

## **Minutes**

**BRUSH September 23, 2009**

Chair: Sam Wiese (Regional Councilor, H&S)

In Attendance: Louise Richard (NAT), Laura Gracie (CEIU), Bob Jackson (AGR), Tracey Shudo (CEIU), Melvin Dureen (USGE), Virginia Vaillancourt (UVAE), Monique Bakker (UEW), Gail Jewsbury ((UEW), Susan Yaciw (UTE), Kelly Megyesi (CEIU), Paul Croes (CEIU), Alice Woods (UCTE), Jim Sidel (DCL), Barry Cunningham (UCTE), Grace Mclvor (NHU), Sargy Chima (CEIU) James Little (PSAC, H&S) and Kay Sinclair (REVP BC).

Regrets: Wayne Little (UTE), Leanne Hughes (NAT), Angela Marafon (UTE), Floyd Knelsen (UTE), Anita Hoffman (CEIU), Megan Adam (UEW).

## **Agenda**

1. Review Previous Minutes
2. Terms of Reference
3. Health Canada – Reduction of Service
4. 2009 National H&S Conference
5. Question from the Membership
  - Armed Members – Megan Adam
  - Medical Leave – Anita Hoffman
  - Big Flood - UVAE
6. Ergonomics – Furniture and Equipment
7. H1N1
8. Food Safety
9. Round Table

### **1. Introduction – Sam**

### **2. Review of Previous Minutes**

Members reviewed the previous minutes and there were no additions or amendments required.

### **3. Terms of Reference**

Sam summarized the revisions to the Draft Terms of Reference and opened the floor for discussion. There were no additional amendments suggested. A vote was taken and the members in attendance have passed the Terms of Reference. Copies of the new Terms of Reference will be circulated to the members of the BRUSH and the Regional Council.

#### **4. Health Canada Reduction of Service**

Sam reported on the work that she and Wayne Little had accomplished.

Canada Revenue Agency has amended its policy on workplace accommodation and have negotiated the provision of health services (ergonomic and fit to work assessments) with and outside service provider.

Corrections Services Canada in the lower mainland has contracted its air quality and ergonomic services with a company in Langley at a rate of \$175.00/hour.

As of September 10, 2009 there is no service being provided at Environment Canada.

We have not heard anything official from the Treasury Board of Canada and our suspicion is that each department will contract their own independent services. We ask that once these contracts begin to appear that members please ensure this information is shared with the BRUSH. We need to look at this issue from an equity perspective and ensure that the members are being serviced in and equitable manner.

#### **5. 2009 National H&S Conference**

One of the main purposes of this meeting was to outline the delegate selection process. Kay Sinclair explained the process and criteria as follows:

- Total Delegates = 300
- Regional Delegates (7 delegates x 7 regions = 49 regional delegates)
- Component Delegates (7 delegates x 17 components = 119 component delegates)
- Component Additional Delegates (300 – 19 – 119 = 162 delegates) the 162 additional delegate seats are allocated to the components on a pro-rata/population basis (larger components = larger portion of the 162 additional delegates)
- Observers

672 applications were received and the conference should have room for ~ 50 observers.

Kay Sinclair REVP BC is chairing the steering committee, which is continuing its work on developing the conference objectives and organizing guest speakers. Members were advised that, like previous H&S conferences, we would be holding a BC Caucus at the end of the conference to develop a Regional Action

Plan. Delegates and observers will be expected to assist in the development of that plan.

## **6. Armed Members**

A question was raised “What training or education is being offered to non-armed members who work with or near armed members”. Paul Croes provided a detailed analysis of his experiences within Customs and Immigration, and advised that threat risk assessments have been done and it has been determined that their workplaces are unsafe. Many staff have not accepted the new reality of the work place and training these members has created some difficulties. One of the big issues is Officers walking through the office with loaded hand guns. Initially, they are very careful however over time they become less vigilant and at times lazy. This has resulted in an increase in accidental discharges. The officers receive the standard operating procedures training however this training is not offered to the non-armed staff.

We reviewed procedures within differing departments.

- DFO – Has a non-gun personnel policy
- Customs – They have some armed training procedures
- Parks – Unknown at present
- CSC – All the guns are in posts and training has been provided to those in need.
- Coast Guard – Not a problem and all ammunition is held in storage.

**TASK** – Jim Sam and Melvin will look at current educational programs with-in departments/agencies and review for non-armed learning opportunities.

## **7. Medical Leave**

There appears to be an increase in the number of members being forced to use their annual leave or sick leave to attend medical appointments of a recurring nature. To address this issue we looked at what the current norms within departments and agencies.

For most collective agreements you will not find leave provisions for medical/dental appointments. For Treasury Board and Agency members leave for medical/dental appointment will be found in the employers Leave With Pay Policy and as such, it does not form part of the collective agreement and is therefore not a matter that can be contested at arbitration/adjudication. This being said, the employer does allow member to take time off for medical/dental however, it is at their discretion and based on their respective Leave Without Pay Policies.

It was emphasized that if this becomes a big work place issue, members should consider using the accommodation argument as this could be seen as an attack on persons with disabilities.

## **8. Ergonomics**

“Did you know that any equipment, device, technical aid, provided to you for the purpose of workplace accommodation can be moved from one Branch to another or from one Department/Agency to another and that the accommodation provided can accompany you throughout your career in the Federal Public Service” – Safety, Emergency and Security management Division (SESMD), Assets Management Directorate (AMD), Corporate Services Branch (CSB).

Information regarding the transfer of ergonomic equipment can also be found in the Policy on the Duty to Accommodate Persons with Disabilities in the Federal Public Service.

Both articles will be posted to the BC H&S website

## **9. H1N1**

Question was raised about vaccinations and H1N1 related sick leave.

In regards to employer provided vaccinations (flu shots), it appears that each department/agency has its own policy.

In terms of sanitation, it is widely known that hand washing is the number one means of prevention and that hand sanitizers, although somewhat effective, should only be used when hand washing is not available. In some offices they are putting hand sanitizers in the washrooms and this should be discouraged and hand washing should be encouraged.

Our front line staff is at serious risk and those with deficient immune systems should be encouraged to get vaccinated. Some departments have put in place pandemic plans in case of a serious outbreak.

If you miss work because of the flu, it will not be compensable by Workers Compensation Boards.

Employers may be sending members home or to the doctor if they are sick and we hope that this policy will also apply to all non-unionized workers/managers in the workplace.

## **10. Food Safety**

Bob Jackson reported on some of the more recent successes of the Food Safety First campaign. The federal government recently announced a 75M dollar increase to food safety which will result in a 35 % increase in meat inspectors (70 new inspectors). Although there are still problems some very good results to report from the hard work of the Agriculture Unions campaign

[www.foodsafetyfirst.ca](http://www.foodsafetyfirst.ca)

22 members of the Canadian public died from the Listeriosis outbreak.

## **11. Lightkeepers Campaign**

Alice Woods (UCTE – Coast Guard – Lightkeeper) gave everyone a brief on the de-staffing of the east and west coast lighthouses. There is a petition going around and we hope you will join us in supporting this quality public service.

“This campaign is not about jobs its about safety and service”.

**Meeting Adjourned**

**Next Meeting December 16, 2009**