



HEALTH AND SAFETY

Worker health and safety is a major workplace issue. As Local officers, you will be called upon to deal with critical and sometimes life-threatening situations.

In 1986, following a major lobbying campaign, the Public Service Alliance of Canada was successful in seeing the passage of legislation placing Treasury Board employees under the jurisdiction of the health and safety provisions of the *Canada Labour Code* (currently *Part II*).

Among its many benefits and protections, that legislation provides for the recognition of the participation of union representatives in health and safety in the workplace. This includes responsibilities for workplace inspections, hazard investigations and participation on Joint Union-Management Safety and Health Committees in all workplaces where 20 or more people are employed.

Significant amendments to *Part II of the Canada Labour Code* were adopted further to the implementation of Bill C-12 in September 2000. A major gain was the improvement of the definition of 'danger' which is no longer restricted to the concept of "immediate danger". It has been expanded to include any existing or potential hazard or condition or any current or future activity that could be reasonably expected to cause injury or illness to a person.

The specific duties of the employer have been significantly increased and are no longer restricted to workplaces controlled by the employer.

Another significant gain is the creation of Policy Health and Safety Committees for employers with more than three hundred (300) employees. Policy Health and Safety Committees are required to consider and expeditiously dispose of matters concerning health and safety raised by members or referred to them by a workplace committee or a health and safety representative.

The creation of an Internal Complaint Resolution Process to assist parties in resolving Health and Safety Complaints at the workplace in a more independent and timely manner is also another important gain. Committee members and supervisors will play an important role in the investigation of complaints and control of workplace health and safety.

The amendments also provide important gains to committee members as the time spent to attend meetings, prepare for meetings and travel to meetings during working hours is considered as “time worked” as opposed to “leave with pay”. This ensures that committee members will be compensated for all hours worked on health and safety including overtime.

Part II of the *Canada Labour Code* can be accessed on the Internet in English at...

http://info.load-otea.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/federal_legislation/part2/legislation/subject.htm

The Agriculture Union provides representation and assists members with health and safety complaints, grievances and Joint Occupational Health and Safety consultation at the Local, Regional and National levels.

The PSAC also plays a key role in regards to the Health and Safety of its membership through its participation on legislative and regulatory review committees and through negotiations of health and safety clauses in collective agreements.

The PSAC Health and Safety Section also provides expertise, advice, information and representation on health and safety issues to our membership. The PSAC also plays a significant role in the education of our members with respect to health and safety by organizing educational courses regionally and health and safety conferences both regionally and nationally.

Our Union Health and Safety representatives play an important role in ensuring that the employers provide safe and healthy workplaces for employees.

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