

ASBESTOS TESTING

In Ontario the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) grants three rights to workers: the right to know about hazards, the right to participate in the maintenance of safe workplaces and the right to refuse unsafe work. The following information involves the fundamental right to know about existing potential hazards.

During the summer one of our elementary schools was found to have had asbestos fibers released into air from the disruption of ceiling tiles during a renovation. From information gathered about the event, the Employer has identified certain schools, including some secondary schools constructed before 1990-1991, that may have a greater chance of containing ceiling tiles with the same asbestos issues as the elementary school in question. Testing has been ordered at these sites and a memo has been sent to the respective custodial staffs with a request to not disturb the ceiling tiles at these schools pending the return of test results. The Unit has yet to receive a full report from the employer regarding this issue but feels it is important to let you know that latest information of which has come to our attention.

Until further notice, **do not disturb the ceiling tiles in your schools** while you go about your regular duties. When we know more about any specific hazards we will act accordingly to keep you informed and to make sure that both the Employer and the Unit fulfill their respective responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act in ensuring the Health and Safety of Teacher/Members.

H1N1 VIRUS

As you have no doubt heard by now much discussion and information has been communicated on the issue of preparedness for and prevention of the spread of the H1N1 virus. To date the Board has distributed information reflective of the positions of both the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and the Regional Office of Health. OECTA Provincial has also disseminated the same information to the Units. As a result the material sent out by the Board is the official word on the issue. The Unit will distribute the Ministry information again next week as well to ensure saturation amongst all of our members. Two key pieces of information in the materials from the Ministry and Region that worthy of note are the lack of any screening or disclosure requirements and the lack of any closure or exclusion protocols.

Dufferin Peel Secondary Unit

President: Gian Marcon First Vice: Maria DeBerardinis Teacher Welfare: Peter Mac Donald Health & Safety: Brian Hiembecker

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QECO EVALUATION STATEMENT DEADLINE

Article 4.018 of the collective agreement directs members who prior to September 1, 2009 have met the QECO 5 criteria for evaluation at a higher level, to provide the new QECO evaluation to the Board within five (5) months of September 1, 2009.

Teachers are reminded to promptly submit any completed QECO evaluations regardless of whether they are first time evaluations for new Teachers or re-evaluations of a previously determined QECO level. Members are reminded to keep a record of all QECO communications.

Please note that Article 4.018 also provides for extension of the five-month deadline. Consideration for the aforementioned extension is possible provided that the Board receives acknowledgement by way of a QECO issued receipt card confirming that a request for a QECO evaluation or re-evaluation occurred by **November 30, 2009**.

BEGINNING TEACHERS

The Unit will soon start the annual cycle of full day in-services for beginning Teachers. This highly successful and popular service is intended to provide education and resources to beginning Teachers in order to alleviate stresses associated with navigating the requirements, services and supports that exist for members new to the profession and new to Dufferin Peel Secondary.

Beginning Teachers will be contacted in the near future and provided with supply teacher coverage so that they may attend a full day in-service that has been well-received by the participants and has proven to be an invaluable investment for the Unit as a whole.

Key areas covered include: the Benefit Plan, the Collective Agreement, Professional Relationships and Boundaries, Pay Cheques/Rates/Grids, Professional Standing and Professional Opportunities.

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