



Canadian Association of University Teachers
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Occupational Health and Safety Report

Date: April 2017

To: Executive Committee
CAUT Council

From: Laura Lozanski, OHS Officer

Adapting Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change

An information guide has been produced that explores ways that academic staff associations can promote campus policies and practices to reduce carbon emissions. A bargaining advisory that highlights collective agreement language that can be negotiated to help mitigate the effects of climate change has also been produced.

Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers

The Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) is a worker-based, ministry-funded organization that provides employees and employers with reputable workplace health and safety services by occupationally-trained physicians, nurses, ergonomists, and industrial hygienists. Although based in Ontario, the OHCOW services are available for out-of-province workplaces and are an excellent resource for physicians and joint health and safety committees (JHSC).

The OHCOW has produced three new apps:

[Air Assess](#) – assists JHSC's and workers to assess indoor air quality.

[Pain Point](#) – basic ergonomics to prevent musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) at work.

[Measure Workplace Stress](#) – a self-survey to identify workplace stress levels.

All of these new apps are JHSC and worker-friendly. They are not intended to replace comprehensive testing but do give the ability for academic staff associations and JHSC's to have some control over basic assessment of these issues.

Campus Security

A campus security Workers Health and Safety Centre module — *Lockdown: A Crisis Response* — is being used by academic staff associations and university and college employers. This module provides ways to develop and implement a response model for crisis events internal or external to the workplace. This can be done through academic staff associations and worker committee representatives, or jointly with the employer.

CAUT Mental Injuries Toolkit Project (LOARC) *Updated

The Mental Injuries Team has produced the Mental Injuries Toolkit (MIT), which is available at: www.ohcow.on.ca/MIT. The MIT has been updated to incorporate equity into the document since a lack of equity and discriminatory harassment in the workplace can cause mental injuries. The new version of this toolkit has been well received in CAUT's workshops.

The purpose of MIT is to help academic staff associations identify causes of psycho-social issues in the workplace, and to implement effective prevention strategies. It incorporates a short, confidential survey to assist with identifying issues and can be used as a tool with the employer to develop appropriate workplace assessments and effective prevention tools.

Disability Guide

There has been interest in producing an accommodation guide for academics who need assistance with resources and collective agreement language. Outreach will begin soon to the equity network for feedback and participation in producing the guide.

Asbestos

The University of Toronto's Medical Sciences Building has become the centre of a brewing controversy on asbestos in the workplace. UTFA and CUPE 3902, along with other campus unions, are dealing with the fall-out of asbestos exposure during renovations, and CAUT is providing assistance and advice.

Asbestos continues to pose a significant hazard in academic workplaces. As aging university and college campus infrastructure requires renovations, the potential for exposure to asbestos increases.

CAUT encourages academic staff associations to work with their members and their joint health & safety committee (JHSC) to ensure that their institutions are complying with all asbestos regulations. It is critically important that each institution use only reputable asbestos abatement companies that can show in writing that they have trained their workers in accordance with the provincial or federal asbestos regulation training requirements, and that those workers have been provided and wear the appropriate and required personal protective equipment. Warning signage is mandatory when asbestos abatement is being carried out, along with sealing off the work area.

CAUT offers a 3-hour Asbestos module for all workers and JHSC members.

Fact Sheets Completed

Ergonomics for Fine Arts

Fact Sheets in Process

Radon

Personal Protective Equipment

Health & Safety Training Workshops for Members

UTFA and CUPE 3902 – Asbestos Awareness (April 2017)

FAUW – Asbestos Awareness (May 2017)