

Workplace health and safety rights

January 1, 2004

The Report: January / February 2004 vol.25 num.1

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I recently transferred from a small unit to a larger, more complex site. Im not clear on a number of tasks which look like they could cause injury. What do I do?



Article 38.03 ... -Employee Safety" of the paramedical professional contract states, in part:

The employer will provide orientation or in-service necessary for the safe performance of work, including the safe handling of materials and products. The employer will also make readily available information, manuals, and procedures for these purposes. The employer will provide appropriate safety clothing and equipment.

Workplace safety is not just a contractual right: its a serious responsibility of the employer, under workers compensation law. You have three fundamental rights under this law:

1. The right to know about all potential health and safety hazards in your work environment ... and receive the knowledge and training you require.
2. The right to participate in the health and safety program through your representative at your facilities Occupational Health and Safety Committee.
3. The right to refuse to carry out work that could jeopardize your health and safety or that of co-workers, patients/clients or members of the public. (In an upcoming issue of *The Report*, this column will feature a review of this crucial right to refuse unsafe work.)

The quote from the contract encompasses a large amount of detail which is specifically laid out in the *WCB Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*.

All employers in the province of British Columbia are required to meet the provisions of this regulation. If you are concerned that any of the above points are not being met:

1. Talk to your co-workers about your concerns and observations. Ask if they received training about safe work procedures.
2. Ask your supervisor what safety training is required and available. Be specific about the tasks which concern you. Ensure you receive training in a timely manner.

3. If you are unsatisfied with your supervisors response, ask your safety steward for direction. Dont allow yourself or your co-workers to work in unsafe conditions. 

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