

# Swedwood Campaign Update

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**RESPECT VAMPIRE**  
(of the week)

**Ken Brown**

This is not a military unit. We do not obey because you say so, we chose to act because it is the best way to work.

You are not a drill sergeant you are a respect vampire.

## Safety Violations issued Union Fights for Safe Work

Thanks to your information and help, the Machinists Union was able to get VA OSHA to do a complete inspection of the Danville operation.

What they found was appalling. What they didn't find was equaling appalling.

Swedwood is guilty of improper record keeping. While this may sound minor it is in fact the most fundamental violation possible. Without accurate records of injuries it is impossible to design an effective safety program. Swedwood failed to report more than 11 accidents and even more impor-

tant they failed to record any of the temporary worker's injuries.

Temporary workers were exposed to serious injury through improper training, language barriers, and high reduction pressure. If the temporary injuries were included in Swedwood's record keeping, this could be the most

dangerous furniture plant in the US.

Until the IAM can win recognition you will continue to be exposed to dangerous work. The IAM with your help has made the plant safer but it is not yet safe.

Before you become the next injured worker, sign and return the authorization card.

## You Could Win Up To \$100.00

It is against the law to require you to do something and not be paid the time it takes to do it. Many of you have received the "Energy Bus". If you have been ordered by anyone at Swedwood to read it call

the union hotline and let us know immediately. By law if they want you to read the book they must pay you the time it takes to read the book.

They talk about "energy" vampires we talk about "Respect" vam-

pires. A Respect Vampire is any management employee who treats you Disrespectfully.

Nothing is less respectful than denying you your week-ends, yelling at you, and last minute schedule changes.

**Virginia Department of Labor and Industry**  
Occupational Safety and Health Compliance  
3013 Peters Creek Road  
Roanoke, VA 24019  
Phone: (540) 562-3580 FAX: (540) 562-3587



### Citation and Notification of Penalty

**To:**  
Swedwood Danville LLC  
and its successors  
100 Swedwood Dr  
Ringgold, VA 24586

**Inspection Number:** 314457250  
**Inspection Date(s):** 05/10/2010 - 09/13/2010  
**Issuance Date:** 09/21/2010

**Inspection Site:**  
100 Swedwood Dr  
Ringgold, VA 24586

*The violation(s) described in this Citation and Notification of Penalty is (are) alleged to have occurred on or about the day(s) the inspection was made unless otherwise indicated within the description given below.*

## Another Union Victory at Swedwood

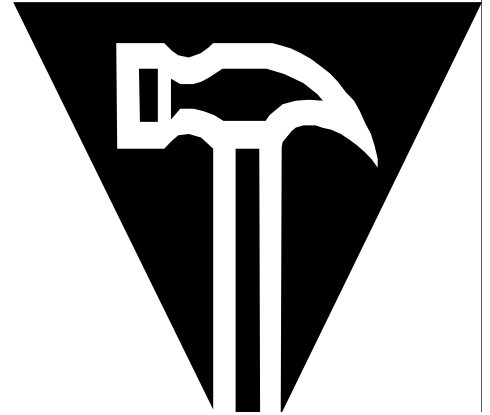
Sherry Logan was terminated for running bad labels. Because you do not have a union no one was able to inform Swedwood that there were four other workers involved in the “accident” that caused the bad labels to be placed on the boxes. Had a union been present we would have found the source of the problem and fixed it, not run around the plant trying to find some one to blame.

Instead what we could do is challenge Swedwood’s efforts to deny Ms. Logan her un-

employment insurance. With our assistance Swedwood was defeated again in their efforts to deny unemployment insurance to a worker who they fired improperly.

The Virginia Employment Commission again ruled against Swedwood and in favor of Ms Logan.

Our next challenge is to get her job back. This is difficult and time consuming, but we are making an effort be-



***In your hands- a tool.  
In the boss's hand-a weapon***

cause no worker should be fired for actions that they can not control. With a union you will be fired for not working but you will not be fired for management’s mistakes.

## The Energy Bus – Union Version

### PERSISTENCE

Moves you forward towards your destination

Sign the Authorization card today



Bus built by Machinist members in North Dakota

#### **Our Vision:**

A workplace where all are treated equally and fairly. Where management asks and listens instead of dictating.

#### **Fueling Our Vision:**

By training and empowering individual workers protected by the union contract all can demand to be treated with dignity and respect.

