

July 16, 2013

TO: Locals - DFO  
National Executive  
National and Regional E.O. Representatives

RE: **DFO National Policy Health and Safety Committee Meeting**

The DFO National Policy Health and Safety UMCC met on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013 with Brother Luc Paquette, Service Officer, attending. The following is a synopsis of the discussions held.

### **Footwear**

The Draft Directive on Protective Footwear was distributed. The Directive has been forwarded to the Director-General's Office for approval and signature.

### **NPH&S Annual Reports**

Reports for compliance to legislation, committee structure, committee meetings and inspections were distributed. Statistics show that the Department rates at 76% for occurrence of meetings and at a rate of 55% for inspections compliance (all regions included). When the Department's Co Chair asked why inspection rates were at 55%, a member of the Committee (Department) shared the opinion that staff resources have been declining and that not having as many people in the field to carry out the inspections may be a cause for this number.

- **Report on Disabling Injuries:** Although elevated, these numbers are similar to last year's and consistent with demographics. UEW asked whether statistics included all cases from past years and if so, suggested that they be broken down by year. This would give a better optic on whether the increase is related to a specific function and would allow the Department a means of identifying potential reasons for the increase in injuries and a means to resolving the cause of the disabilities.

### **Terms of Reference**

Legislation requires that Terms of Reference for Health and Safety Committees be revised every two years. The National Terms of Reference are ready to be signed and the NCR provided its Terms of Reference for review (they have been approved and signed by both NCR co-chairs).

### **AED**

In contradiction with a previous decision to not have a feasibility study performed, the Department announced that it would employ the services of a company to provide an assessment relating to the feasibility of installing the AEDs.

### **Scent in the Workplace**

Draft Guidelines on the subject have been completed and provided to bargaining agents for review and comments. It is hoped that a final version will be submitted by the next meeting.

## **Radon**

The St. George Area Office in SWNB recorded levels of Radon in concentrations higher than recognized safety limits. Office personnel as well as Unions representatives were advised of the findings. SNC Lavalin has been hired to design a solution for the building for resolution of the situation. In the interim, detectors and HVAC have been installed and detection levels have been set to a higher sensitivity of recording. Health Canada was on site, has provided information sessions, and has also stated that there are no immediate health risks to employees. The Department stated that steps were being done as per the guidelines. The Unions requested that the subject be kept on the Regional Health and Safety Committee agendas for proper monitoring.

## **Occupational Health & Safety Manual**

The Department announced a new outline for the project. Although this project is now two years in the making, the Department now feels that the direction the project had been taking is no longer the direction of choice. It was felt by the members of the project that the proposal to condense the current twenty (20) chapters to eight (8) was not "user friendly".

Budgets have been approved for the new project and a new six (6)-chapter manual is to be developed. The Department is tentatively scheduling a meeting in Ottawa with all Regional Managers for September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013, to discuss the structure and the direction of the OSH Program as a whole.

UEW expressed its disappointment about the way this project is developing noting that 2 years into the process, the Department is basically starting back at point zero again. The Department responded that the reasoning was to involve more people at the Regional level as opposed to keeping the initiative of the manual at the National level. UEW reiterated that the lengthy time taken to produce such a manual of importance is strikingly odd. In response, the Department reasoned that the delays have been caused by lack of personnel due to the recent cuts. UEW agreed but clarified that the Department is the sole bearer of the effects of the cuts, not the Unions.

## **2013 Fall Meeting**

September 26<sup>th</sup> was identified as the next meeting date.

## **Roundtable**

During the roundtable, UEW expressed its concern that the tele-conferencing number was not on the invitation. This resulted in an elected UEW representative being unable to participate. UEW requested that the teleconferencing number be included on the meeting invitation so such an occurrence does not occur again.

Submitted on behalf of the national office