



## REPORT IT!

Union Stewards can help members understand their responsibility to report health and safety concerns at work and support them in speaking up.

Workers reporting occupational health and safety (OHS) issues or concerns is fundamental to any effective health and safety system. While reporting is the responsibility of all workers, Union Stewards can play a leadership role in helping all members understand why they must report their concerns and be prepared to direct them to employer, union and government reporting mechanisms.

By Trevor Hansen  
AUPE Occupational Health and Safety Representative



Most employers operate under what is known as an Internal Responsibility System (IRS) in which both workers and the employer have an equal part to play in maintaining a safe and healthy worksite. Such systems cannot function without workers reporting unsafe incidents or concerns, including incidents at the worksite that result in injury, incidents that could have resulted in injury but didn't (known as "near misses"), or simply reporting an unsafe act or piece of equipment.

Reporting all health and safety concerns allows multiple things to happen. Firstly, it allows workers to notify employers about their concerns so that employers can begin an investigation with the goal of fixing the problem. Secondly, when workers report problems and employers respond, they are establishing a positive and effective OHS system. When workers have confidence that a reporting system is operating properly and can see efforts for improvement and correction, it

boosts employee morale and motivates workers to continue looking out for safety at work.

Under OHS legislation, workers are obligated to report OHS concerns to their employer. Members may be concerned about repercussions for reporting incidents, but Section 36 of the OHS Act prohibits any disciplinary action for a worker acting in compliance with OHS legislation, which means your employer cannot discipline you for reporting incidents.

Under Section 2 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, employers have an obligation to ensure workers' health and safety, and to make workers aware of their responsibilities and duties under the legislation. Included in this section is

an obligation that workers not only take reasonable care to protect themselves and other workers, but also cooperate with the employer for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of all workers. The reporting of OHS incidents is critical in not only complying with your obligation as a worker, but also in making your worksite a safer place for everyone.

While members may be aware of their obligation to report OHS concerns and their protection against reprisal, many don't know how to report or to whom. Regardless of your employer, the first step is to advise your immediate supervisor of the concern or incident. By doing so, you are complying with Section 14 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, which requires workers to report unsafe equipment and unsafe working actions or conditions. Other OHS reporting mechanisms vary amongst employers. All workers can also contact Alberta Occupational Health and Safety at 1-866-415-8690. ■

## WORKSITE ISSUE REPORTING

Different employers may have different processes for reporting OHS incidents. Here's a look at some major employers and what you should do if you need to file a report.

### Alberta Health Services

Within Alberta Health Services (AHS), all OHS incidents should be documented through MySafetyNet, an online system accessed through your AHS Insite account.

[mysafetynet.albertahealthservices.ca](http://mysafetynet.albertahealthservices.ca)

### Government of Alberta

The Alberta government uses written reporting forms to report OHS incidents and near misses.

Speak to your manager to obtain a form

### Covenant Health & Covenant Care

Covenant Health has a toll free number that you can call to report incidents or concerns at work.

1-855-342-8070

### AUPE OHS Reporting

In 2015, AUPE launched an online reporting form for members to report OHS incidents and concerns. Once AUPE's OHS department receives your report, someone will contact you to verify that you've reported the concern to your employer, and, if necessary, will escalate the issue on your behalf. AUPE has so far received more than 600 reports.

[www.aupe.org/hsreporting/](http://www.aupe.org/hsreporting/)

### Other Employers

Employers should have a defined reporting system in place, and all workers have a right to know how to report an incident. AUPE encourages all members to talk to their supervisors and ask about the reporting procedures.

## Become a Union Steward

Learn new skills, support your co-workers and help strengthen your union by becoming a Union Steward. Start by enrolling in the prerequisite courses, including Introduction to your Union, Contract Interpretation, Introduction to Occupational Health and Safety and Basic Conflict Management. If you like what you have learned in those courses, you are ready to sign up for Foundations for Union Stewards.

Prerequisite courses and Foundations for Union Stewards are offered at various AUPE offices from September to June.

Check [www.aupe.org/training/](http://www.aupe.org/training/) for registration information.

For more information or to enrol, call the Member Resource Centre at 1-800-232-7284.

## HAVE QUESTIONS? CONTACT YOUR MEMBERSHIP SERVICES OFFICER



**CALL 1-800-232-7284**

Have your local/chapter number and worksite location ready so your call can be directed quickly.





## AUPE EDUCATION ONLINE REGISTRATION

### **It's as easy as a few clicks of a mouse!**

AUPE strives to empower its members through knowledge, offering a full slate of courses to help achieve this goal. A new online registration system rolled out last year makes signing up for education courses easier than ever. Here's a quick look at some of the functions that make online registration a breeze.

#### **Functions**

- Enables you to register yourself in AUPE courses through the AUPE website
- Walks you through registering for courses and ensuring appropriate prerequisites
- Counts down the number of spaces left in a course
- Keeps track of your course registrations
- Allows for automatic waitlists
- Notifies you of new courses in your area
- Contains your education history
- Stores copies of all AUPE Education certificates

#### **Getting Started**

- Sign in to the online registration system available at [www.aupe.org/training/](http://www.aupe.org/training/) using your member number
- Select a course and date (the system will ensure you meet the necessary prerequisites)
- Receive an acceptance email a few weeks prior to the course
- Confirm your attendance and attend the course

Steward Notes is published by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees to provide information of interest to AUPE Union Stewards, worksite contacts and other members. Topics deal with training for union activists, worksite issues, disputes and arbitrations, health and safety, trends in labour law, bargaining and related material. For more information, contact the editor.

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The goal of Steward Notes is to help today's AUPE Union Stewards do their jobs effectively. To help us, we encourage readers to submit story ideas that deserve exposure.

Story suggestions for Steward Notes may be submitted for consideration to Merryn Edwards by e-mail at [m.edwards@aupe.org](mailto:m.edwards@aupe.org). Please include names and contact information for yourself and potential story sources.

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