

Shipyard workers hold short ULP strikes at 6 Vigor properties

Several hundred shipyard workers at six Vigor Industrial facilities in Oregon and Washington conducted unfair labor practice (ULP) strikes Sept. 25 during their lunch break and at the afternoon shift change.

The Metal Trades Council of Portland & Vicinity and the Puget Sound Metal Trades Council filed an unfair labor practice complaint with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) after Vigor Industrial implemented a tobacco free policy Sept. 1 at all of its locations without bargaining in good faith. The job action involves workers at Cascade General, Vigor Marine and Vigor Fab at Portland's Swan Island ship repair yard.

Vigor Industrial employs approximately 1,700 workers in facilities in Portland, Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, Bremerton and Port Angeles. They are members of various craft unions, and work under a master labor agreement negotiated and administered by the Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO. [The Carpenters Union represents some employees under a separate agreement.]

The Portland Metal Trades Council bargains local terms and conditions in Oregon (at Swan Island). The respective Metal Trades Councils in Washington bargain local terms and conditions for workers in those cities.

"Implementing a tobacco-free pol-

icy is absolutely a mandatory subject of bargaining, and Vigor knows it," said Brian Opland, business manager of Seattle-based Boilermakers Local 104. Local 104 represents all welders, ship fitters, riggers and helpers in Oregon and Washington, as well as several other job classifications.

Speaking at a lunchtime picket at Swan Island, Opland explained to nearly 100 workers that tobacco use has never been an issue in the past. In 2013 Vigor was concerned about trash and litter (cigarette butts, etc.), so the union and company agreed on a process for corrective action. Last year the company spent nearly \$20,000 to build a covered designated smoking area for its employees at Swan Island.

Opland said the company has expanded tremendously over the last several years, and with that growth it has begun operating "more and more like a dictatorship."

Last year, Vigor Shipyard in Seattle implemented its last, best and final offer after the sides couldn't come to terms on a deal, and workers decided not to strike. It takes a two-thirds majority vote to strike.

The Portland Metal Trades Council contract at Cascade General expires in Nov. 30 of this year.

The master agreement with the national Metal Trades Department expires June 1, 2017.

Opland said the NLRB is currently investigating the charges and has not

yet set a timeline as to when it may issue a ULP complaint. Meantime, future

job actions and additional ULP charges are being discussed.



Joe Loennig, a member of IBEW Local 48, joins about 75 co-workers from various craft unions on a picket line Sept. 25 at the Portland shipyards on Swan Island. Portland and Puget Sound metal trades councils filed an unfair labor practice complaint against Vigor Industrial after the company implemented a tobacco free policy at all of its properties without bargaining with the union. Unfair labor practice strikes were held during lunch break and afternoon shift-change at Vigor properties in Portland, Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, Bremerton and Port Angeles.

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