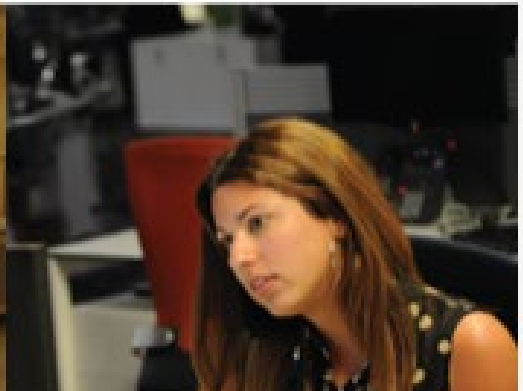
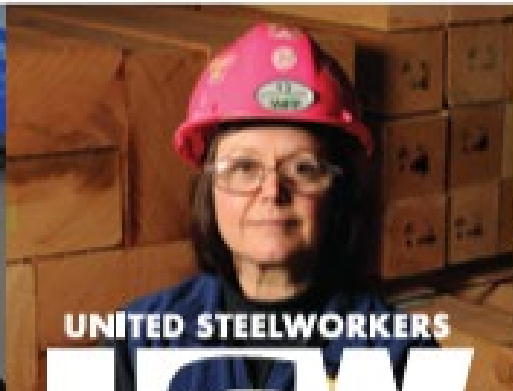
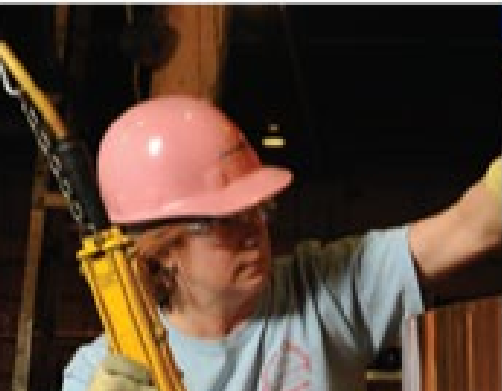




USW ACTION GUIDE

RAISING THE BAR ON

Women's Health and Safety



2. INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELL-BEING AT WORK

When we don't take women's issues into account, we miss opportunities to protect all workers.

Anything that harms men is a hazard for women, too. But biological differences and social attitudes mean that women workers can face other, or greater, risks to their health, safety and well-being at work (see chart on next page):

UNION HEALTH AND SAFETY PRINCIPLES

Unions know that the key steps to ensuring healthy and safe workplaces are:

1. Recognizing when a problem or hazard exists.
2. Preventing hazards by getting rid of them altogether, addressing the problem at the source or reducing them to the lowest possible level.

BIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

THIS REALITY...	RESULTS IN THESE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROBLEMS FOR WOMEN WORKERS
Women's bodies can get pregnant, menstruate (and go through menopause), and produce milk or lactate.	Women face different hazards depending on where they are in their reproductive cycle. And pregnancy, menstruation and menopause can make hazards more serious (such as standing for too long, working at high temperatures, stress).
Women are shorter, smaller and lighter than men, on average. This leads to differences in blood volume, oxygen consumption, upper-body strength and center of gravity, to name a few.	Because safety standards, tools, uniforms and protective equipment are designed based on the average man's weight or height, they inadequately protect most women (and many men). Protective clothing and equipment can be dangerous if they don't properly fit women's bodies.
Society has valued men and so-called "men's jobs" more than women and so-called "women's jobs."	An unhealthy workplace culture and low respect can put women at risk of violence and of sexual, racial and other harassment.
We have stereotypes about which jobs men should do and which jobs women should do.	When workplaces aren't designed with women in mind, they can lack adequate, accessible toilet facilities. This can result in urinary tract infections, kidney and bladder problems and unsanitary conditions. Tools, machinery, uniforms and safety equipment are often not designed for women's bodies.

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