



# USW LOCAL 7884

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## ON THE LINE

### *Is Fording River a Training Ground for The OIL SANDS?*

*We have previously written articles regarding the company's treatment of their employees at Fording River and how it has a negative impact on the retention of good skilled and experienced workers, and impacts the motivation and morale of those workers who decide to stay and tough it out.*



*Management by terrorism, and the fear by discipline does not breed lasting loyalty at the mine-site. Workers are continually leaving their jobs at Fording River for the jobs in the oil sands, where they receive better compensation, and above all they are treated with decency and respect, they are valued by their employer and their opinions matter.*

*Companies outside of TECK are going out of their way to hang on to their top talent. Keeping employees happy, motivated, and on the payroll is one of the key concerns of businesses these days, especially since surveys show that the turnover among workers has doubled in the past couple of years. This means that it's an open market for top talent. A good employee can walk out your door today and have a better job tomorrow. Gone are the days when the weekly paycheck, a few weeks of vacation and an incentive plan are enough to keep employees happy.*

*It seems that this Company intentionally goes out of their way to make their employees working environment unpleasant. Instead of listening to, and resolving worker concerns; they have an attitude of I'm the boss, I make the rules and if you don't like it quit. This archaic approach to managing the workplace is a breeding ground for creating a culture of unhappy, disgruntled workers who will eventually leave in search of the job where they are heard, respected and valued as an employee.*

The Union attempted to discuss this retention issue at a Labour Management Committee meeting, where we outlined to the Company that in an 18-month period 26 trades people retired and another 25 trades people quit. The Company did not want to discuss the retention issues of why so many trades people left the company, their only response was **“that they were unhappy disgruntled workers anyway so no big loss”**. This company opinion is not only limited to the trades, it seems to be their opinion property wide, where workers have been told by management many times; **“If you don’t like it here then quit”**. If our Company continues to ignore this very serious retention issue, then Fording River will continue to be the prime training ground for the oil sands.

My brother lives in Creston B.C. and works at C.N.R.L where he works a 7/day 7/off 7/nights 7/off schedule, as a haul truck driver. He gets paid 56¢/km to travel to and from his home in Creston to the Calgary airport/free parking and flights, his hourly wage is \$50/hr and last year he made \$180,000.00, not including benefits and bonuses. Personal fully furnished rooms, big screen TV, excellent food, personal trainers in the gym and massages are also provided free of charge after your workout. And above all he is treated with dignity and respect and his opinions are valued by his Company. Also experienced equipment operators and trades people are paid \$60/hr with the same benefits, and they are currently looking for and hiring experienced operators and trades people.

With attractions like this, you would think a Company like Teck would have a different approach when dealing with the retention of their employees at the River, and start resolving some of the worker’s concerns. But no, they just don’t seem to care, they continue with the ongoing conflicts that are driving their people away, and refuse to address the real issues. And then they tried to introduce language at the bargaining table that would have employees pay them a monetary penalty if they quit. How crazy is that!



# IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

*Mental Health is a state of well-being in which you understand your own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and are able to make a contribution to your community.*

*Both your physical and mental health are the result of a complex interplay between many individual and environmental factors, including:*

- *family history of illness and disease/genetics*
- *lifestyle and health behaviors (e.g., smoking, exercise, substance use)*
- *levels of personal and workplace stress*
- *exposure to toxins*
- *exposure to trauma*
- *personal life circumstances and history*
- *access to supports (e.g., timely healthcare, social supports)*
- *coping skills*

*When the demands placed on someone exceed their resources and coping abilities, their mental health will be negatively affected. Two examples of common demands are:*

***i) working long hours under difficult circumstances, and***

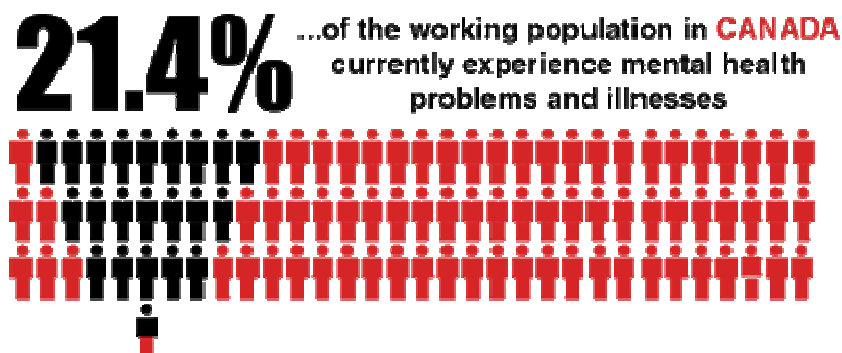
***ii) caring for a chronically ill relative. Economic hardship, unemployment, underemployment and poverty also have the potential to harm mental health.***

