



Day of Mourning: NBFL calls on provincial government to enforce legislation to protect workers

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Every year, on April 28, the National Day of Mourning, people come together remember the workers who lost their lives or were injured while working. Day of Mourning ceremonies are taking place in: Bathurst, Fredericton, Miramichi, Moncton and Saint John.

“Today, not only do we remember those who have fallen and support their families, but we also come together to show our dedication towards improving health and safety provisions and their enforcement,” says Chuck Rouse, the Vice-President responsible for the New Brunswick Federation of Labour’s Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Committee. “Every New Brunswicker deserves to come home at the end of their work day healthy and safe.”

In 2015, over 9,500 New Brunswickers were injured on the job while 14 people lost their lives as a result of a workplace injury or disease.

“We support the United Steelworkers Union’s campaign to stop the killing and enforce the law. Hence on this Day of Mourning, we are calling on the New Brunswick Attorney General to take the necessary steps to enforce the Westray Act,” says Patrick Colford, President of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour.

Following Westray coal mine explosion that killed 26 miners on May 9, 1992, in Nova Scotia, the United Steelworkers Union spearheaded a decade-long campaign to demand “No More Westrays.” The *Westray Act* amended the Criminal Code to hold corporations and their directors criminally accountable for workplace deaths and injuries. The amendments were adopted unanimously by the House of Commons and became law in 2004. This law is currently not being enforced.

April 28th was first established in Canada as the National Day of Mourning for workers killed, injured or disabled on the job. It was recognized as such by the Government of Canada in the year 2000, at the urging of the Canadian Labour Congress. April 28th commemorates the date that the first comprehensive workers’ compensation legislation was adopted in Canada. It was adopted on April 28, 1914 by the province of Ontario. April 28th is now recognized in countries throughout the world as a day to remember, reflect and renew efforts to keep workers safe and healthy.

- 30 -

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