Workers should not be treated as disposable and work should not be spirit-sapping, body-breaking grind.'

Hazards Identified by Fast Food Workers

Issue	Potential Hazard	Suggested Solutions
Lack of personal safety	Incidents of violence, robberies, sexual harassment, and bullying. This can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicides from behaviours initiated by customers, other employees, and employers.	Zero Tolerance on violence Security procedure including alarms and CCTV used to secure film of any customer violence. Clear policy on acceptable behaviour displayed for customers and issued to all staff in training and enforced by managers and supervisors.
Thermal discomfort	Having windows open for long periods with wet, windy, cold, conditions or hot, stuffy working conditions	Heaters and adequate ventilation in work space which are maintained and can be used as necessary throughout the year. PPE available free if necessary Windows closed whenever possible
Air Pollution	Exposure to automobile exhaust including diesel fumes and dust Carbon monoxide poisoning can result in headache, fatigue, flu-like symptoms and potential heart problems. Diesel exhaust is a carcinogen and exposure to fine dust can lead to cancers etc.	Windows closed whenever possible and exhaust extraction units installed to protect workers Air quality monitoring inside and outside windows
Noise	Exposure to traffic noise while working in the drive-thru area. Uncomfortable and hot headsets, acoustic shock.	Suitable headsets, regularly maintained that fit comfortably to head and ideally a set for each individual. Rotation of workers in drive-thru
Musculo skeletal problems	Taking payments, cash and cards and serving food and drink to customers in cars can result in awkward postures, excessive reaching and lifting and twisting. Also a lack of work space	Professionally designed work space which is of adequate size to accommodate seats and designed to reduce excessive stretching and twisting Rotation of workers in drive-thru Training for workers on potential injuries that can occur and how to avoid them.
Prolonged Standing	Workers being expected to stand without a break for long periods. Standing for long periods of time can cause stress and strain to workers' backs and legs and circulatory problems.	Seats available with foot rests if necessary and anti-fatigue mats
Working at height	Ladders used to clean and steps used to fill drinks machine: Ladders not maintained and ladders and steps being used on wet floors	All equipment maintained with a schedule of checks. All floors clean and dry and ladders/steps not used on wet floors
Disease/ Illness / Injury	Injury, illnesses and near misses not recorded	All incidents recorded, reviewed to discover any underlying causes, so that health and safety risks are reduced
Greasy, slippery floors	Slips on floor and injuries from falls or contact with hot oils or sharp equipment	All floors kept dry and regularly cleaned
Chemicals	Many cleaning substances are corrosive and can cause skin and eye burns. Some may cause dermatitis (dry, sore, flaky skin) or other skin irritations, asthma and breathing problems.	Carry out a COSHH Risk Assessment. Hazardous substances should be removed and replaced with safe products
Burns	Burns on arms from operating equipment	Ensure equipment fit for purpose, replaced if necessary and/or includes guards to protect workers, workers provided with safety garments and trained to ensure free

		from injury. All injuries recorded in accident book and investigated to prevent future injuries.
Taking rubbish to bins	Rubbish bins are outside and have an insect/rodent hazard, also open to elements	Rubbish bins are sited near to premises. All ground surrounding bins is clean and free from ice, water etc. Staff provided with PPE to protect them from contact.
Breaks, holidays, sickness	Working more than 6 hours without a break. Not being given holidays or unable to take sickness absence	All workers are entitled to take a 20 minute break after 6 hours; many employers provide a longer break. All workers are entitled to paid holiday leave. www.gov.uk/calculate-your-holiday-entitlement Paid sickness absence is at the discretion of your employer but many employers have procedures in place to support workers when they are ill and ensure they do not return to work until they are better, which is very important for food safety. http://www.hazards.org/sickness/

Please note this list is not exhaustive. Other hazards may exist which should also be risk assessed.

HSE website provides detailed information on risk assessment and controlling different risks

<http://www.hse.gov.uk>

What can we do to support workers in the fast food sector?

- The fast food industry is notoriously unorganised. Staff on zero hours contracts feel vulnerable, they are often on low wages and do not know when they will get work or when they will be paid next. This makes it difficult to organise them, however, the BFAWU has started organising in McDonalds and has already held a successful selective strike to challenge the unfair and unsafe working practices of the employer. It is important to advise any fast food workers you come into contact with, to join a trade union. <http://www.bfawu.org/join>
- If you are an elected politician or a trade union representative working with fast food workers, you could build up a dossier of unsafe and unhealthy conditions, injuries and issues that the workers raise. This should be forwarded to the local authority environmental health department for action. Always follow this up and find out what action has been taken by the environmental health department.
- If you visit a fast food restaurant then raise any health and safety concerns you identify with staff/managers etc. If you are an elected politician, make it known that you are and that if you have any concerns you will be raising them at the council, etc. Ensure that you include in any discussion, that you expect there will be no victimisation of workers.
- Organise a formal visit to the local fast food outlet from the council.
- Organise a formal visit to your local fast food restaurants if you are a Member of Parliament and make sure you talk to the staff about any concerns and make it known to them that they can contact you confidentially with their concerns.
- Trades Councils could also join the campaign to organise workers and ensure they know about trade unions and what they can do to support them and also make workers aware of health, safety and welfare laws.

There are thousands of people who work in the fast food sector. They will be your friends, or friends of family members or someone in your family. Talk to them about their rights at work and about why it is important that they join a trade union.