*While there is growing awareness of the role that the workplace plays in affecting our mental wellness, workers can also take steps towards promoting their own mental well-being by building a strong resilience to stress - a process referred to as mental fitness. By actively practicing mental fitness, we can elevate our health and work performance, while effectively managing varying levels of stress.*

*Here are some ways to practice mental fitness:*

- 1. SCHEDULE "me-time" daily.*
- 2. REWARD yourself.*
- 3. PLAY to your strengths.*
- 4. ASK for and OFFER help.*
- 5. DE-STRESS your diet.*
- 6. PRESS pause once in a while - downtime is good.*
- 7. GET regular physical activity.*
- 8. SET goals and stay on target with a journal.*
- 9. PRACTICE relaxation techniques and get enough sleep.*
- 10. CHOOSE a positive attitude*

*Imagine working in a highly productive environment in which you feel safe, respected and valued; the work is challenging; the demands of the job are reasonable; you have work-life balance; and your employer supports your involvement in your work and interpersonal growth and development. This is what is known as a mentally healthy workplace.*



## ***Why organizations need to be concerned.***

*Poor mental health not only hurts the individual, it also impacts an organization's bottom line and ability to thrive. Having the support of their workplace can make a world of difference for workers with mental health issues.*

*Including mental health in your business model is important to a healthy workplace. Poor mental health not only hurts the individual, it also reduces corporate profits. It's important that all levels of the workplace - including the Board of Directors, management, finance, and human resources departments - get involved to incorporate mental health at your workplace.*

*There is no one "right way" to create a mentally healthy workplace because every workplace is different - from the people doing the work, to the work that needs to be done, to the leaders running the organization, the size of the organization, the external environment that influences the community, and the external resources the company draws. All of these factors play a role in employee mental health.*

## ***Burnout***

***Job burnout*** is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long-term exposure to demanding work situations. Burnout is the cumulative result of stress. Anyone can experience job burnout. However, research has shown that working in professions with high job demands and few supports can increase the prevalence of burnout and reduce engagement.

### ***Burnout has three main characteristics:***

- 1. exhaustion (i.e. the depletion or draining of mental resources);*
- 2. cynicism (i.e. indifference or a distant attitude towards one's job); and*
- 3. lack of professional efficacy (i.e. the tendency to evaluate one's work performance negatively, resulting in feelings of insufficiency and poor job-related self-esteem).*

### ***What causes job burnout?***

- Lack of control:*** This is an employee's lack of influence on decisions that affect their job. Examples include hours of work, which assignments they receive, and an inability to control the amount of work that comes in.
- Unclear job expectations:*** Examples include uncertainty over what degree of authority an employee has and not having the necessary resources to complete work.

- **Dysfunctional workplace dynamics:** Examples include working with an office bully, being undermined by colleagues or having a boss who micromanages your work.
- **Mismatch in values:** If personal values differ from the way an organization does business or handles employee grievances, it will wear on employees.
- **Poor job fit:** An employee working in a job that doesn't fit their interests and skills is certain to become more and more stressed over time.
- **Extremes of activity:** When a job is always monotonous or chaotic, an employee needs constant energy to remain focused, leading to energy drain and job burnout.

*Burnout can stem from many negative conditions at work. Examples of these conditions include low levels of control and support from co-workers and supervisors, job dissatisfaction and low organizational commitment. Job dissatisfaction, reduced self-efficacy, and low levels of workplace peer support in particular can lead to higher levels of cynicism.*

***Employees are at a higher risk of job burnout if they:***

- *feel so pressured to complete high amounts of work that they do not have a balance between work and personal life;*
- *try to be everything to everyone;*
- *have little variety and are bored with their job;*
- *think they have minimal control over work.*

*Although burnout is common, depending on the profession, it should not be taken lightly. Burnout can be hazardous to an employee's health. It is positively related to many mental and physical health problems, including depression, anxiety and psychosomatic health complaints. The health problems that accompany burnout are linked to extreme exhaustion. People experiencing burnout should be encouraged to see a health professional.*

***What else can employers do?***

***Below are eight strategies that employers can use to encourage positive Mental Health:***

1. *Encourage active employee participation and decision making*
2. *Clearly define employees' duties and responsibilities*
3. *Promote work-life balance*

