

Office Safety: Whether You're Back or Never Left

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Providing a land acknowledgement at the beginning of an event or meeting gives time for reflection and demonstrates recognition of Indigenous lands, treaties and peoples. It involves thinking about what happened in the past and what changes can be made going forward in order to further the reconciliation process.

Agenda

- Introduce Marianne Hladun Regional Executive Vice President
- Discuss how reporting to work is a H&S issue
- The role of the committee/representative
- Review things to consider
- Where do we go from here?





Setting the Table

Marianne Hladun- Regional
Executive Vice President
Prairie Region

Survey Major Findings

More than 65,000 PSAC members have responded to PSAC's survey, following Treasury Board's decision to increase their telework mandate and require federal public service workers to be in-office a minimum of three days per week (at the time).

- 91% of respondents are strongly opposed to the new telework mandate.
- 64% of respondents are likely or very likely to file a grievance.
- 75% of respondents are willing to take action to fight the new telework mandate.

These following issues would be made worse by going to the office 4 days a week

- Expenses (parking, childcare, lunch, commute, etc.) (91%)
- Commute time and transportation (90%)
- Work life balance (89%)
- Environmental impact (84%)
- Mental health (83%)
- Caregiving responsibilities (73%)
- Lack of workspace (79%)
- Job satisfaction (80%)



Why should we consider this from a H&S perspective?

- When we look at H&S, it needs to be in a holistic manner, considering all aspects affecting well-being
- The option to work remotely has been **demonstrated** to be effective for improving well-being. Half of all sick leave is related to mental health, and sick leave usage was down significantly when workers were working remotely. Why change?
- Flexibility and respect are cornerstones of a healthy workplace- direction and top-down inflexibility create unhealthy workplaces (CSA Standard)
- There is supporting language in H&S Legislation, on top of collective agreement protections (when respected!)
- The employer's duty to accommodate cannot be ignored



Canada Labour Code-Duties of Employers

General duty of employer

124 Every employer shall ensure that the health and safety at work of every person employed by the employer is protected.

Specific duties of employer

- 125 (1) Without restricting the generality of section 124, every employer shall, in respect of every work place controlled by the employer and, in respect of every work activity carried out by an employee in a work place that is not controlled by the employer, to the extent that the employer controls the activity,...

SK- Section 12, MB Section 4(1), AB built in throughout



Policy

“Implementation plans must be developed by departments and shared for information with joint departmental union-management committees.”

CLC Pt.II

135(1)(d) ... shall participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of a program for the prevention of hazards in the workplace that also provides for the education of employees in health and safety matters related to those hazards;

(i) shall participate in the implementation of changes that might affect occupational health and safety, including work processes and procedures and, where there is no policy committee, shall participate in the planning of the implementation of those changes;

(similar wording for provincially legislated workplaces)



Issues to consider that may impact H&S

These can be as a result of new processes, policies, changes to work or environment

- Safe entry and egress to buildings
- Challenges to safety especially in downtown work locations
- Safe occupancy rates, meeting Code for physical space
- Adequate numbers of first aid attendants
- Proper amount of washroom facilities
- Ergonomic issues for shared equipment and spaces



- Fire emergency preparedness- Remind workers about building specific procedures (e.g., emergency evacuation plans). Conduct practice drills, evaluate, and make any necessary improvements.
- Ventilation
- Interpersonal issue resolution
- Application of scent sensitivity policies
- Verify that inspections are being done(e.g. first aid kits) are up to date.
- Make sure that updated health and safety information is posted in the workplace



The Duty to Accommodate (DTA)

- *In respect to everything else discussed, there still needs to be a plan to accommodate those due to special circumstances covered under Human Rights legislation.*
- *This could be based on family status (day care availability, school openings, elder care), those with a diagnosed medical condition, or those in a high risk category*
- *As with other aspects there needs to be flexibility, openness, and individual consideration of needs*

Each of these needs must be evaluated on a case by case basis



Where I think we have some immediate remedy

- Those that require accommodation (physical or psychological injury/illness, family status, immunocompromised, etc)
- H&S language- role of policy and workplace committees (consultation, participation, reporting, recording)
- Wording in the agreement and guidance itself- what it says and what the employer is doing seem to be two totally different things



Next Steps and Resources

- Consult with your local, component and H&S Committee/Representative, PSAC Regional Office
- CCOHS.ca
- For federal workplaces: Employment and Social Development Canada toll-free number:
1-800-641-4049
- Clint Wirth wirthc@psac-afpc.com

