



To: Local Coordinators, Bargaining Unit Presidents, Health and Safety Network Leads, and Joint Health and Safety Committee Members from the Executive Booklet

From: Linda Haslam-Stroud, President

Date: July 27, 2010

Re: **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Facilities' Venting Hazards**

C: Board of Directors, District Service Teams, Provincial Services Team

ONA health and safety specialists are developing a process for reviewing Ministry of Labour (MOL) orders and prosecutions in health care workplaces around the province. We plan to have a quick means to widely share information of significance to members. In the meantime, ONA will send memos to leaders to advise of issues for which action in your workplace may be appropriate.

For example, in recent months we understand that the MOL has issued orders regarding MRI venting hazards at more than one hospital. One MOL inspector report noted:

An Auditor General's report identified inconsistencies and deficiencies in the operation and safety practices of MRI units in Ontario. In 2003, the Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee (OHATC) made recommendations that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) should review all MRI facilities. In response, the Ministry of Health struck a committee to examine MRI safety practices and funded a survey, "Magnetic Resonance Imaging Environment Safety in Ontario." Following the report of the committee, the Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee released its recommendations... available on the Internet. In Ontario, the general duty clause of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (an employer shall take every reasonable precaution for the protection of a worker (sec. 25 2 h)) is used to enforce health and safety in MRI facilities.

The report cited in the inspector's orders noted safety issues with some MRI facilities in Ontario. The OHATC endorsed several recommendations after a study found:

- The lack of a formal MRI Safety Officer position at each hospital or hospital group.
- The use of outdated MRI equipment categorization.
- Not utilizing the four safety zone MRI environment architecture.
- Not controlling access into the MRI environment.
- Not indicating the 5 G area through floor demarcation.
- Inconsistent MRI equipment labels.
- The use of unclear MRI warning signs.
- Inadequate training for Level One MRI personnel, and non-MRI personnel.

If your workplace has MRI facilities, your Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) members can review the report and recommendations, which can be found on the MOHLTC website at http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/ohac/tech/recommend/rec_mn.html (see April, 2006).

During JHSC workplace inspections, committee members should check for compliance with the recommendations. The JHSC may request, and should expect to receive, information from the employer addressing any questions regarding your facility's specific equipment and related information.

If you have health and safety concerns about the MRI equipment in your facility, please:

- Raise the issue with your supervisor/employer, citing the report and recommendations.
- If unresolved, raise the concern(s), citing the report, for discussion at the JHSC.
- If necessary to address issues, the JHSC can submit written recommendations to the employer (worker members should caucus before the meeting to discuss issues, solutions and draft recommendations).
- If the committee as a whole will not agree to submit recommendations, or the employer does not respond satisfactorily to any recommendations, it may be appropriate for the JHSC member(s) and/or the union to call the MOL with your unresolved health and safety concern(s), and for the union to file grievance(s)

Please contact your Labour Relations Officer for assistance.