



WORKPLACE HEALTH, SAFETY AND COMPENSATION

There is nothing more important to the labour movement than making sure that workers stay safe and healthy on the job. Our lives depend on it. Since its creation in 1913, the New Brunswick Federation of Labour has been active in the areas of workplace health and safety and worker's compensation.

Worker's compensation evolved from a historic compromise between workers and employers based on the Meredith principles, namely: 1) No fault insurance; 2) Collective, rather than the individual, liability of employers; 3) Employer responsibility for the costs of worker's compensation as a cost of doing business; 4) Adjudication and administration by an independent commission; 5) Prevention of accidents and the promotion of safety; and 6) A prohibition of legal action by employees against their employer.

Workers, not employers, pay the heaviest price for workplace accidents and illnesses that often are the result of inadequate training, poor employer safety practices, hazardous equipment, infrequent workplace inspections and poorly enforced safety laws.

Preventing Workplace Injuries

More needs to be done to prevent workplace injuries and fatalities. In 2013, over 11,500 New Brunswickers were injured on the job while 7 people lost their lives as a result of workplace injuries.

Waiting Period

In New Brunswick, injured workers do not get any income for the first three days after their injury. This three day waiting period to receive workers' compensation benefits causes undue financial hardships to injured workers and their families. This waiting period should be eliminated.

Bullying and Violence in the Workplace

Bullying and violence in the workplace have been recognized internationally as occupational health and safety issues. Some provincial governments, such as Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Quebec, have adopted legislation or regulations that help protect workers from workplace violence and/or bullying. The provincial *Occupational Health and Safety Act* should be modified to include bullying and violence in the workplace as occupational health and safety risks.

During the next provincial election, ask the candidates:

- Do you agree that more can be done to prevent workplace injuries and fatalities? Do you support hiring more compliance officers and having better enforcement policies and stricter penalties for employers that do not follow the law?
- Do you think that it is fair that workers injured on the job need to wait three days before receiving workers' compensation benefits? Will you work to get rid of this three day waiting period?
- Do you agree that bullying and violence in the workplace should be added to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*?