

On Occupational Health and Safety

No more bullying in Manitoba workplaces

Jill is a computer technician who works in a small computer repair company. On one of her first projects, a customer was upset with her work. Jill's boss, Garry yelled at her in front of the customer and said he might fire her. Since then, Garry has been really hard on Jill. He hovers over her while she works, yelling at her for being too slow or doing her work incorrectly. He never gives Jill help or advice on how to improve her work.

This scenario is an example of bullying at work. Starting on February 1, 2011 Manitoba workplace safety and health law will prohibit bullying (also called psychological harassment) in the workplace.

Bullying includes actions such as verbal or written abuse, threats, derogatory comments, ridicule, gossip, uncalled-for interference with another's work, and vandalism of personal property.

However, reasonable day-to-day actions by a manager or supervisor that manage, guide or direct workers or the workplace is not harassment. Managers and supervisors have the right to review an employee's performance and to discipline an employee if she or he is not meeting the employer's expectations.

Recent research showed that 40% of workers in the Canadian prairies reported experiencing bullying on a weekly basis for at least six months.

In this issue . . .

- **No more bullying in Manitoba workplaces**
- **Workplace Stress Initiative**
- **Research and Workplace Innovative Program-WCB**
- **Upcoming Events**
- **Fact sheet - Mouse-Related Pain**

Victims of bullying often report feelings of frustration and helplessness, a loss of confidence, difficulty concentrating, sleep disturbances, stress,

anxiety and other physical or psychological illnesses.

Examples of workplace bullying include

- excluding a person from conversations or activities
- withholding information needed for a person's work
- undervaluing a person's effort
- spreading rumours or gossip
- taking credit for other people's ideas
- constant criticism
- preventing applications for training, leave or promotions
- yelling or swearing
- physical abuse or threats of physical abuse

Bullying is not good for the workplace either. It usually leads to low morale, increased absenteeism, high turnover, high stress, increased benefit costs and decreased productivity and motivation among employees.

The new amendment to health and safety law in Manitoba means that two main types of harassment are now prohibited in Manitoba workplaces. The first type of harassment consists of inappropriate actions or comments that are based on human rights protected characteristics such as race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, source of income, political belief, disability, age, nationality or place of origin.

The second type of harassment is considered psychological harassment or bullying and may involve

Continued on page 3

Workplace Stress Initiative celebrates its achievements

The Workplace Stress Initiative, a collaborative partnership that promotes healthy workplace practices to reduce workplace stress in Manitoba, brought its work of almost a decade to a close in November. The torch has been passed to the Occupational Health Centre who will carry forward this important work in some new and exciting ways.

Formed in 2002, the Workplace Stress Initiative was comprised of 22 different workplace, community and labour organizations over the years. The Workplace Stress Initiative published articles and held media interviews to increase public awareness about workplace stress. Their website provided a distinct Manitoba perspective and resources on stress and healthy workplace practices to prevent and reduce stress among employees.

In 2006, the Workplace Stress Initiative held a workshop "Healthy Workplace Practices: Making it Work for You" to launch the publication of eight Manitoba case studies of workplaces engaged in healthy workplace practices that prevent and reduce stress. Close to 500 people from a variety of workplaces were involved in this project and the case studies continue to be a resource for those interested in healthy workplace initiatives.

On the public policy side, the Workplace Stress Initiative put a great deal of effort into researching

and presenting papers to public hearings in the province. This work helped to influence the changes to Employment Standards legislation in 2005 which saw the introduction of bereavement leave and personal/family responsibility leave for all workers in Manitoba. The Workplace Stress Initiative was also one of the key proponents of the need to include bullying in the definition of harassment contained in workplace health and safety legislation. This change to legislation will come into effect starting February 1, 2011 (see article on page 1).

According to Ann Harry, chairperson of the Workplace Stress Initiative, *"It has been an honour and a privilege to have chaired the Workplace Stress Initiative for the past few years. Being able to recognize and share best practice examples of solutions that Manitoba workplaces have implemented changes the perception of what is possible. I am very happy this important work will continue under the auspices of the Occupational Health Centre. There is no stressful workplace situation that cannot be lessened or made better if we remain solution focused rather than problem centered."*

The Occupational Health Centre (OHC) looks forward to building on the legacy of the Workplace Stress Initiative. OHC is currently developing Respectful Workplace training for health and safety committees that will include important information about the new legislation on bullying.