4. *Encourage respectful and non-derogatory behaviors*
5. *Manage workloads*
6. *Allow continuous learning*
7. *Have conflict resolution practices in place*
8. *Recognize employees' contributions effectively*
9. *Promoting Mental Health*

***A psychologically Safe and Healthy workplace is one that promotes workers' mental well-being and does not harm employee mental health through negligent, reckless or intentional ways. For example, a psychologically safe workplace would be free of excessive fear or chronic anxiety. An organization's commitment has to start at the top. There is also a legislative requirement for employers to protect the mental and physical health of their employees. Many provincial occupational health and safety acts have been expanded to include harm to psychological well-being in the definition of harassment. In jurisdictions that do not have explicit legislation dealing with psychological health in the workplace, the general duty clause would apply.***



**Impact of an unhealthy workplace on employees**  
Adapted from Health Canada/Dr. Martin Shain

***If you need any further information regarding this issue; Please Contact the Union Hall for Assistance and or Direction.***

**250-865-2223 or [usw7884@telus.net](mailto:usw7884@telus.net)**

## *Attack on Day's Off*

*Our Collective Agreement (C.B.A.) contains a number of leave provisions which we have successfully bargained over many years.*

*Regular vacation provides for time off work and the more years of service you have the more time off you get. In the recent Collective Agreement, a change was made that alters the vacation period. Previously the vacation had to be scheduled by April 15<sup>th</sup> and taken between April 15<sup>th</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>. Under this system between January 1<sup>st</sup> thru to April 15<sup>th</sup> vacation would be granted on a first come basis. We had a number of disputes with Management on this system including an attempt by Management to refuse vacation entitlement and pay employees out.*

*We took this matter to the courts and stopped this Management direction dead in its tracks. Now, as a result of our recent acceptance of the CBA, we have a new scheduling process. Members still have to have their vacation request's in by February 15<sup>th</sup> and Management must schedule and post vacation by March 31<sup>st</sup>. Management now has the right to schedule the vacation between April 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year and March 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.*

*We also are the only Teck Operations which enjoys Special vacation. This allows a member after every five years' service period to take 120 hours off work during the proceeding five-year period. There were no changes to this provision in our recent round of bargaining. This time off work may be taken at times that are suitable to both the Company and the Employee. Special vacation "must" be taken within the designated five-year period.*

*The allocation of regular vacation shall have priority over the allocation of special vacation. If in the fifth year, a member's scheduled Special vacation leave is cancelled by the Company, the employee will receive an extra year to schedule the time off. We also enjoy two Floaters every January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. These two days can be scheduled at a time suitable to the Employee and the Company during the January 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> period. For new employees you must complete a 150 days continued service period to qualify for the two Floaters. If no mutual suitable date can be agreed to by the end of the year, the Employee will be paid out for the two Floaters.*

*We also enjoy Banked Time. Banked time is achieved by banking the premium hours when you work overtime. The Banking of hours is unlimited. An Employee may arrange to take Banked Time off with the mutual agreement by the Employer.*



*If the Employee does not request the time off work or no mutual dates can be agreed to then the Employee will be paid out for this time on the following April 30<sup>th</sup>. This money can also be directed to the Employee's personal RRSP.*

*We have received numerous concerns by our members that the Employer has advised them that they will not grant any Banked Time or Floaters. This would clearly violate the CBA. When we requested the Employer's position they denied this blanket policy. However, since then we have been advised by our members that the Employer is limiting the amount of people allowed off which does not allow for time off request's for the use of Banked Time, Floaters and Special Vacation. It is our position that if this is occurring this would be a clear violation of the CBA.*

*It is the obligation of the Employer to give consideration for the use of all leave provisions and cannot simply establish a policy that would negate any consideration. In our Collective Agreement we have a number of provisions that require the Agreement of the Employee. For example, Regular Vacation once scheduled can only be changed with the consent of the Employee. It would be a violation of the CBA if the Union advised Employees not to give consideration to changing Scheduled Vacation if requested to do so by Management. Another example would be the hours of work. In Mine Operations you work till 7 o'clock and you finish the task you are doing. However, it is at the discretion of the Employee what the meaning of completing the task is. It would be violation of the CBA if the Union directed its members to park at 7am/pm and not give consideration to finishing the task.*

*Another example would be the taking of work breaks. Work Breaks are to be taken at certain times as identified in the CBA. However, with mutual agreement an Employee can agree to take breaks outside of the agreed to times. It would be a violation of the CBA if the Union advised its members not to give consideration to moving their Work Breaks if requested by the Employer. Another example is overtime. The decision to work overtime is voluntary (unless in cases of emergency or urgent or necessary relief work). It would be a violation of the CBA if the Union advised its members not to work overtime.*

