

REPORT OF THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL
HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
February 18, 2016

Present: Jody LaPierre
Steve Johnson
Colleen Hodder
Brian Oldford
Nancy MacLean, PSAC Staff Advisor

Regrets: Bill Bennett
Nathalie Paulin

1. Health and Safety Education

The National Bully Awareness Campaign was completed in December, 2015. However, given the significant interest for the training, the two-day training course will continue to be offered as needed and requested. The two-day course provided information and education to Local Workplace Health & Safety Committee members and to Local Executives on how better to enforce the Canada Labour Code Part II and the Part XX of the Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations on violence prevention in the workplace. The following Health and Safety education sessions are scheduled:

- Violence Prevention in the Workplace – February 20 – 21, 2016 – Sydney, NS
- Introduction to the Canada Labour Code Part II – March 19 – 20, 2016 – Moncton, NB (bilingual)
- Introduction to the Canada Labour Code Part II – April 2 – 3, 2016 – Halifax, NS

Sister MacLean delivered a 90 minute session on Medical Privacy in December, 2015 during the Representation Skills Seminar in Halifax. The training sparked great interest and it will be offered as part of the workshop series at the Halifax International Women's Day Conference. The workshop defines what medical privacy is and outlines what information an employer or insurer is legally entitled to have. The workshop also identifies the legal rights and responsibilities of employees with regards to insurance claims such as workers compensation and disability insurance.

2. Domestic Violence in the Workplace

"Can Work Be Safe, When Home Isn't?" is a report produced by the Canadian Labour Congress. The report focuses on the impact on domestic violence on workers and

workplaces. Statistics shows that 43.2% of those experience domestic violence will discuss it with someone at work. This is a workplace issue, it's a health and safety issue and it's a Union issue. The PSAC will be doing workshops during the Halifax International Women's Day conference in March and it will be the focus of the PSAC Atlantic Regional Women's Conference.

3. Asbestos in Federal Government Sites

Asbestos in Federal Government buildings and the risk to potential exposure is a major concern to the Public Service Alliance of Canada. The position of the federal government is that asbestos can still be used in new constructions and we know that Canada is still importing asbestos containing products. Workplace Health and Safety Committees need to ensure that when refits or construction is taking place that discussions take place regarding the potential exposure to asbestos.

4. "Focus on Safety" Youth Video Contest – WorkSafe NB

WorkSafe NB has launched the provincial "Focus on Safety" youth video contest. The contest challenges New Brunswick high school students to create a video that illustrates the importance of working safely on the job. The contest runs until April 1, 2015 with cash prizes available for both students and their high schools. The first –place winning video will be automatically entered in the national "Focus on Safety" youth video contests, sponsored by the Canada Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. To obtain additional information, please visit

http://www.youthsafenb.ca/en/nomercy/youth_video_contests.aspx

5. Up-date Mental Health Task Force

Mental health is an important part of the workplace and impacts individuals, employers and the economy. Mental health is a growing issue in Canadian workplaces, affecting 1 in every 4 Canadians. As was previously reported, the Technical Committee presented its report and recommendations to the Steering Committee on the Mental Health Task Force on September 30, 2015. The report was released on December 2, 2015. The Technical Committee developed the following vision that guided the drafting of its report:

To create a culture that enshrines psychological health and safety and well-being in all aspects of the workplace through collaboration, inclusivity and respect. This obligation belongs to every individual in the workplace.

There are several legal duties that support providing a psychologically safe workplace. They include: employment standards legislation, employment contracts, occupational health and safety legislation, human rights legislation, workers compensation legislation and the Law of Torts (negligence).

In 2014 the Joint Learning Program (JLP) began to offer the Mental Health in the Workplace training. In 2014, 83 workshops, with 1482 attendees, were delivered across Canada. In 2015, 247 workshops, with 3590 attendees, were delivered. Please note, the first Mental Health Workshop in the Atlantic Region was held on August 27, 2014. We are pleased to report that 77 workshops have been facilitated in the Atlantic Region and another 20 workshops are scheduled so far this year. We are sure additional workshops will be scheduled and those statistics will continue to grow.

6. Atlantic Regional Health and Safety Conference

The conference callout and application forms have been distributed. The registration is progressing. The Atlantic Council Health and Safety Committee reviewed the PSAC Calendar of Events prior to scheduling the conference. The Committee also took into consideration other factors such as hotel availability and the schedule of the Regional Executive Vice President – Atlantic. The Committee tried to accommodate everyone. It is the responsibility of each delegate attending the conference to ensure that the education and information received is shared with all other Local members. Given the limited conference budget it is not possible to accept several delegates per Local. The Atlantic Council Health and Safety Committee will be putting forth a resolution to the National Health and Safety Conference recommending that Regional Health and Safety Conference budget allocations be increases and that delegates be fully funded.

7. Role of the Atlantic Council Health and Safety Committee Chairperson

The same criteria to attend the Regional Health & Safety Conference applies to the Regional Council Health & Safety Committee. All conference attendees must be a member of the Workplace Health & Safety Committee. The Council Committee can only apply if he/she meets the mandated criteria and if selected will also be assigned additional duties during the conference that may include reading the harassment statement, introducing and thanking, etc.

8. Regional Health and Safety Committee

As previously reported, during the 2015 National PSAC Convention, a resolution was passed to recognize the establishment of Regional Health & Safety Committees under the PSAC Constitution. It was decided that the Atlantic Council Health & Safety Committee would serve as the Atlantic Region's Committee. Please be advised that all members of the Atlantic Council Health & Safety Committee have knowledge and experience with Occupational Health & Safety. The majority of the Committee members currently sit on their Workplace Health & Safety Committee. The resolution dealt with the establishment of Regional Health & Safety Committee(s). This Committee promotes through its mandate the environment but are not experts in environmental sustainability. The PSAC has a National Standing Committee on the environment which is chaired by Todd Panas, National President – Union of Environment Workers. This Standing Committee produces a report for the National Board of Directors which is available on the PSAC website.

9. Committee 3-Year Mandate and Plan

The 3-Year Mandate and Plan will be revised to reflect the dual role of being the Regional Committee as per the PSAC Constitution.

10. Roundtable

Brother LaPierre reported that the Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour will be holding a week long educational seminar on Mental Health. Additional details are forthcoming.

The Department of Veteran Affairs have adopted “The Elephant in the Room” module. Staff who have participated in the learning can now display a small blue elephant in the work space that signifies that they are an ally and do not stigmatize against mental wellness. This person is open to have a discussion on mental health.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Brian Oldford, Chairperson

Atlantic Council Health, Safety & Environment Committee