

TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: June 17, 2010

SUBJECT: Restructuring Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Committees at Memorial University

Please see the attached memo on Restructuring Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Committees at Memorial University.

Summary of Memo:

- New OHS legislation mandates a workplace oriented (building/worksite focused) OHS Committee structure.
- A 3 tier Committee system has been organized to help implement this restructuring. MUNFA has historically been involved in OHS on the Memorial campus and remains committed to continued involvement for the benefit of improved health and safety in our workplace.
- Employee groups and Memorial will need representatives.
- This is an opportunity to volunteer and add voices as MUNFA members to be part of new OHS structure at Memorial.

To: All Faculty and Staff of Memorial University, including Grenfell College and Marine Institute

Subject: **Restructuring Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Committees at Memorial University**

Memorial University is restructuring its occupational health and safety (OHS) committees to be more building/worksites focused. These committees are central to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment.

In every workplace, all employees are expected to be familiar with and committed to health and safety and governing protocols, both provincial and federal. At Memorial University, there are many buildings, different campuses and fieldwork locations with a mobile workforce and student population.

Over the past several years, there has been an ongoing concern that the existing OHS committees were working in isolation of each other and were dealing with many of the same concerns. Hence the need for a more defined process to share information.

Current legislation calls for a more workplace oriented OHS structure rather than one based on employee groups. In order to meet this requirement, it will be necessary to establish committees for each building, on each campus, where there are more than 10 employees. This means that the number of legislated joint committees at Memorial will increase from five to almost 40, encompassing all groups in each building/worksites. For those worksites with less than 10 employees, a worker health and safety representative will be required.

Most universities in Canada have moved to a worksite focus. Employee groups (MUNFA, NAPE, CUPE, LUMUN, TAUMUN) have engaged University Officials and begun the important work of restructuring existing committees to:

- develop an enhanced safety culture at the university,
- facilitate communication between the various groups, and
- meet the legislative requirements.

To restructure OHS committees at Memorial, a Tier 1 committee has been organized to implement these changes in the restructuring. A three tier system will be implemented:

One system, three tiers

The university's new OHS system, one approved by Government Services, has three tiers:

Tier 1 – is a university-wide committee designed to provide overall direction and support, and would include representatives from all the employee groups and senior administration. This committee is in place and is called the University Health and Safety Committee (UHSC).

Tier 2 – is made up of union-based joint committees, which would remain in place as they presently exist.

Tier 3 - would be worksite or building committees and would be considered the Workplace OH&S Committees as required under provincial legislation.

Your help is needed

The University Health and Safety Committee (Tier 1) is working together with the university's Department of Health and Safety to help organize and facilitate the re-structuring of OHS at Memorial.

In order to effect these changes, employee groups and Memorial will need representatives to attend training and participate in OHS committees for each building on each campus. Training is expected to take 2-3 days. In some instances this will require modifications to existing OHS committees, while in others, building committees will need to be created.

It is the intent of the Tier 1 committee to have all these committees in place as soon as practically possible. Employees, faculties and divisions will be contacted over the summer to facilitate this process. We look forward to your cooperation and participation in this process.

The UHSC encourages you to volunteer to be a member of one of these committees. If interested, please contact your dean/director and/or union. You should also forward your name to the Department of Health and Safety at health.safety@mun.ca.