Upcoming Events

Occupational Health Centre presents
After the Audiogram - Where Do You Go From Here? by Bob Turner, M.S. AUD (C)
March 1, 2011 - 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.
For more information call 926-7909 or email tiffany.pau@mflhcc.mb.ca

Manitoba Association for Rights & Liberties presents
The March 21st Human Rights Film Festival to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - March 21 - 26, 2011
For more information call 947-0213 or go to www.marl.mb.ca/content/filmfestival

Manitoba Federation of Labour presents
30th Annual Health & Safety Conference
April 14 & 15, 2011 - Register by March 31, 2011
Fee \$225 (regular) \$125 (North of 53).
To register, you must be a member of a local union affiliated to the Manitoba Federation of Labour.
Call 947-1400 or go to www.mfl.mb.ca.

Steps for Life Walk
Walking for Victims of Workplace Tragedy
May 1, 2011 - Kildonan Park
For more information or to register go to www.stepsforlife.ca

SAFE Healthcare presents
SAFE Healthcare Conference
May 9 & 10, 2011
Victoria Inn Hotel & Conference Centre, Winnipeg
For more information go to http://safemanitoba.com/safe_healthcare_conference.aspx

SAFE Work Manitoba presents
Preventing Workplace Violence & Harassment
May 12, 2011 in Winnipeg and
August 30, 2011 in Winnipeg
Free registration. To register call 945-3446 or go to <http://safemanitoba.com/events.aspx>

Continued from page 1

severe, repeated conduct that adversely affects a worker's psychological or physical well-being, or may be a single occurrence if it is shown to have a lasting, harmful effect on a worker.

Employers are responsible

Employers must take the following actions to help prevent harassment in their workplaces:

- ✓ develop and follow a written policy and action plan to prevent and stop harassment in the workplace
- ✓ make sure all workers know and follow the harassment prevention policy at all times.

By law, employers must consult with the workplace health and safety committee or representative when

developing the harassment prevention policy. For more information on what the policy should include, you can review the Harassment Prevention Brochure and see a sample Harassment Prevention Policy at SAFE Work Manitoba's website http://safemanitoba.com/new_workplace_regulations_effective_february_1_2011.aspx

The Workplace Safety and Health Division is also offering training sessions for health and safety committee members on the requirements of a Harassment Prevention policy. You can register online at the above website.

This article has been adapted in large part from the Manitoba Government's brochure on Preventing Harassment at Work.

Research and Workplace Innovation Program

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) has established the Research and Workplace Innovation Program (RWIP) to promote and fund scientific research, workplace innovation projects and knowledge transfer related to prevention of occupational injuries, diseases and return-to-work of injured or ill workers.

The RWIP makes available \$1 million each year to fund high quality scientific research and programs that develop, implement or evaluate innovative, practical, shop-floor solutions for improving workplace health and safety. For more information on the RWIP contact

*Bruce M. Cielen, Manager
Research and Workplace Innovation Program
Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba
Telephone: 204-954-4650 or 1-800-362-3340
Website: www.wcb.mb.ca/about_wcb/community_initiatives.html*

Day of Mourning for Workers Injured & Killed on the job April 28, 2011

11:50 a.m. - Leaders Walk
Starting at the Union Centre, 275 Broadway and walking to the Legislative Building

6:00 p.m. - Memorial Service
Union Centre Auditorium - 2nd floor, 275 Broadway

For information on events planned call 947-1400 or go to www.mfl.mb.ca

**I want
to help!**

I will support the Occupational Health Centre to help Manitobans protect their health and safety at work.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ Prov _____
 Postal Code _____

Please make your cheque payable to the MFL Occupational Health Centre
102-275 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4M6

A tax receipt will be issued for donations of \$10.00 and over.



Check out this website...

Antidepressant Skills at Work

Dealing with Mood Problems in the Workplace

www.comh.ca/antidepressant-skills/work/

Antidepressant Skills at Work: Dealing with Mood Problems in the Workplace is an online self-care manual by experts in workplace mental health and addiction. The manual is intended for working people who are at risk of developing depression or who have developed minor or major depression. It is also useful for family members, coworkers, or employers who want to help.

The manual focuses on ways to deal with workplace problems so they are less likely to lead to depression and on ways to reduce the effects of depression on work satisfaction and performance.



Do you have an article, information or story about workplace health and safety that you want to share?

We reserve the right to edit. Send your newsletter contributions for "Focus on Occupational Health and Safety" to Karen Hamilton at khamilton@mflhcc.mb.ca or fax: 956-0848

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CUPE 2348

The MFL Occupational Health Centre (OHC) is a community health centre focused on promoting the health of Manitoba workers. We are a non-profit, charitable organization funded by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and by donations from individuals and unions. We are committed to working with all Manitobans who are interested in creating safer and healthier workplaces.

The OHC provides the following services to Manitobans:

- **medical services to help you find out if your job is making you sick**
- **education and assistance to workplace health and safety committees to identify and resolve health and safety problems.**
- **special initiatives with immigrant communities**
- **information and library services, Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm**

Healthy Workplaces Healthy Workers Healthy Communities