#### **Our Focus:**

Getting 50% of Swedwood workers to share

our vision and take the first step toward dignity and respect by signing an authorization card.

#### **Positive Energy:**

Work can be fun. All it takes is to be treated with dignity and respect. To have a voice in what happens instead of always being the victim.

## The Energy Bus – Swedwood Version

#### **Their Vision:**

Reduce costs regardless of who is harmed.

#### **Fueling their Vision:**

Give up your week-ends, give up having any control over your daily schedule. Get sick and risk losing your job.

#### **Their Focus:**

If you can earn the status of “Favorite” expect to be transferred to the shift you want and the job you want. A promotion may be possible, not based on your knowledge, skills, or abilities, but based on who you know.

#### **Positive Energy:**

Do exactly as you’re told and enjoy it. Real energy vampires blame others for their mistakes. Which supervisor does this remind you of? Share some joy with a co-workers on the line and get disciplined.

## Pay for Performance – The Next Swedwood Failure

Swedwood management’s latest effort to boost production isn’t to recognize that family time is important or to acknowledge that last minute schedule and shift changes are signs of bad management. Instead they are trying to put in place a pay-for-performance system.

These systems can work if there is a union contract in place to make sure that you were involved in designing it and applying it. Without a union

on site, the favorites will be rewarded and the rest will not. As usual, as soon as Swedwood decides to recognize us as your bargaining representative we will help them get this new pay system right.

The main problem at Swedwood is that management looks every where but the mirror to find what is wrong. They swear at you, fail to

honor their own obligation for timely and fair evaluations, view honest criticism as insubordination, and think because they give you a pay check they own you.

Our first victory after 50% of you sign authorization cards will be to stop unannounced shift and schedule changes. We know your time is important . Good management is key.

# Swedwood

## Contaminated Saw Dust?

Apparently management is concerned that they will not be able to get sawdust hauled away. Unless your sawdust is chemically dangerous, which it might be, selling sawdust is not a common problem in this industry. Many

union operations sell their sawdust for a sizeable profit, some goes to paper mills, particle board or hard board plants and some to landscaping firms.

If your sawdust is chemically dangerous then this is an entire

area of investigation OSHA did not know about. Because if it dangerous to others it is dangerous to you.

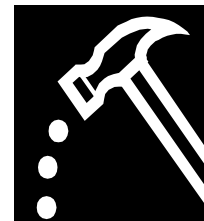
The Machinist Union will request the MSDS’s from Swedwood to find out if you are at risk.

## How Can It Get Any Worse?

Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, Swedwood started sending some workers home during the week yet is still making them work on week ends. This is extremely poor mismanagement. Most other employers would use the week end as the time to fix work

problems and operate during the week.

We haven’t yet heard their excuse this time. Perhaps they should get a point for every time they mess up. If they did



**Stop being the nail and grab the hammer.**

the turnover of management would be even higher than it is.

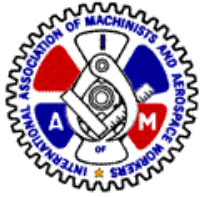
Before they can run it completely into the ground you need to get all the protection the law allows, get the IAM.

*“IKEA now knows we told the truth. Work is unsafe in Danville.”*

IAMAW MACHINISTS  
UNION "FIGHT FOR

IAMAW  
Woodworkers Department  
9000 Machinists Place  
Upper Marlboro, MD  
20772

**Fight For  
Fairness**



Protect your future,  
Join the Machinists

*"Through personal observation and employee interviews training is adequate. Temporary employees and new employees are not allowed to work in hazardous areas or on machines. Only trained employees can do those these operations after being trained on the machines and LOTO"*

## What OSHA missed?

You described to us situations where workers were:

- expected to put their body parts in harms way without having the authority to lock-out.
- unable to clearly differentiate between robot repair alarms and emergency alarms.
- denied access to the bathroom.
- expected to do electrical work without proper certification
- inadequately trained to operate machines.

These are just a few items that OSHA ignored.

Why did OSHA ignore these issues?

The answer is because 50% of you have not

signed the authorization cards, the union could not participate in the opening or closing conferences. Since we had no legal status we were unable to schedule off site interviews with the OSHA inspector. Thus, the company controlled the inspection process.

Until the union is recognized, these safety issues will continue.

Please sign and return the authorization card.