*Teck enjoys one of the best work forces in the mining industry. Employees will work with the Employer in a professional way and will give considerations to the Employer's requests when it is in everyone's best interest. At the same time, Employees should expect the same from Management. Nothing can be more important to an Employees Health and Workplace Moral than being allowed the time off work that we have negotiated.*

*The Union would hope that when Management considers work place policies/rules that the number one consideration has to be a fair consideration of the needs of its Employees and not just simply their production goals. If the Employer imposes any blanket policies that hinder the right of our members to take a well deserved break from work, we will see them in court. The Union would be more than willing to sit down with Management to discuss this issue at anytime. Not everything has to go to court, but that is their choice.*



## ***Doctor's Notes***

*We continue to get inquiries on whether the Employer has a right to request a Doctor's note and what information the Employer can demand. The Employer does not have an absolute right to request a doctor's note whenever they want. The Collective Agreement has a provision's where it gives the Employer the right to request a doctor's note. These are the day before and the day after a Stat Holiday and the Stat Holiday itself. If the Employer does not request a note, it does not need to be provided and you will be entitled to the Stat. pay.*

*Other than the Collective Agreement provisions the Employer can request a note when there is a legitimate concern that the Employee is truly sick. An example would be an Employee requesting a vacation day, and the request being denied. If the Employee phoned in sick for that day, the Employer would succeed in demonstrating that they had a reasonable concern that would support medical verification. As well if you will be away from work for a longer period, it would be wise to request a note from your doctor. As well, the Employee is required to keep the Employer informed on the length of their absence and any changes. Certainly, the Employer requires this information so they can properly plan the manpower requirements. The medical note should only state that you're off work for medical reasons.*

*The Union would suggest that you never provide medical or personal information to the Employer. If a request is made by the Employer for additional medical/personal information, contact the Union Hall for advice. This includes any verbal information you may provide to the Employer. If you report to work and the Employer wants to send you home because they have a concern about your ability to work always request a Steward. If you require further clarification call the Hall.*

## *Training*

*Simply, training is not an unfettered Management right. The Collective Agreement (CBA) is clear when it states “Management Rights... shall not be exercised in anyway inconsistent with or contrary to any of the terms or provisions of this agreement”. So the question is, are there provisions in the CBA that govern or direct how training is to be administered. The answer is yes. The CBA states that for unplanned training opportunities (this occurs when the Company has not planned for training because of short notice), the most Senior Employee in the Job Classification in the work area on the shift will be offered the first opportunity to train. Also for planned training, the most Senior Employee in the Job Classification on the shift will be offered the first opportunity to train.*

*We have had complaints from members on some shifts that Junior Employees are being trained and they are not being offered the training opportunity. We mainly see this in the Equipment group where you have several pieces of equipment. They have been told they must get all their hours in on a piece of equipment before they can be considered for training on another piece of equipment in the Equipment group. The problem arises when they get the initial training they do not get put on that piece of equipment on a regular basis. This results on them being unfairly excluded from other training opportunities. We have discussed this problem with the Training Department and they have agreed that this should not happen.*

*Also the Seniority provisions of the Collective Agreement allow for the most Senior person being given the opportunity to train outside of the Employee’s Job Classification (for example, a truck driver being trained in the equipment group for temporary relief). If any of our member’s are continuing to have training issues, contact your Steward or the Union Hall. For the most part, Supervision has addressed these issues when they are brought forward and we look forward to their continued co-operation.*



## ***The DAM Policy (Drug, Alcohol, Medicine)***

*We finally finished up this Arbitration on February 1, 2017. The policy was instituted in 2012 unilaterally by Teck. Although the Union urged Teck not to institute the policy until completion of the merits of the case Teck proceeded to institute the policy. This was surprising as according to WCB rates for Industries, we were safer than a Lawn Bowling facility. The Union attempted to block the introduction of the policy, however a different Arbitrator allowed the policy to be introduced. That Arbitrator specifically stated that if Teck is not successful in arbitration, “the Employer faces liability in damages. The longer they continue the policy without a determination on it’s merits, the greater it’s potential liability in damages”.*

*The Employer also fully endorsed that if they were not successful that breaches of Privacy Rights can be addressed by an award of damages. Of course, it will not just be Privacy Rights that will need to be addressed. All employees who have suffered harm in other ways such as wrongful discharges, suspension from work, lost wages, travel costs are a few examples. We fully intend, if we are successful to aggressively pursue all claims for damages.*

