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Remarks for Media Briefing
Survey of Health and Safety Conditions in the Fast Food Industry
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Thanks for joining us today.

We've heard important – and alarming – information about what's going on in America's fast food restaurants.

We've heard from fast food workers. We've heard about the OSHA complaints that are being filed today.

And we've heard a thorough summary of what we believe is the first-ever national survey of fast food workers about health and safety on the job.

Fast food workers are like everyone else: They come to work to earn a living and support their families.

Nobody comes to work to get injured.

Nobody comes to work to get burned.

Certainly, nobody comes to work so they can get handed a packet of mayonnaise when they *do* get burned – instead of real first aid and real medical treatment.

My organization, the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health, is a network of non-profit worker advocacy groups from around the country.

Our focus is on preventing injuries -- getting hazards out of the workplace before someone gets hurt.

A few months ago, the team from the Fight for \$15 campaign asked for our help. They were hearing many reports of injuries in the fast food industry.

We wanted get some data, to find out how serious the problem is.

Now we have the data. Now we know: This is a VERY serious problem.

This is a very large industry, with 3.6 million front-line workers, all over the country.

Based on those numbers, and our survey data:

- 87% of these workers report on-the-job injuries– that’s **3.1 million workers in a year.**
- 79% have been burned – that’s **2.8 million workers in a year.**
- 58% have suffered multiple burns – **that’s 2 million workers in a year.**

The first step to fix this problem is to listen to workers. They’re telling us they are getting hurt because they’re understaffed and under pressure to work fast.

Fast food employers need to **schedule for safety**: Put enough workers on the job, every shift, so work can be done safely

Also, employers need to analyze these jobs and workplaces to eliminate hazards.

Can grills and frying machines be modified to reduce exposure?

Are the containers used to transport hot oils and liquids sealed and closed tightly, so there are no spills?

Are the floors in these restaurants appropriately maintained to prevent dangerous slips and falls?

Are workers equipped with appropriate protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and goggles?

This kind of systems analysis, using engineering controls as the first step to prevent hazards, is the best way to make a safe workplace. We say, “Fix the work, not the worker.”

The fast food industry is made up of many profitable companies and franchises. These companies need to schedule for safety... and invest in safety.

We have to do a lot better than offering workers a packet of mayonnaise after they get burned.

Please visit COSHNetwork.org if you'd like to see a memo from Guy and his team about the survey, survey results, and press release about the OSHA complaints filed today.

That's **COSHNetwork.org**.

Thank you.