

TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: August 24, 2023

SUBJECT: Heat Stress on Campus

On July 21, 2023, information on heat stress prevention was circulated on NEWSLINE to the university community. In the days preceding and following this NEWSLINE message, the MUNFA Executive heard from members whose workspaces in various buildings around the St. John's campus were becoming dangerously hot. Reports from some members indicated temperatures in their regular workplaces exceeding 40°C.

Information included in the NEWSLINE message suggested ways members of the campus community could mitigate the effects of heat through such measures as wearing loose clothing, drinking small amounts of water, and rescheduling work during cooler parts of the day.

The MUNFA Executive is concerned that the growing duration and intensity of days with heat warnings in the province are not sufficiently addressed by such mitigation measures. Executive notes for example that none of the advice given in the NEWSLINE messaging included the option of working from home or, as is common practice with snow days in the winter, canceling classes.

The MUNFA Executive believes that the university must develop policies and procedures appropriate for heat warning days that are akin to those which already exist for snow days. Climate conditions are shifting. University employees and students require safe working and learning conditions in all seasons. Days of intense heat are likely to be a fact of life much like the winter storms people of this province have long since lived with and adopted appropriate measures to deal with. MUNFA will continue to address these concerns with Senior Administration.

The MUNFA Executive encourages members who experienced adverse working conditions due to heat earlier this summer to contact munfa@mun.ca with details. Please include the name of the building you work from, the floor, and any other details you may find pertinent.