

## FAQ ON KINGSPAN

**COMPANY:** Kingspan is a global manufacturer of building materials, including insulation and skylights. California has five Kingspan factories, and one is represented by SMART Local 105 in Fontana, CA. Workers at Kingspan’s Santa Ana Light & Air factory are majority Latino, and when they began organizing in 2021 some were making slightly over minimum wage, including a worker who has been there for 30 years.

**UNION BUSTING:** In October 2021 a majority of the workers in Santa Ana, CA petitioned management for improved health and safety and a fair process (also known as a labor peace agreement) to decide whether to join a union. The company responded with union busting, distributing anti-union literature to the workers. In February 2023 at the plant in Modesto, the company held a “captive audience” meeting.

**FIRING IMMIGRANT WORKER:** In March 2022, Kingspan fired an immigrant worker after they updated their social security number, something workers have a right to do without retaliation under state law. That case is yet to be settled.

**UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE CHARGES:** In September 2022, Kingspan settled two Unfair Labor Practice cases the federal government brought against it for violating workers’ rights in Santa Ana and other plant locations. One was for withholding health benefits on the basis of union representation, and the other was for prohibiting workers from disclosing compensation data and personnel and salary information among themselves or to others.

**UNSAFE WORKING CONDITIONS:** In April 2022, Kingspan was found to have violated 22 safety regulations, including 5 serious violations. Kingspan was fined \$21,785. Kingspan has abated all the violations cited by OSHA and the case was settled in September 2022. However, indoor air pollution continues to be a concern that was not fully addressed by OSHA.

**INDOOR AIR POLLUTION:** PM 2.5 is a type of pollution known to cause serious health problems. In August 2021, workers teamed up with Dr. Shahir Masri from UC Irvine to measure the indoor air pollution. PM 2.5 levels were found to be “unhealthy” and at times “very unhealthy” according to EPA standards for outdoor air. Unfortunately, OSHA standards for indoor air fall short in protecting workers in our community. Instead of working with Dr. Masri to find solutions, Kingspan sent a letter threatening to sue him if he did not retract [his report](#). The study was later published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

**WATER POLLUTION:** Kingspan’s Santa Ana factory has operated under a consent decree since April 2021 for discharging heavy metals into the watershed. Records show that Kingspan discharge levels for zinc were almost 7 times allowable limits in 2020-2021 and over 13 times the limits in 2019-2020. Kingspan workers filed a whistleblower complaint alleging the company had not adhered to the stormwater pollution prevention plan that it filed with the CA Water Control Board—a requirement of the state permit called for by the federal Clean Water Act. In January 2022 the Water Board issued a Notice of Violation.

**MISMARKETING OF COMBUSTIBLE INSULATION:** In 2020-2021, a UK [Government Inquiry](#) into the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire that killed 72 people revealed a 14-year pattern of deceptive fire safety practices by Kingspan’s UK Insulation business. From 2006 to 2020, Kingspan used an outdated 2005 large scale fire test to market a new, more combustible version of its Kooltherm K15 insulation. The company used these tests to secure misleading fire safety certificates, while concealing four failed large scale tests conducted in 2007 and 2008 on the K15 product actually on the market. Internal communications showed managers joking about fire safety and the mismarketing. Managers involved in the testing scandal also oversaw other products which have not been investigated. When one manager was asked during the inquiry whether the company’s “deliberate and calculated deceit” was part of “part of an overarching strategy to achieve the best possible sales of the product,” the individual agreed and went further to clarify: “And that’s the strategy adopted for all the products, really. That is that everything that can possibly be done is done to achieve sales.”