*There were several legal developments that also occurred while we were disputing our case. The Supreme Court of Canada overturned a New Brunswick decision which had allowed Random Alcohol testing. In Alberta, Suncor lost it’s right to impose Random testing, however that Arbitration was quashed by the Alberta Courts. That decision is being challenged by the Union in the Higher Courts. Even if the Union is not successful, Suncor and their Union would have to start afresh in front of a new Arbitration Panel. Also, at Cardinal River, Teck lost it’s right to impose Random testing and this decision was not challenged by Teck. The Arbitrator did not accept any of Teck’s arguments and preferred the evidence of the Union Expert.*

*We expect that we will not receive the Arbitrator’s decision for several months’ given the volume of evidence that requires consideration. We would like to thank all the hard work put into this important case by our Union Officials, our Team of Lawyers and our Members who gave evidence at the Hearing.*

***Please contact us at the Union Hall if you have any Questions.***

# Work to the Rule

*Normally, a work to rule campaign is a Union initiative designed to slow down production. What happens is all Union members are required to follow every rule or policy to the letter. This would also require all members who cannot remember a job procedure to request a review of the procedure before the job proceeds.*

*This would also include all Equipment Operators or Haul Truck Operators to operate their machinery at speeds that are comfortable to them. Remember the golden rule “Drive to the Conditions”. Now we are certainly not calling for such an initiative, however we are asking all members to follow the Policies / Procedures as set out at Teck. If you’re unsure about a job procedure, ask before you do it. The message is “stop taking short cuts”.*

*You might believe that you are helping Teck’s bottom line if you do take a short cut or speed, or work in a tight area where it is unsafe to operate. etc. .... Guess what, Teck has made it very clear that they do not want this kind of help and if you’re caught or have an accident they will discipline you **up to and including discharge of your employment**. Remember every operator is responsible for the safe operation of their equipment, and every worker under the Law has the right to refuse unsafe work.... Section 1.10 of the Health Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia.*

*If you see a fellow member doing something wrong go tell them, talk to your union rep or call the Union Hall, rather than running to management. If you get harassed by anyone for following the rules, we will immediately investigate and take them to task. If you have any questions, please call the Union Hall.*



# *Employees' Right to Refuse Unsafe Work*

- Unsafe Work**      **1.10.1**      A person shall not carry out any work or operate any equipment, tool, or appliance if he has reasonable cause to believe that to do so would create an undue hazard to the Health or Safety of any person.
- 1.10.2**      A Supervisor shall not knowingly perform or permit a worker to perform work which is, or could create, an undue hazard to the Health or Safety of any person.
- Right to Refuse**      **1.10.3**      A person who refuses to carry out any work or operate any equipment, tool, or appliance, in compliance with section 1.10.1, shall forthwith report the circumstances to his supervisor.
- Supervisor Investigates**      **1.10.4**      The Supervisor receiving a report under section 1.10.3 shall forthwith investigate the matter and ensure that any hazardous condition is remedied without delay; or if, in his opinion the report is not valid, he shall inform the person who made the report.
- Investigation**      **1.10.5**      If the procedure provided for in section 1.10.4 fails to resolve the issue and the person continues to refuse to carry out the work, the supervisor or other management representative shall forthwith make an investigation in the presence of the person who made the report, together with another person having knowledge of the work in question and who is:
- (1) a worker representative or designate of the OHSC if available or
  - (2) designated by the Local Union to represent the person refusing to carry out the work, or
  - (3) a co-worker selected by the person refusing to carry out the work.

**Use of  
Alternate  
Worker**

**1.10.6**

If the person still refuses to carry out the work after his supervisor and the other person have investigated the issue in accordance with section 1.10.5 and are both of the opinion that no undue hazard exists and that

- (1) the refusal is considered to be justifiable for reasons peculiar to that particular person, and
- (2) there is no justification for an alternate person to refuse to carry out the work in question then, the supervisor, after informing the alternate person of the reason for the refusal, may have him perform the work.

**Manager  
Investigates**

**1.10.7**

If the procedure in sections 1.10.4, 1.10.5 and 1.10.6 fail to resolve the issue, the manager shall

- (1) conduct an investigation and either develop a plan that is acceptable to the persons who will do the work and which will allow the work to proceed safely, or suspend further work, and
- (2) If the work is suspended or allowed to proceed, submit a report to the OHSC, local Union, and an Inspector, that describes the incident, shows compliance with the Code and describes any remedial action taken.

