october 2026

# THE SERVICE WORKER

## “Take Class Action Against Climate Change”

With at least 70 confirmed deaths the 2026 heatwave is ripping its way through North America, bringing a stark concreteness to the realities of climate change. This climate catastrophe tortures every labor sector that this capitalist, settler economy relies upon: agricultural labor, industrial labor, forced prison labor, and yes, service labor as well. When kitchen thermostats can’t get an accurate read or don't exist in the first place, and broken A/Cs are replaced with box fans, workers suffer from heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which in extreme cases can lead to unconsciousness and even death. With stakes as high as the record breaking temperatures, it is no wonder why service worker unions have historically prioritized lowering kitchen temperatures and increasing options for heat risk mitigation.

Despite OSHA naming 80$^{O}$F as the threshold for dangerous heat conditions, many restaurant workers regularly endure temperatures that exceed this. One would be hard pressed to find a functioning kitchen that isn’t frequently hearing worker complaints of the intense heat all year, and especially during summer months. While death due to heat exposure is rare in food service specifically, headaches, nausea, and fatigue as a result of the constant high temperatures are all too common. Kitchens have always been hot, but with the globe heating up alarmingly fast and catastrophic weather events becoming more and more frequent, something has got to give, and soon! Climate change is going to do more than break some old thermometers, it’s going to be the final nail in the coffin of our already decrepit supply chains and crumbling infrastructure.

Food service work will be impacted by the oncoming food scarcity that will result from climate change. As global temperatures rise, more areas will become unable to grow food due to droughts, floods, and fires. Not only will local production be affected, but anything imported as well. Products from other countries will become less available and as a result many specialty food places will have to close, or change drastically. One paper released in the third issue of the second volume of the International Journal of Science, Strategic Management and Technology states,

> “One of the most apparent effects of climate change on organizations is the rising occurrence and intensity of natural disasters such as floods, droughts, hurricanes, and forest fires. For instance, flooding can result in the shutdown of manufacturing activities, damage to storage facilities, and disruptions in the supply chain of raw materials and finished goods. On the other hand, droughts and changes in rainfall patterns can lead to a decrease in agricultural production, causing an increase in the cost of food and raw materials for organizations that rely on natural resources.”

Another problem arising from drastic climate change is the rapid mutation of viruses and bacteria that cause illnesses. We saw this with the COVID pandemic in late 2019, which altered the food service industry irreparably with how the popularity of take out and delivery apps skyrocketed during lock-downs. Repeat exposure to illnesses will continue to disable people, and food service industry workers have a particular danger of getting sick due to the amount of people they interact with on a daily basis. This includes BOH, which saw some of the highest recorded fatalities during the worst parts of the pandemic. Over the course of this year the FDA has announced over a thousand recalls, and food-borne illness outbreaks have been on a severe rise. It is well known the current administration has cut funding for the FDA, however as workers we cannot ignore that these food-borne illnesses would not be quite so prevalent if it weren’t for the conditions in large agricultural corporations. It’s no coincidence that companies like Taylor Farms also rely on the predatory practice of using prison labor, putting exploited workers in fields with no access to bathrooms, hydration, or shade for literal pennies.

The contradiction of the food service industry being badly afflicted by, but also negatively inflicting upon, the environment can always be traced back to a capitalistic mode of production. The factory meat industry has one of the highest rates of water consumption, and McDonald’s and Burger King sell over 2.5 billion burgers each year —

**Are you a service worker? We want to hear from you!**
**Contact: Org_CSW@proton.me**
**https://newserviceworker.wordpress.com/**

october 2026

# THE SERVICE WORKER

## "Take Class Action Against Climate Change"

that's around 5 million head of cattle each. Various fast food restaurants also fund the 'israeli' occupational forces committing genocide in Palestine, i.e. Starbucks and McDonald's, and the most recent iteration of the ethnic cleansing has been a major contributing factor to climate change as the massive bombing campaigns produce high carbon emissions. Not to mention, some companies like Compass Group provide a third of America's high-intensity catering services, which include military bases and weapons manufacturers. We must use the tools at our disposal to fight against this. We must breathe life into a movement for revolutionary change, because following the ecological track laid by the current system will kill us all if we don't.

