

Day of Mourning

The National Day of Mourning, held annually on April 28, was officially recognized by the Federal Government in 1991, eight years after the Day of Remembrance was launched by the Canadian Labour Congress.

The Day of Mourning has since spread to about 80 countries around the world and has been adopted by the AFL-CIO and the Confederation of Free Trade.

The Canadian flag at National Steel Car and on Parliament Hill will fly at half-mast on this day, to honour all workers who have died on the job.

This touches us very closely here at National Steel car. Many of our members will remember Brothers and Sisters whom we have worked with and beside, who have died right here as a result of accidents in the workplace. Being more aware of past occurrences not only honours those in the past makes us more attentive and careful in the future.



Local 7135

March 2013 Newsletter

President's Message

We have received the draft of the Blue Cross benefit plan from the company and have taken action with a preliminary overview. We have found minor differences which we are presenting to the company for explanation and correction. We are also contacting the International Union for assistance in obtaining a professional benefits specialist who can thoroughly inspect the document for further errors.

I would like to take this time to honour a member who is retiring shortly: Maurice Rozon, who began with National Steel Car over 40 years ago and has been a major contributor to our local union. Maurice not only served as a past president, but also on many committees such as the Grievance Committee, the Negotiation Committee and most notably, as the Chair of the Compensation Committee. His experience and knowledge will be greatly missed.

Thank you, Maurice Rozon!

We have began to discuss this summer's plant shutdown and the company is tentatively looking at the last week of July and the first week of August. We hope to confirm this shortly.

Orders:

- P1 – 675 Tri Levels until the end of June
- P2 – Possible Hopper Cars but not yet confirmed
- P3 – 600 Bi Levels for GATX, BNSF, and UP until the end of August
- P5 – 750 Gondolas until the second week of September
- P7 – No orders
- 1329 Active employees with 384 currently laid off. New hires will begin in April once all laid off employees have returned.



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Health & Safety Report

Slips trips and falls

There are two kinds of falls – fall from the same level and fall from height.

Same-level fall can be caused by slippery or uneven surfaces, debris or other tripping hazards, dark or obstructed pathways, and unsuitable footwear.

Falling from heights can occur by working in an environment where there is a chance of falling more than three metres.

What the law says:

Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act requires that employers take every reasonable precaution to protect workers, provide information and instruction, and ensure that workers properly use/wear the required equipment. Employers, supervisors, and workers, can be prosecuted for not complying with the law.

How this hazard can affect you:

- Each year there are about 17,000 lost-time injuries due to falls in the workplace
- 65% of all fall-related injuries are from same level
- One in five lost-time injuries are the result from falls
- Every year about 20 people die in Ontario because of workplace falls
- 80 workers are injured every day because of a fall – that's one fall every 20 minutes

What you can do:

- Understand policies that outline rules for housekeeping, lighting, and inspections
- Ensure that your PPE, and other equipment, is in good repair and used correctly
- Ask for proper training or procedures for cleaning up spills
- Ensure that you have the proper training for all PPE provided to you
- Remind your supervisors of their legal obligation to provide a safe working environment
- Do not work in areas that have tripping or falling hazards in areas that are missing or have broken guard rails, open or holes in trench plates, etc

Letter to the Editor

We recently added a spot in our website that will allow our members to communicate with the editors of our newsletter, or send in suggestions for the newsletter. If have a charity event, or information on upcoming events that you would like to share with our membership, this would be the place to start. This would also be the place to send in articles that you think you would be educational or informative for our members or share concerns about an article that was posted in a previous newsletter or online. Remember, that this is your newsletter, and it is there to inform you about what is going on – both at the plant, and in our communities...

Check us out at www.usw7135.ca. We look forward to hearing from you.

Need a Ride Program

We have employees who come into work from all parts of the city and surrounding areas including Niagara, Mississauga, and Brantford, just to name a few. We understand that due to the economy or other reasons, some people may not be able to drive or have access to a vehicle and, as such, we have created a useful "Need a Ride" program for current members. You can either request a ride, or, for those who have access to a vehicle, offer a ride. You may live in an area close to someone who is without reliable transportation.

