



Have a safe and happy winter season!

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Winter 2008

PSAC NORTH - HEALTH & SAFETY

Welcome to the first edition of the PSAC North Health & Safety newsletter!

Yukon Advanced Health & Safety Training 2008

15 members from across the Yukon and one from NWT attended this course that was facilitated by Denis St Jean, Health and Safety officer out of Ottawa and Steve Petersen Health and Safety rep for the north.

I would like to express gratitude to our guest speakers, Jean-Francois Des Lauriers PSAC REVP for the North, Alex Furlong President of the Yukon Federation of Labour, Julie Docherty from the Workers Advisors office, and Kurt Dieckman Director of the Yukon WCB for the informative and frank discussions regarding Health and Safety issues.

Content of the Advanced Health and Safety Course held in Whitehorse November 15-18

Why health and safety is a union issue;

Gains we've made - history of working for healthier and safer workplaces;



Legal Framework of OH&S --a better understanding of the or the Yukon Occupational Health & Safety Act or the Canada Labour Code Part II;

Identifying the main health & safety rights and responsibilities of workers, unions and employers;

Recognizing and identifying health and safety hazards; and viewing health and safety issues from a worker's perspective.

Work Shouldn't Hurt --Harassment, Ergonomics, making connection between Environment and H&S;

Strategic approaches --Using Collective Bargaining and the Contract;

Getting the most out of Joint H & S Committees -mobilizing the members, connecting with leadership.

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Know Your Rights!

- Right to Know
- Right to Participate
- Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

For NT and NU Members:

http://www.wcb.nt.ca/your_wcb/legislation.html

For YU Members: <http://www.wcb.yk.ca/>

Federal members - Section (127) :

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/acts-regulations/General/c/clc/act/clc.html>

Right to Know

You have the right to know about hazards in your workplace. You should be taught how these hazards can affect you and your co-workers. The first step is to get proper health and safety training. This includes learning how to identify workplace hazards and knowing what to do if there is an incident or spill.

Right to Participate

You have the right to be involved in health and safety concerns in your workplace. You can participate through a safety representative at your workplace, or be involved in your workplace health and safety committee.

Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

You have the right to refuse unsafe work. If you have reasonable grounds to believe the work you do or the piece of equipment you use is unsafe, you can stop this work immediately. There are steps in place to correct unsafe workplace situations so you can return to work.

Contact your supervisor or health and safety representative to find out how to correct the unsafe situation. You shouldn't work until the situation has been corrected. You cannot be laid off, suspended, or penalized for refusing unsafe work if you follow the proper procedures.

Shoveling Snow:

From the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety

Why is snow shoveling an occupational hazard?

As Canadians, we've been digging with that same snow shovel just as we do every year. But have we ever really given this chore much thought? Whether you're shoveling at work or at home, there are some things you should consider.

Timing and attitude

Often the need for shoveling snow arises unexpectedly and interferes with what we had originally planned to do. Consequently we face this unwanted chore unprepared and, more important, in a hurry to get it over with as fast as possible. If we are not careful, we could experience cold exposure, fatigue, muscular strains and more serious injury, particularly to the lower back. On the other hand, it is more practical to shovel early and often. Fresh dry snow is lighter and therefore more manageable than wet, heavily packed or partly melted snow.

What should you know before you start shoveling?

First of all, you should keep in mind that, while shoveling snow may be an excellent workout for the physically fit, it involves strenuous effort.

Load a shovel (over 1 kg) with 5 kg of snow (just about the average) every 5 seconds, and you move a load of over 70 kg in one minute. Repeat for 15 minutes and you will have shoveled 1,000 kg of snow. Such effort is obviously not for everyone.

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For more information about working in the cold, you can visit the "Cold Environments" publications in OSH Answers - General Information, Health Effects and First Aid, and Working in the Cold, on the Canadian Center for Occupational Health And Safety website: www.ccohs.ca

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It is hard on the heart and back for those who are not used to it or not in good physical shape. If you are older, overweight, or have a history of back or heart problems, or simply feel that it is too much for you, avoid this job by delegating it to someone else. Another option would be getting a snow blower.

As with any exercise, talk to your doctor. If you are physically fit, do some warm-ups before you start shoveling. Flexing and

stretching exercises will loosen up the muscles and prepare them for the job ahead.

Next, check your clothing. Are you dressed appropriately? Wear several layers of warm lightweight clothing that is hinder free and comfortable to move in. The inner layer should be fishnet underwear or thermal underwear that allows perspiration to escape from the skin surface. Make sure your head, (especially your ears), feet and hands are

well covered. However, do not let your hat or scarf block your vision - you have to see what you are shoveling. Boots should be water-resistant and high-cut, and should provide good traction. Gloves should be light and flexible and give you a good grip. If it is really cold, wear something over your mouth. And do not shovel at all if the temperature drops below -40°C, or below -25° to -30° C when it is windy.