In trying to best handle our immediate need to escalate our struggle, there is no better place to start than from this point of understanding: the strike is the fundamental weapon in the hands of a union! A strike, a work stoppage, the withholding of our labor, our expertise, our time, from our bosses, and instead putting it towards organizing for change. This is the force with which all major concessions have been muscled away from the boss under capitalism. The deep-seated fear of every CEO, manager, and business founder is that we realize the collective power our participation as workers grants us over the places in which we work. A strike can be more strategic than a mere stoppage; it can and should include a militant picket line agitating against crossing the picket line via scabbing[1] or the continued patronage of the business. The success of the company must be sabotaged, the company must not be allowed to simply ignore the strike the way Starbucks ignored the recent Starbucks Workers United strike.

We should mandate the constant, unending, and uncompromising presence of our collective voice at all times until the demands are met, and our demands must include the end to overheated kitchens, and end to participation in imperialism, and organizing for a more sustainable food industry. With a well organized strike, we can even demand closed doors to ICE pigs who want to eat our food after brutalizing our community members, and who's presence jeopardizes the safety of our more oppressed coworkers. Workers know how to make the heat less deadly, we cannot let our demands be stunted by sell-out unions and no-strike clauses[2], but advance them by grounding ourselves in shared struggle. We create the solidarity that bonds together a union so strong it can smash the bosses vice-like grip on our lives. It is undeniable that the richest few, their followers, and those misguided by their constructed false avenues of progress are the cause of our collective demise both on the clock and on the planet we call home. This unbreakable solidarity is what gives us the strength to achieve what may now seem impossible: worker self-determination and an end to the system that profits off our suffering. Dare to struggle, dare to win!

[1]: Scabbing: The union busting tactic of hiring outside workers during a strike. Done by disgusting bosses who ignore the demands of a strike and choose to hire replacement workers (or 'scabs') rather than address union demands. Do not be a scab. Do not befriend or otherwise tolerate a scab under any circumstances. They are sell-outs and class traitors of the worst variety.

[2]: No-strike clause: A horrible kind of amendment tacked onto weak union contracts restricting the rank and file workers' ability to exercise work stoppages, sit-ins, picketing, or any labor action aimed at costing the company money for the sake of meeting demands. A deep betrayal to the members of any union.

**Citations:**

Bansal, Ananya, and Kushal Sharma. "Impact of Climate Change in the Business Environment." International Journal of Science, Strategic Management and Technology, vol. 02, no. 03, Edtech Publishers (OPC) Private Limited, Mar. 2026, pp. 1–9, https://doi.org/10.55041/ijsmt.v2i3.229.

Chauhan, Frenki. "Effects of Covid-19 Pandemic on Service Industry." International Journal of Advanced Research in Commerce, vol. 03, no. 04, 2020, pp. 110–12, https://www.inspirajournals.com/uploads/Issues/1072057035.pdf.

Haley, Beth M, et al. "Evaluating COVID-19 Risk to Essential Workers by Occupational Group: A Case Study in Massachusetts." Journal of Community Health, Springer Science+Business Media, July 2023, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-023-01249-x.

Chen, Yea-Hung, et al. Excess Mortality Associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic among Californians 18–65 Years of Age, by Occupational Sector and Occupation: March through October 2020. Jan. 2021, https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.01.21.21250266.

Nguyen, Frances. "Back-of-House Restaurant Workers Are Struggling to Survive This Pandemic." Prism, 8 Nov. 2021, https://prismreports.org/2021/11/08/back-of-house-restaurant-workers-are-struggling-to-survive-this-pandemic/.

Coalition of Immokalee Workers. "Fair Food Program's Unparalleled Heat Protections Keep Making Waves across the Nation." Ciw-Online.Org, 28 Aug. 2026, https://ciw-online.org/2026/08/fair-food-programs-unparalleled-heat-protections-keep-making-waves-across-the-nation/.

**Are you a service worker? We want to hear from you!**
**Contact: Org_CSW@proton.me**
**https://newserviceworker.wordpress.com/**