

BULLETIN

OHS: Sometimes there's no time to search the web

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THE REPORT: OCTOBER 2013

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WorkSafeBC has ruled that posters and hard copies of first aid information must be properly posted and readily available to workers throughout FHA work locations.

BACKGROUND

Last fall, WorkSafeBC advised the Fraser Health Authority they were in violation of Section 3.17 (2) of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation because first aid procedures were not properly posted "conspicuously in suitable locations throughout the workplace...." WorkSafe inspectors found that first aid procedures - including contact phone numbers and injured worker transportation protocols - were not sufficiently available for workers throughout Surrey Memorial Hospital and ordered the health authority to fix the problem. The FHA responded by appealing the order, arguing that they had met their legal obligation by posting the procedures on the FHA intranet. The health authority also argued it was not reasonable for them to post hard copies in multiple locations.

The HSA was asked to comment on the matter. A submission was made to the WSBC Review Division in May. The union pointed out that having first aid procedures only available on the FHA intranet was a violation of the OHS Regulation because:

1. Many workers at Surrey Memorial (and in other FHA sites) do not have easy access to the health authority intranet and as a result did not have access to necessary first aid information.
2. The union found that even among those workers who regularly access the FHA intranet, it was not an easy task to locate first aid information.
3. At Surrey Memorial Hospital there are more than 400 HSA members employed by health authorities other than the FHA. Extra steps may be required for those workers to access the FHA intranet and no clear direction was provided by FHA directing those workers to the proper first aid procedures.
4. FHA first aid procedures posted on the intranet were quite specific to the FHA even though many SMH workers are employed by other health authorities.
5. FHA, as the prime contractor at Surrey Memorial, is responsible for the health and safety of all workers at the site, regardless of which health authority they work for, so first aid procedures must be readily available to all.

THE OUTCOME

The decision of the Review Officer, which is a final decision from WorkSafeBC, was that FHA must post the appropriate hard copy first aid information conspicuously throughout the workplace.

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