**Remember this is a legislated right under the Health Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia. Don't be intimidated by anyone, into doing something that you believe is unsafe.**

**REQUEST A UNION SAFETY REP**



# Tool Box Meetings

*We have received many complaints from workers in Mine Operations that management is conducting crew meetings prior to shift start. The Union sent a letter to management outlining that these so called tool box meetings are being conducted by management anywhere from 6:45 to 6:55 am/pm, and we would consider these meetings as time worked and subject to the overtime provisions outlined in the Collective Agreement. We stated that if a worker shuts down their piece of equipment at the end of the shift prior to 7 am/pm they will be disciplined, and If Management starts work/meeting with the workers prior to 6.55 am/pm shift start, then the workers should be paid overtime.*

*The Company responded by stating that “**these Tool Box meetings are voluntary, workers are not required to participate or attend, therefore overtime is out of the question**”. It is our opinion that these meetings occurring before your shift starts without overtime, is a complete disregard of your time. Remember every second counts, they are up on the hill with stop watches, telling you your taking too long to do your ground check, they are disciplining you for parking one (1) minute early and, they are disciplining you for taking to long on your lunch break. But it’s ok for them to take 10 minutes of your time before the start of your shift to do a tool box meeting. Something is not adding up! Remember this is your time, and **you are not required to participate**, if you do not want to, it’s your choice. Give them an inch and they will take advantage of it, you take an inch and you will be disciplined up to and including discharge. You are however required to get your assignments prior to shift start, and be on the man buss departing the dry at 6.55am/pm. Please call the Union Hall for further direction.*



**Listen to Me “Were Having a Tool Box Meeting”**



# ***Family Responsibility Leave***

*This section of the Employment Standards Act was included in order to assist employees to meet work and family responsibilities. I will provide the following background information on this provision. Family responsibility leave is an employee initiated unpaid leave designated to help employees deal with family problems that conflict with job responsibilities. This leave applies to members of the employee's immediate family or to persons living with the employee as a member of his or her immediate family.*

## **Text of Legislation**

***52. An employee is entitled to up to 5 days of unpaid leave during each employment year to meet responsibilities related to***

***(a) the care, health or education of a child in the employee's care, or***

***(b) the care or health of any other member of the employee's immediate family.***

### ***Subsection (a)***

*"A child in the employee's care" means a child under the age of nineteen. Parents are not entitled to family responsibility leave to attend to education-related issues of their children after they reach the age of nineteen.*

### ***Subsection (b) "Immediate family"***

*"Immediate family" means the spouse, child, parent, guardian, sibling, grandchild or grandparent of an employee, and any person who lives with an employee as a member of the employee's family. It includes common-law spouses, step-parents, and step-children, and same sex partners and their children as long as they live with the employee as a member of the employee's family.*

### ***Duration of leave***

*Employees are entitled to request up to 5 days off, to be taken at their discretion. Any time taken off on any day (even one hour) qualifies as **one day** for purposes of this section, unless the employer and employee agree otherwise.*

### ***Reason for leave***

*The request does not need to be made because of a crisis or emergency. **It must be related to the care or health, and in the case of a child, education, of a member of the employee's immediate family.** An employee is **encouraged** to give reasonable notice of any request for leave to allow the employer to accommodate the absence.*

*Employers are entitled to reasonable proof, after the event, that the request for a leave was valid, however not to the extent that employees are required to disclose personal or private information.*

### ***Examples***

- I was notified by school authorities that my child has been injured in a school yard accident and taken to hospital. Family responsibility leave should be allowed.*
- I have an appointment to meet with a school counsellor to discuss my son's behaviour issues. The appointment is during my scheduled working hours. Family responsibility leave should be allowed.*
- I must accompany my elderly, disabled parent to attend a medical appointment. Family responsibility leave should be allowed.*
- I want to accompany my child on a school recreational activity excursion. Since this activity is not related to the care, health or education of the child, it does not justify family responsibility leave.*
- I want two days' family responsibility leave to go to Edmonton to help my son pack up his belongings after his second year at university and drive him home to Terrace, where he will live with us and work for the summer before going back to Edmonton to continue his studies. Since my son is over the age of nineteen, this activity is not related to the education of a child in the employee's care and does not justify family responsibility leave.*

*There are many situations that arise in a person's personal life that may or may not fall within the definition of the Family Responsibility Leave Legislation. You can Google BC Family Responsibility Leave for further information, or you can call the Union Hall and we will give you our opinion if your situation falls within the definition. You can also call the Employment Standards Branch at;*

