

March 8, 2011

TO: Locals – NRCan  
National Executive  
National and Regional E.O. Representatives

RE: **NRCan National Policy Committee on Health and Safety (PCOHS)**

The NRCan National Policy Committee on Health & Safety met on February 21, 2011. Brothers Nick Humphreys, Regional Vice-President, B.C./Yukon Region, Chuck Davis, Regional Vice-President, Ontario Region, and Sister Manon Desormeaux, Service Officer, attended. Below is a brief summary of discussions that took place.

### **Accommodation and Environmental Sensitivities**

The sub-committee provided a report on its analysis of the situation to date concerning the development of a no-scent strategy inasmuch as there was a need to avoid situations where employees go home sick. The sub-committee provided the following recommendations to the Committee; i.e.:

1. *Develop a Contact List* to address situations and answer questions relating to where an employee should go to get information relating to contacts and accountability.
2. *Develop an awareness campaign* to address the issues concerning cleaning products that make employees ill, accommodation, employee illness due to not respecting the no-scent signs and the new “Managing for Wellness: Disability Management Handbook for Managers in the PS.”
3. *Have resources allocated.* Although resources exist, are more required? The recommendation is to have someone accountable across the country.

The PCOHS Committee agreed that the introduction of a Contact List was a positive initiative. As a next step, the Department will look at how the resources can be allocated. A completed List will be tabled at the next meeting of the Committee followed by a discussion on how the Department can move forward. Ultimately, the List will be submitted to the Policy Centre to have it tested.

### **Revised OHS Directive**

The Department provided an overview of the changes to the OHS Directive, i.e.;

- Workplace Occupancy: meet the appropriate ergonomics standards
- Elevating Devices: Safe operating certificate
- Electrical Safety: Extension cords shall not be used as permanent wiring
- Water Quality: Containers to be disinfected by a qualified person at least once a week
- Pesticides: Integrated Pest Management
- Asbestos Management: As a minimum, comply with the PWGSC Policy and Code of Practice
- Sanitation: Cleaning products that are environmentally friendly

Many concerns were raised with respect to the Water Quality. First, a qualified person is defined as a person who receives the proper training and/or an experienced person. There is a concern with respect to “water clubs” who are groups of employees who participate by giving money to pay for bottled water or a water cooler in the workplace. The Department will review whether or not they have to comply with the Directive.

Should you have any comments or concerns regarding the foregoing, please do not hesitate to contact the national office.

Yours fraternally,

William Pynn,  
National President,  
Union of Environment Workers.