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# ...Safe from Hate

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drawings demeaning to women were found in a porta-pottie at an Adidas construction site in Portland.

“There’s a problem in the industry as a whole,” says Laborers Local 737 Business Manager Zach Culver. “It’s been a longstanding problem. It’s our job as leaders to step up and be leaders and not turn a blind eye.”

Union employers — and unions — are trying to get the word out that conduct like that will no longer be tolerated.

Laborers Local 737, for example, is letting its 2,800 members know that the union won’t be protecting those who harass others on the job.

“Our union constitution and our collective bargaining agreements don’t protect that kind of behavior,” Culver said.

Lauri Rollings, executive director of the union-signatory Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association of Oregon (PMCA), developed a webinar for PMCA contractors with a protocol for handling future incidents like the noose that was found by a Plumbers and Fitters

Local 290 apprentice in May. She’s also been working with leaders of Local 290 to promote a more positive jobsite culture. The joint effort may begin with “respectful workplace” trainings for all members. PMCA and Local 290 are also talking about ways to intervene more effectively with members who perpetrate abusive behavior. In recent months, Rollings said, one Local 290 member was fired for using the “n” word on a job site, and another was fired for a homophobic remark to a fellow member. But when members are fired for harassment, they go back to the hiring hall and get dispatched to another employer.

“That means the same problematic behavior potentially creates liability for the next contractor,” Rollings told the *Labor Press*. To address that, PMCA and Local 290 are discussing ways to train and counsel offenders.

“It would be more one-on-one than a typical diversity training,” Rollings said. “We want to make sure we’re counseling why it’s important to behave respectfully toward co-workers.”

Via Zoom, Local 290 held a four-morning 16-hour training



## SAFE FROM HATE JOBSITE CULTURE PLEDGE

- **Training** Signers will implement positive jobsite culture training for all current employees and/or union members within six months. All employees, including supervisors and managers, journeymen and apprentices will receive the training, and unions will provide journeyworker “upgrade” trainings.
- **Zero tolerance** Employers will work with labor partners, subcontractors, and others to hold accountable any employee who instigates, supports, or fails to report jobsite incidents. Employers will communicate clear protocols and enforce real consequences, including suspension and termination after prompt and thorough investigation.

over two weekends in July, with both union leaders and contractors in attendance. Another training took place in November. The trainings were led by longtime labor lawyer Barbara Diamond and her associate Marina Moro. Diamond has been holding workshops on implicit bias and microaggression theory since 2012.

“We start by talking about peoples childhood,” Diamond told the *Labor Press*. “People haven’t communicated well with each other about what their life experience has been.”

Diamond, who since retired from her law practice, is hopeful progress can be made. What’s now considered sexual harassment was once just assumed to be how women would be treated in the workplace, until it gradually became unacceptable, Dia-

mond said.

One training Safe From Hate is considering promoting industry-wide is a program called Green Dot. Used by general contractor Hoffman Construction on the recently completed Multnomah County Courthouse project, it trains bystanders to intervene when one worker harasses another.

“It took us 20 years to get safety where it is today,” says Penny Painter, a 20-year carpenter who now manages the BOLI-Oregon Department of Transportation Workforce Program. “The culture in the construction industry is not going to change overnight. However it is going to change. Those that want it to happen are ecstatic about this work being done. And those that don’t might want to think about getting on board.”

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floor coverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters,



This holiday season is unlike any other, to cap off a year unlike any other.

Throughout this holiday season, and as we move into a new (and hopefully better)

year, we wish you moments of peace, connections with family & friends

even if they can’t be in person. We wish you endurance, strength,

health, and much happiness.



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