*1- 800-663-7867 or 1-604-660-2421, and request to speak with an Information Officer regarding an interpretation of Family Responsibility Leave.*

## ***Worker Morale at Fording River***

*Taking pride in your job is something that most workers strive to do at work, however this is getting increasingly more difficult to maintain in all area's of the operation. We are all responsible for our own thoughts and attitudes. Yet, too often the working conditions created by management make us unhappy, unmotivated, and ultimately crushes employee morale. Management attitude alone is not enough to retain workers, and have them engaged and perform at their highest level. **To truly improve employee retention and morale, management must take action on the issues that are causing the frustration and the lack of motivation in the workplace.***

*To just say that they are unhappy disgruntled workers, without addressing the real issues, is archaic and counterproductive, and will only force workers to look for other employment, where their opinions matter. Employees who report that they're not adequately recognized at work are **three times more likely to say they'll quit in the next year.***

*There are some easily resolved problems at Fording River that management refuses to address with the workforce, or the Union. A positive approach on the company's part would truly benefit their retention and employee morale problems, however they do not want to be proactive in discussing or resolving any issues and seem to relish in the ongoing conflicts that are forcing employees to quit their jobs.*

*We were talking with a 25-year-old heavy duty mechanic who recently terminated his employment at the mine-site. We asked him why he quit and he told us that he just had to get out of there, it was pure chaos and that it was a struggle going to work every day. A young 25-year-old heavy duty mechanic should have been quite the catch for this company, and with a little bit of effort on their part they could have prevented him from leaving, but instead they let him go. **What a Shame!***

*We were also talking with an Equipment Operator who recently quit his job and is now working at C.N.R.L. He tells us that it was the smartest move that he ever made, and that it feels as if a big weight has been lifted off his shoulders. Aside from the increased pay and benefits, the biggest difference he noticed was the treatment of their employees, and that it feels great to be finally treated with respect, and to have his opinions valued by his employer.*

*He also wanted to thank Fording for the excellent training that he received while on site, and assures them that it was not wasted, as he is putting his acquired skills to good use at his new job.*

## ***Poor Union Management Relationship***

*The Union is dealing with an increased workload of grievances that are the cause of most of the frustration and lack of motivation in the workplace, for example; Not allowing workers to use Bank Time; Unjust Policy for requesting time off; The grouping of Vacation; Vacation Scheduling; Displacing Service Persons; Forcing Members to use Leave Entitlements; Unjust Discipline; Unjust Suspensions; Unjust Terminations; and many other grievances.*

*These grievances are also causing frustration for the Union, as the Company refuses to attempt to resolve any of these issues through the grievance procedure, which forces us to Arbitration to have a third party resolve the disputes. This Company has the opinion that they have already discussed these issues with their internal management personal, and they are cemented in their decision's, so attempting to resolve them with the Union would be a waste of time unless the Union can agree with their position. The Union is going to be very busy in Arbitration, so please bear with us as we attempt to resolve all of your issues at Arbitration, as the Company's Industrial Relations Department refuses to resolve your issues through the grievance procedure, unless it's under their terms.*

*We have been with this Company for a long time, and we have never had such a horrific Labour Management Relationship as the one that we currently have at Fording River. Let us assure you however; that your Union will challenge this Company in Arbitration on each and every one of these issues. Some we will win and some we may not, but we guarantee you, that we will challenge them on every issue where we believe they have violated the Collective Agreement.*



## ***Unjust Company Policy***

*During a Quarterly Safety Meeting in the winter of 2014, workers were instructed by management that any worker who missed work because of bad road conditions would be disciplined. The Union challenged this Company Policy using the argument, that being able to make a personal judgment call regarding any safety issue, is one of the cornerstones of being a Courageous Safety Leader, whether it's driving on the highway coming to work or driving on the haul road on the mine-site.*

*The Union instructed the membership to use their own judgment regarding severe road conditions, as we are not living in a third world country where you're expected to put your life on the line for your employer. The Union was successful in this argument and not one workers was disciplined for making the right decision.*

*During the recent snow storms in February 2017 the roads were again closed for days due to severe road conditions, accidents, and avalanche warnings, after the roads opened there were road advisories in effect due to hazardous conditions. Some workers choose to err on the side of safety and not drive. [Highway 3 Both directions - Freezing Rain from Yahk to British Columbia and Alberta Border \(209.9 km\). Travel Advisory in effect. Travellers are advised to please exercise caution when travelling and consider alternate plans. Updated Thu Feb 9 at 2:46 pm PST. \(ID# 239192\)](#) ***“The Company has now set out a new policy stating; “We are not forcing employees to use entitlements for times where the road is closed. If the road is open and employees choose not to come in, we have advised supervisors to use entitlements. We recognize there may be travel advisories however, these are advisories and employees can mitigate some of the risks on the highways (speed, leaving early, etc.) It is the minority who have chosen not to attend work when the roads are open”.*** *The Union grieved this Company Policy and will be going to Arbitration.**