How should you shovel?



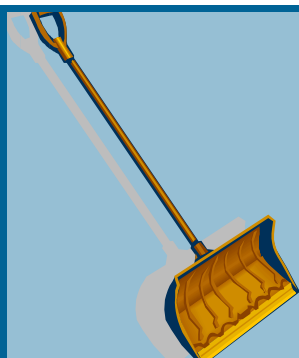
You may want to get the job over with as fast as you can, but it is better to keep mobile and work at a steady pace. Shoveling is going to make you sweat and, if you stop, you could get a chill.

Push the snow rather than lift it. If you must throw it, take only as much snow as you can easily lift and turn your feet to the direction you're throwing - don't twist

at the waist. Throwing the snow over your shoulder or to the side is a no-no! And remember, the wetter the snow, the heavier it is.

You might want to consider using a snow scoop which allows you to move snow with less effort, by pushing instead of lifting. The scoop rides up over the snow to allow you to move the snow without ever having to lift it.

Pace yourself. Shoveling snow is strenuous activity comparable to weightlifting while walking on uneven and unstable ground and wearing heavy-duty clothing. Take frequent breaks and drink some warm non-alcoholic fluids.



Any shovel will do, right?

What about that shovel? Is it a snow shovel? Any other kind of shovel will make the job much harder.

A snow shovel should be light-weight, about 1.5 kg or a little over 3 lbs, and the blade shouldn't be too large. Otherwise your load will be too heavy, putting too much stress on your heart and back. The handle should be long enough so that you don't have to stoop to shovel. The grip should be made of plastic or wood--metal gets too cold.

Parking Lots - Fall Prevention:

From the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety

Do parking lots pose special hazards?

Parking lots are a special adjunct to many workplaces. Even though you may not be conducting your job there (unless you are a parking attendant or maintenance worker), there is still a possibility that you can be injured. Besides the risk of violence, the major risk includes falls resulting from slips and trips.

What factors contribute to fall incidents on a parking lot?

A smooth, even, flat surface is ideal for walking because it reduces the likelihood of twisted ankles or loss of balance which can lead to falls and other painful mishaps. In fact, guidelines require that parking areas be level and even, with cracks, holes and lumps not exceeding 1 cm.

However, heavy use by both pedestrians and vehicle traffic both cause a parking surface to deteriorate. Examples of damage to look for: broken pavement, and gratings.

Leaks and spills of engine oil or antifreeze, which commonly occur wherever cars are parked, can further add to risks of slips and falls.

In outdoor parking lots, severe weather conditions additionally aggravate even slight damage to the parking surface. As a consequence the risk for falls due to slips and trips is relatively high in this environment.

Are speed bumps a fall hazard?

Speed bumps and tire stops are usually not necessary in a well-designed parking lot. Besides potentially causing damage to vehicles, they create a yet another hazard for tripping.

The layout of the parking area should make it impossible to drive unsafely or fast.

Otherwise, if speed bumps or tire stops are absolutely necessary:

- locate them away from pedestrian traffic (such as at entrance and exit areas).
- use a speed bump sign and post the recommended speed wherever such bumps have to be used
- speed bumps should be designed according to the provisions of American National Standards

Are tire stops hazardous?

Tire stops are serious tripping hazards particularly when parking slots are occupied. When tire stops are present, a few precautions are advised:

- They should be no wider than the width of the vehicle
- They should be marked with a contrasting color
- Special attention should be paid to their regular maintenance because they deteriorate faster than other elements of the parking area



What responsibilities do workers have?

Safety is everybody's duty, so workers as much as employers should:

- clean or report spills right away
- clear away clutter and debris, if they can
- report hazardous conditions to their supervisors
- remain aware that falls can happen anywhere, anytime!

How can you prevent falls?

Falls can be prevented through a number of steps:

- good lighting
- good housekeeping
- good quality walking surface in the parking area
- appropriate walking pace: walk, don't run

- paying attention to where you are going
- selection of proper footwear

What does good housekeeping mean in terms of parking lots?

- Good housekeeping includes:
- cleaning all spills and oily spots immediately

- marking oily or icy spots and wet areas
- clearing ice or snow as soon as possible
- removing clutter, debris and any obstacles from walkways

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
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Learn more about Health & Safety online at:

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) promotes a safe and healthy working environment by providing occupational health and safety information and advice:

- www.ccohs.ca

These sites have a wealth of information for workers:

- www.wcb.yk.ca
- www.wcb.nt.ca

The Yukon Workers Advocate Office:

- www.justice.gov.yk.ca/prog/ms/wad/index.html

Worker Advisor for the NT:

- www.waonorth.ca

This group provides training in the Yukon in conjunction with the YFL and WCB:

- www.yukonsafety.com



If you would like to serve on your regional Health & Safety committee please return this form to:

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Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____