In appreciation for your help, every member who enrolls in this program as a driver will be entered into a monthly draw to win a \$50 gas card.

To register, just go to our website at www.usw7135.ca and click on the "Need A Ride Program" button. This will direct you to register as either a driver, or a person in need of a ride.

Education Report

We still have spaces available for the Level One Safety Training that we will be running at our hall on April 6, 2013. All those interested must register by email to: joe.paquette@usw7135.ca When we receive your request, you will be contacted with all pertinent information and verification that you have been registered.

Deadlines for applications for the Steelworker Scholarships are below. All information and applications for these scholarships are posted at: www.usw7135.ca – in the “Education” section.

- Steelworker summer program (Deadline: May 31, 2013)
- Norma Berti Scholarship Award (Deadline: June 28, 2013)
- Patrick Hinchey Scholarship Award (Deadline: June 28, 2013)
- Peter Leibovitch Scholarship Award (Deadline: June 28, 2013)

Marin & Associates is offering first aid training to members of Local 7135 and their families. They run Standard First Aid CPR/AED Level C every weekend, and on some evenings, to accommodate shifts and busy schedules. The cost per person is \$120.00 plus HST. Anyone interested should contact them directly at pmarin@shaw.ca or by phone at (289) 396.3026.

The Canadian Labour Congress is running a Retirement Planning course that deals with many subjects including health, activities, and finances, to help you plan for your retirement and is open to all of our members free-of-charge. This program will run March 23 and 24, 2013, at the USW Hamilton Office at 1031 Barton Street East. Anyone interested should email Darren Green at Uswa5328@msn.com or call him at (905) 719.4412.

Grievance Committee Report

When filing an “improper pay” grievance, be sure to include all the relevant information to the pay issue being grieved. Pay stubs are very helpful, as are dates, the number of people working in the position if applicable, etc. It is very good practice to document the following on a daily basis: all of your production; all the hours you worked; the number of people working in your position; any direction given to you by supervisors.

We have made headway into the stack of grievances that we inherited and that have been filed as of late. If you have a grievance filed and receive a call from the hall please return that call so we can schedule your grievance to be heard. If after repeated attempts to schedule you with no response back, we will send you a registered letter advising you to contact us in 30 days or we will deem the grievance abandoned and will withdraw it.

If you have not already picked up your copy of our CBA, please do at your earliest convenience. They are available from Human Resources and we have a few copies here too. We should have a copy and read it so we can understand what our contract actually states.

Compensation Report

If you are injured or ill because of work, **your first priority is to seek proper medical attention.** You must also inform your supervisors, so that they can give you assistance and fulfill their responsibilities regarding the incident.

**Did you know that as soon as you are injured at work
YOU ARE NO LONGER COVERED UNDER THE CANADA HEALTH ACT?!**

The Canada Health Act states:

"insured health services" means hospital services, physician services and surgical-dental services provided to insured persons, but does not include any health services that a person is entitled to and eligible for under any other Act of Parliament or under any Act of the legislature of a province that relates to workers' or workmen's compensation;"
(see: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-6/>)

At that point, you are totally at the mercy of your provincial worker compensation system to provide your health-related needs.

**But, what if they say "NO"?
What if the worker compensation system denies your claim?**

The reality for many workers that are seriously injured is that they are subject to lengthy appeal processes by the worker compensation system and then, if their claim is still denied, they cannot sue the WCB, or their employer, and are left to fend for themselves and their families without any support.

Injured workers across Canada are scraping to find money for medications and treatments when their worker compensation board either denies their claim, under-compensates their claim, or cuts off their claim prematurely.

How would you feel having to choose between your medications, your rent, or food for your children?

This situation is not an exception. As worker compensation boards save money by denying claims, injured workers and their families suffer.

