



June 2, 2005

TO: Worker Members of Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC)

Dear Joint Health and Safety Committee member:

We are sending you this letter to advise you that the health and safety staff of our various unions now meet jointly on a regular basis.

We meet regularly in order to identify and address health and safety issues in the health care sector that are common to all four unions. Our hope, by identifying common trends and issues, is to collectively respond to health and safety issues in order to help our members achieve the safest possible work environment. For example all four unions are collaborating on issues such as the Needlestick Campaign, the Minister of Labour's Health and Safety Action Group, understaffing, and the pressing need for violence and ergonomic regulations.

In our meetings we have identified several areas of common concern that if addressed could help you and other JHSC worker representatives address any health and safety hazard/issue that exists in your workplace.

In order to address these issues we ask that all of our JHSC members work together to ensure compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Following is a list of actions which we have learned will assist you to make your JHSC more effective. We recognize that some committees have already incorporated some of these strategies.

- Ensure that workplace inspections are occurring as required under section 9(26) of the OHS Act
- Ensure that worker members of the JHSC participate in all JHSC meetings. If you cannot attend a meeting, ensure that your alternate attends in your place, fully informed.
- Ensure that there is enough time allotted at each JHSC meeting to address all issues on the agenda and where sufficient time is not allotted, re-schedule another meeting within the next two weeks. If the employer refuses, contact the Ministry of Labour (MOL) for assistance.
- Ensure that all worker members caucus, utilizing as a minimum the one-hour paid preparation time as per section 9 (34) of the OHS Act, before every JHSC meeting.
- During caucus determine hazards from inspection reports, accident/illness/exposure reports, MOL orders and worker complaints
- During caucus draft written recommendations to the employer which address each hazard and a recommendation to resolve the hazard
- Present draft recommendations to the entire JHSC at the meeting.

- If the employer representatives on the JHSC do not agree to forward your recommendation to the employer, you have an unresolved H & S issue and you should call the MOL for assistance.
- If an MOL inspector enters your workplace as a result of a formal complaint, ensure that a member of the JHSC accompanies the inspector while he/she investigates.
- Ensure that the inspector addresses all outstanding H & S issues.
- When the issue is specific to one particular union, the worker co-chair should call that union's representative to accompany the co-chair and the inspector.
- When MOL leaves orders, call a meeting of the JHSC to review the orders and to ensure that workers are consulted about the implementation of the orders before the compliance date.
- Never sign off on an employer's compliance to an order without the consensus of all worker members of the JHSC.
- Always ensure that worker members have equal representation on the JHSC. If employer representatives outnumber the worker members at a meeting, request the employer to remove enough representatives to create equal representation.

Always support each other in your issues. Multi-union committees that support each other achieve the greatest success in worker health and safety.

We urge you to discuss this letter with each other at your next JHSC caucus and develop strategies to address these issues. If you have any questions regarding H & S, please direct your enquiries to your respective union.

We thank you for everything you do to protect worker health and safety in your workplace.

Sincerely,

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