



November 2008

**Ministry of Labour Consultation Paper on
Workplace Violence Prevention**
by Nancy Clark, Member-at-Large,
Health and Safety Coordinator

In September, the Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL) issued an open letter asking for comments on the issues surrounding workplace violence. These included: the definition of workplace violence, prevention requirements, sector-specific requirements, domestic violence in the workplace and work refusals. The Health and Safety Standing Committee for Local 555 made a submission based upon the questions asked by the MOL.

We expressed an opinion that any definition of workplace violence should include bullying and psychological as well as physical violence. With respect to a violence prevention program, we feel all employers should develop one and in that plan also have a response plan for violent situations in the workplace. The employers need to assess the likelihood of violence and the potential for different magnitudes (affecting one individual worker up to and including all of campus) and ensure there are procedures in place to prevent and react to such incidents. The consultation paper asked if there should be a differentiation between domestic violence coming into the workplace and violence in the workplace. Our committee stated that this may lead to discrimination and even more unacceptable would be a delay in responding because of the need to determine if the violence was workplace or domestic in nature.



One of the questions asked dealt with different Sector Regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Our submission stated that because universities may have different activities that may fall under various Sector Regulations, it is important that the most stringent regulations apply for any situation where the jurisdiction is unclear.

Finally, it was asked whether or not a worker should have the right to refuse unsafe work because of violence. We stated most definitely. One of the concerns that arise from this is where the worker is to go after the refusal. The Act states that once a worker exercises their right to refuse unsafe work (presently because of any equipment, machine, device or thing, not person or violence not mentioned and therefore not covered) and notifies their supervisor, they are to remain in a safe place until the investigation. In our submission, we suggested that the prevention plan address the “safe place” since it will change depending upon the magnitude of the violence and situation. A supervisor’s office may be safe if the violence is from a client or co-worker but is not if it is the supervisor initiating the violence. In cases that involve the entire campus, some areas may be designated as “safe rooms”, however, at the very least, a standard operating procedure needs to be in place.

Our final point is that all workers need to be trained not only in how to be safe when incidents of violence occur and things that can be done to prevent and/or limit the impact of violent situations but also in the harm that physical and psychological violence can cause in the workplace.

The full text of our submission can be found on the Health and Safety Standing Committee web page:

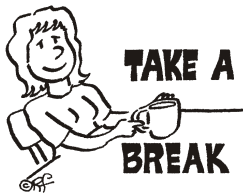
<http://www.cawlocal555.ca/healthsafety.html>

**CAW Local 555 Selected for Pilot Study for
Musculoskeletal Symptom/Exposure Survey**
by Nancy Clark, Member-at-Large,
Health and Safety Coordinator

CAW National has under taken a pilot project for assessing musculoskeletal injuries and potential injuries in the workplace. Our Local has been selected to participate in this project and it has been endorsed by the Executive Board and your Local standing committee for Health and Safety. The survey was developed by the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) and is being tested with the intent of surveying all sectors of the CAW.

Initially, we are surveying the smaller Units (RMA, Parking, and Security Services). In the near future, Unit 1 will also be surveyed with the hope that all of our Members can participate in this project. It is very important for surveys to have a high percentage of completion (OHCOW suggests that an 80% return is the minimum required) and that is why we are tracking the returns. Once the surveys are complete, there will be no individual indicators to identify a specific worker.

The results will be computerized and a report will be generated for the Unit. I will share the results with you and your Joint Health and Safety Committee. If there are any areas that show a problem, we will be able to work together to make recommendations to fix them before workers are injured.



**2009 Elections for the Position of
Health and Safety Coordinator**
by Deb Kigar, Elections Committee Chair

This is a reminder that, as of our next set of elections, the Health and Safety Coordinator position will be by election, rather than by appointment, as occurred in 2006. Since this position has duties that affect our Members health both directly and indirectly, it has been determined that, in order to be eligible to run for this position, there is a need for training prerequisites. These prerequisites are:

1. Health and Safety Training -
 - a. WHSC (Workers Health and Safety Centre) - Level I (One Week PEL),
 - b. WHSC (Workers Health and Safety Centre) - Level II - Committees - Provincial (One Week PEL), and
 - c. WHSC (Workers Health and Safety Centre) - Level II - Law - Provincial (One Week PEL);and
2. Compensation, Return to Work -
 - a. WCB I & II - Ontario Only (One Week PEL),
 - b. WCB III (Ontario Only), Appeals and Dispute Resolution (One Week PEL), and
 - c. WCB - Return to Work (Ontario Only) (One Week PEL).

Course descriptions can be found on the Local web site on the Health and Safety Standing Committee page. These courses have been listed as PEL courses but they are also available through Mohawk College Continuing Education.