ALWAYS keep documents and report any details in a timely matter.

Political Action

The bitter teachers' dispute that has caused chaos in schools across the province is setting the stage for a new wave of labour unrest that Ontario has not seen in decades.

With Tory leader Tim Hudak, the favourite to win the next provincial election, talking tough against unions and promoting a so-called right-to-work agenda, they warn that Ontario is heading for labour discontent that could cripple the province. The experts say if teachers' unions today are up in arms because the Liberal government is curbing their right to negotiate contracts or go on strike, Ontarians can only imagine what would happen if the Tories enact a right-to-work law that could strip unions of their ability to function and hasten their demise.

"Right-to-work is too loaded and incendiary, and if a majority Conservative government passes such a law, it would produce huge anger and blow-back," says Carleton University business professor Ian Lee.

"It is a bridge too far to take away the Rand formula... If Hudak was elected and it went through, the union movement would pull out all the stops and declare war against the government."

The president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, Sid Ryan, says even as teachers are battling the Liberal government today, the union movement knows that a Conservative government would be worse, and Hudak's right-to-work proposal — an "Orwellian slogan" that will "destroy" unions — says it all. He warns any government contemplating such legislation better buckle up for a protracted labour war.

"This fight we see right now with school teachers is about just the right to collective bargaining. Imagine if this is a fight over the right to join a union or for freeloaders to hold their money and destroy the labour movement. It will be an incredible fight," Ryan says.

"The days of protest under Mike Harris when we had 200,000 protesting on the streets of Toronto will be like a Sunday picnic compared to the fight that will go on if they try to take away the Rand formula."

Lee, who teaches strategic management at Carleton's Sprott School of Business and once ran for the federal Progressive Conservatives, is mystified by Hudak's endorsement of right-to-work. He says the Tory leader was on a winning path talking about deficit reduction, pension reform, a public sector wage freeze and cutting spending, which many Ontarians readily identify with. But veering into an area like right-to-work, which is largely identified with Southern U.S. states such as Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, is baffling.

Right-to-work was used by southern states starved of manufacturing jobs to attract plants that companies had been reluctant to locate in the south. Lee says the policy has succeeded in attracting new jobs even though "you work for less money."

Even in the public sector, where unions are strong, their power has been waning with governments chipping away at wages and benefits. Public sector pay freezes or one-per-cent increases and smaller pensions are going to be the norm, he says.

The Tory base may welcome tough right-to-work policies, but Lee says Canadians and Ontarians "are more centrist than Americans" and right-to-work could backfire. Centrist and independent voters Hudak might need for a majority could be repelled by what they may see as a mean-spirited attempt to kill unions.

There is a direct link between labour unions and the middle class. Not only do they protect a union employee's job and rights, they also help non-union workers by setting the standard of acceptable work relations. Most of the labour laws we have now came as a direct result of united people (unions) fighting for them.

Without unions, without collective bargaining, and without workers sticking together, employers would dictate working conditions, hours, wages, and benefits without any input from the workers and without unions, there would be no Canadian middle-class. There would be the rich and the poor—no in-between.

Unions have helped keep non-union companies more honest with just their presence. It has made them (non-union) companies pay a competitive wage to recruit workers to their companies.

The rights unions fought for over the decades benefit all Canadians today. If our unions cease to exist, these hard-won liberties will begin to disappear. Below is a list of some of the rights employees have attained due to union activism:

- Weekends,
- Paid vacations
- The 8-hour work day
- Ending child labour
- Paid work breaks, including lunch
- Equal pay for equal work for women
- Abolition of sweatshops
- Sick leave
- Canada Pension Plan
- Minimum wage
- Pregnancy and parental leave
- The right to strike
- Anti-discrimination rules at work
- Overtime pay
- Occupational health and safety
- The 40 hour work week
- Worker's compensation
- Employment Insurance
- Pensions
- Public education
- Laws against wrongful dismissal
- Laws against sexual harassment
- Statutory holiday pay
- Vacation pay