

UTE – National Health and Safety Conference

Friday August 24

Chris Aylward – Chairperson

- welcomed everyone

Yussuff Hassan – CLC Secretary Treasurer

Spoke about:

- the meeting between Stephen Harper, George Bush and Felipe Calderon to discuss the "Security and Prosperity Partnership
- the need to hold employers accountable for workplace injuries and death due to non-enforcement of health and safety regulations including criminal charges and jail time
- Canada is 5th from the bottom for recorded workplace accidents, just above Korea, Mexico, Portugal and Turkey
- the need to ensure the conservatives do not get a majority in the next Federal election as they have an agenda to privatize everything
- the need to have a national WCB plan for Federal employees
- the importance of ergonomics which account for ½ of all workplace injuries and the need for Federal ergonomic regulations and standards
- the danger of asbestos and the importance to have a ban and removal plan to get every workplace asbestos free

Patty Ducharme – PSAC National Executive Vice-President

Spoke about:

- most union issues are health and safety related
- poor wages = poor diets, inability to afford proper healthcare (drugs)
- 1,000 workers in Canada die each year as the result of workplace accidents (3 workers/day)
- 1,000,000 workers are injured in Canada each year on the job (3,000/day)
- very little media attention is brought to these issues
- union promotes the highest level of health and safety for members
- the Federal Government is selling 9 buildings including the Harry Hayes building in Calgary and a large building in Montreal that

currently houses CRA and this will result in the loss of control of health and safety within the buildings, it will now go to 3rd parties

- the need for on-going consultation with health and safety representatives
- PSAC now has an updated health and safety toolkit
- PSAC is currently updating it's duty to accommodate information
- PSAC is working on a manual for stopping workplace violence

Lysanne Gauvin – CRA Assistant Commissioner – HR Branch

Spoke about:

- we can't allow delays, health and safety issues must be addressed in a timely manner
- National policy levels work very well with union and management
- Working Group conduct analyses of occupational risks and current issues, they do risk prevention, pandemic training, train committee members, deal with safety footwear, tackle issues and make recommendations to the National Policy Commission
- very few issues go from local to national level, most are handled locally or regionally
- there is currently a new health and safety video being rolled out
- workplace training courses have been simplified and are being implemented
- pandemic preparedness is being done nationally headed by Dr. Patricia Houston
- many lessons were learned from S.A.R.S.
- working groups are developing hazardous prevention for CRA starting with field employees then in-house employees
- there is a move to complete job hazard analyses

Betty Bannon – UTE President

Spoke about:

- types of health and safety issues such as air quality in buildings, asbestos, threats (tax avoiders, etc), fumes (trucks running in loading docks and office machines such as copiers), power and water outages
- the need for health and safety conferences is decided at the triennial convention, this year we had 3 regional and 1 national conference
- we were the first Federal organization to have a joint health and safety committee
- we were the first organization to have asbestos removal guidelines
- we had one of the first abuse/threat policies

- we have an emergency procedure manual joint with the employer
- our standing national OHS committee has been around for 35 years
- announcement that the employer is eliminating our in-house ergonomic department at HQ which will result in WFA for 5 employees

Nicole Dube – HRSDC – Health and Safety Officer

Presented a slide show – attached

Saturday August 25

Dr. Patricia Houston MD, MPH – Pandemic Preparedness in Canada

Presented a slide show – attached

Lisa Addario – Latest Development in Occupational Health and Safety

Spoke about:

- the latest mine cave-in Utah
- the challenge against the appeals office for health and safety specifically the structure and lack of independence and impartiality
- the park wardens fight to carry arms
 - o they have a law enforcement mandate
 - o they must arrest and detain poachers
 - o they act as peace officers in parks and again arrest and detain individuals
 - o they seize weapons and lay charges for illegal firearms
 - o they are often on horse back in back country and work at night
 - o they interact with people who carry high power rifles
 - o they are required to wear bullet proof vests as part of their uniform
 - o sometimes RCMP officers are 2 or 3 days away
- the employer's response
 - o when in a difficult situation they should just tactically reposition
- an update on a couple court cases involving PSAC members

Louise St-Arnaud – Re-integration in the Workforce Following Mental Health Problems

Presented a slide show – attached

Jason Gaudet – Health Canada – Internal Ergonomics Program (I.E.P.)

Presented a slide show – attached

Sunday August 26

Betty Bannon – UTE President

Spoke about the elimination of the ergonomic department at HQ and the fact that 5 employees are directly affected. She spoke to the employer and it is strictly a cost savings measure, they said they will save \$600,000.00 in salary dollars.

There was then a plenary and members were asked to comment on ergonomic services they have received from the CRA team and Health Canada. Many members spoke highly of both the CRA team and service they have received from Health Canada.

Marion Balla – Director, The Alderian Counselling & Consulting Group Inc.

Presented a slide show “Facing Life Changes with Courage and Humour” – attached.

Chris Aylward – Chairperson

- closing remarks

Workshop Information

Workshop – Friday August 24

Disability Insurance Cases Representation

– presented by James Infantino

This was a very informative workshop. We received a manual for dealing with cases, complete with the form, instructions, the appeal process, duty to accommodate information, etc. I will donate mine to the local and put it in the filing cabinet on the first floor. James also discussed some cases and we heard from members who have had problems and successes dealing with the insurer on behalf of members.

Workshop – Saturday August 25

Indoor Air Quality – presented by Tedd Nathanson

This workshop was a slide presentation which offered a lot of statistics regarding air quality issues such as asbestos, mold, air filtration systems, HVAC systems, cleaning solutions and odors in general.

There was a lot of interaction from members who shared stories of air quality issues in their buildings. Specifically the current issues with flooding, mold, low level asbestos, HVAC systems and air quality reports for the Harry Hayes building and the 3rd tower at HQ.

Tedd talked about a case where a member was permanently disabled from strong fumes due to a communication issue. The cleaner could not read English and failed to dilute the solution properly resulting in permanent lung damage to an employee. She now speaks on air quality.

Tedd also discussed mold. Cases of mold in office buildings and homes are growing at a fast pace. He talked about the problem with mold in Native housing in Ontario and how it's about to become a larger issue than clean water.

We were reminded that any time a ceiling tile is removed in an office all workers in the general area should be removed from their workstations as many pollutants are in the dust in the ceilings of office buildings.