

REPORT OF THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ATLANTIC REGIONAL COUNCIL

MAY 7, 2015

PRESENT: Jody LaPierre Bill Bennett
Steve Johnson Stephanie Jones
Colleen Hodder Brian Oldford
Nancy MacLean, Staff Advisor

REGRETS: Nathalie Paulin

1. Bill C-4: Health and Safety Training

One day training on Bill C-4 Training: Amendments to the Canada Labour Code Part II continues to be offered in the Atlantic Region. Training sessions were held this spring in Halifax and an English and French course was held in Moncton. The training was well attended. The PSAC has produced an on-line version of the course "Fighting for Our Lives: Bill C-4 and Health and Safety" at <http://psacunion.ca/online-learning>. Unfortunately, members have indicated that their employers have still not initiated any training. The legal duties of the employer are outlined in Section 124 and 125 of the Canada Labour Code Part II. More specifically, *Section 125 (1)(z) states, "ensure that employees who have supervisory or managerial responsibilities are adequately trained in health and safety and are informed of the responsibilities they have under this Part where they act on behalf of their employer; (z.01) ensure that members of policy and work place committees and health and safety representatives received the prescribed training in health and safety and are informed of their responsibilities under this Part ..."*

The amendments to the Canada Labour Code Part II came into force on October 31, 2014 as a result of the enactment of Bill C-4. If employers are not providing the necessary training to employees they are not complying with the Act and are therefore in violation of the legislation. Work place Health & Safety Committees and Policy Committee members are urged to address the requirement for training during their next meetings. Health and Safety training is an employer requirement!

2. 19 Campaign – "Go to Work Sick"

The Canada Occupational Health and Safety News published an article on the PSAC "19 Campaign – Go to Work Sick." The article covered the March 19 nation - wide rally to protest against the government's proposed changes to their sick leave provisions. This is a health and safety issue and the PSAC will continue to negotiate measures for healthier workplaces.

3. National Day of Mourning 2015

National Day of Mourning ceremonies were held in several communities in the Atlantic Region. The PSAC was pleased to co-produce with the Canadian Occupational Health & Safety Centre (CCOHS) a new commemorative poster that was distributed to all Locals. The ceremony lists were posted on the PSAC Atlantic website. Area Councils were encouraged to lay wreaths in their local area. We are pleased to report that wreaths were laid by the following:

- Mary Marson – Halifax Area Council
- Isabelle Forest – Moncton Area Council
- Joanne Coish – St. John’s Area Council
- Susan Frellick-Perry – Charlottetown Area Council
- Nifam Khanal – Fredericton Local

The PSAC Atlantic Region aired radio ads to commemorate the Day of Mourning. These radio ads were run in each province from April 21 – 28, 2015. There was good feedback received from the PSAC membership.

4. North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week

North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) week is May 3 – 9, 2015. NAOSH week was first launched in June 1997, marked by an agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico. The goal is to focus employers, employees, partners and the public on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace, at home and in the community. NAOSH week events and activities are scheduled in many communities and PSAC members are encouraged to participate and/or to organize Local activities. In the past, UNDE Local 80403 have partnered with their employer, Department of National Defense, located in Greenwood, Nova Scotia to organize an annual health and safety fair with almost 75 vendors promoting all aspects of health and safety.

5. Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness week is an annual national event that takes place during the first week of May to encourage people from all walks of life to learn, talk, reflect and engage with others on all issues relating to mental health. Over the past number of years we have seen an increase in awareness, information and training on mental health from the PSAC and the Joint Learning Program. Let’s continue to raise the awareness! Visit www.mentalhealthweek.ca for more information.

6. National Mental Health Task Force

The PSAC reached an agreement with Treasury Board on the establishment of a joint task force on mental health. The task force, comprised of a technical committee and a steering committee, is established with a long-term focus and commitment of establishing successful measures to improve mental health in the work place. The Memorandum of Understanding outlines the responsibilities of the task force, which include identifying ways to reduce and eliminate the stigma associated with mental health issues, improving communication on mental health challenges in the workplace, and implementing the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Work place.

7. National Bullying Awareness Campaign

It was previously reported that the National Bullying Awareness Campaign would be released in early 2015. Please note, consultation with the National Human Rights Committee members needed to be held and additional documents are now being developed. To date, resource documents have been produced and others are being worked on. The campaign is now scheduled for release in the fall 2015.

8. Violence Prevention in the Workplace: Part XX Regulations under the Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations

Commencing in September 2015, the PSAC will be offering a two day training course entitled, “Violence Prevention in the Workplace.” This training course will be open to Health and Safety Committee members, Local Executive members and Local Stewards. The training will highlight the legal requirements on violence prevention within Part II of the Canada Labour Code and Part XX of the Canada Occupational

Health and Safety Regulations. Participants will be able to understand the existing recourses available in preventing and dealing with violence occurrences in the work place and they will be able to assist members in better understanding the rights and obligations for workers, workplace committees and for the Union. The two day training course will be posted on the fall education schedules for each province.

9. Regional Health & Safety Committees

During the 2015 National PSAC Triennial Convention, a resolution was passed to recognize the establishment of Regional Health & Safety Committees under the PSAC Constitution. These established committee(s) will now have the ability to send resolutions directly to the National PSAC Health and Safety Conference and the National PSAC Convention. Please note, these committee(s) will not be funded. Further discussion will be held with Sister Jeannie Baldwin, Regional Executive Vice President – Atlantic.

10. Maritimes Work Safe Survey

The JD Irving Limited Research Centre in Occupational Medicine of Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia was contracted by the three Maritime Provincial Work Safe Boards to conduct a survey / focus groups to determine how to improve the current medical practices as to reduce unnecessary work absences and to facilitate decisions about return to work programs. The sessions focused on recommendations of medically unnecessary work absences whether caused by work or not. Some of the health impacts reviewed included the following: unemployment is unhealthy to the injured worker; failure to remain at work or participate in a RTW program; addiction, mental health, social isolation, pain and fear. The Canadian Mental Health Association states, "Prolonged absences from one's normal roles, including absence from a workplace, is detrimental to a person's mental, physical and social well-being." A number of sessions were held and Sister Nancy MacLean and Brother Brian Oldford participated in the English sessions and Sister Monique LaPlante participated in the French session. We expressed the importance of injured workers having access to care in a timely fashion and that education for workers, physicians and employers on accommodation rights is required. We also indicated that there is a need to reduce the stigma associated with mental health disabilities and some employers are not doing enough in the workplace to address this issue.

13. Committee 3-Year Mandate and Plan

The Atlantic Council Health and Safety Committee revised their 3-Year mandate and plan. The document will be sent for translation and will be posted on the Atlantic website in the coming weeks. It will also be distributed to Health and Safety networks.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Committee;

Brian Oldford
Chairperson
Atlantic Council Health and Safety Committee