## **You Must Register for Pharmacare**

*Do you have a Pharmacare number? All residents of British Columbia are encouraged to register for Pharmacare even if your income does not entitle you to the benefits. You must have a registration number on file with Sun Life when using your drug card. If you do not have a Pharmacare number and your prescription amount hits the cap of \$600.00 then Sun Life will have your card declined by your pharmacist until you have a Pharmacare number registered with Sun Life. If you do not have a Pharmacare number you can register online at [www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme) or call 1-800-663-7100. If you need assistance or a computer to register on-line please contact the Union Hall and we can assist you in registering and obtaining a Pharmacare number.*

*Once you have your Pharmacare number contact Sun Life Customer Service at 1-800-361-6212 and inform the customer service agent that you wish to submit your Pharmacare number to your file. Be sure that you have your Contract # which is 150038, and your Personal Certificate number, which would be your man number. It usually takes one business day for Sun Life to update your drug card.*

*If your Drug card is declined for this reason or any other reason, and it is urgent that you obtain the prescription, then you should pay for your prescription and manually submit an Extended Health Care claim form to Sun Life for reimbursement. You can obtain these claim forms on the Sun Life Website or the Union web-site, or stop by the Union Hall and pick one up or call us and we will fax it to you. If you have any difficulties, please contact us at any time.*

## **Always know your Negotiated Sunlife Benefits**

*Members are continually being sent the wrong reimbursement on their eye glass rebates. Remember you are entitled to \$150 reimbursement per year, and where no benefit claim is made in a year, the benefit will be increased to \$300.00 for the next year only. We periodically get calls from workers who are only being reimbursed \$150 when they should be reimbursed \$300.00. Please pay close attention to your entitlements, because if you don't catch it, Sunlife doesn't care. Please contact the Union Hall immediately if you have not received the proper re-imburement.*

## **Together, we have made progress But we must Keep Fighting for Safer Workplaces**

*Unions are about more than decent jobs for workers. The labour movement also works to make workplaces safe for everyone. Yet, each year thousands of Canadians are killed or injured on the job or die from work-related diseases. In 2016, 1000 Canadians died because of their work, but we know the numbers are higher because official figures only capture those who received workers' compensation benefits. Hundreds more die from under-reported illnesses and occupational diseases that go unrecognized in the compensation systems.*

*Despite the frequency and tragedy of these deaths, negligent corporations that kill workers face little public, political or legal scrutiny. While police routinely investigate and lay charges related to homicides, different rules seem to apply to workplace fatalities. We should not tolerate a situation where companies wilfully neglect health and safety measures that would prevent injury and death. For example, nearly two years after a Burns Lake, B.C., explosion and fire took the lives of two workers, it was announced that neither criminal charges nor charges under the provincial worker's compensation or occupational health and safety legislation would be laid. Justice is not being served.*

*We must have thorough scrutiny for potential criminal liability on the part of those employers who are negligent. Governments have a responsibility to properly enforce health and safety laws and the criminal code. Yet the same politicians who claim to be tough on crime are soft on corporations responsible for workers' injuries and deaths.*

*This amounts to unequal treatment before the law, with different rules for investigating fatalities in workplaces than for those occurring elsewhere. Fairness works only if corporations and their representatives are held accountable – in the same way perpetrators of other crimes are held to account. On April 28th we mourn those who have died. However, the deaths of these workers are also a reminder that all levels of government must do more to enforce our Health and Safety laws and vigorously prosecute violations when a worker is killed or seriously injured. It is time for fair and equal treatment before the law for workplace injuries and deaths. Together we have made good progress protecting workers' Health and Safety but we have to keep fighting for safer workplaces for everyone.*



## **Congratulation's to Retirees**

- **Gerald Row – Process Operator – 43 years Service**
- **Kul Sekhon – Electrician – 38 Years Service**
- **Al Brown – Driller – 35 Years Service**
- **Brett Bryan – HD Mechanic – 37 Years Service**
- **Gerald Perosa – Painter – 37 Years Service**
- **John Moffat – HD Mechanic – 37 Years Service**
- **Glenn Inman – Haulage Driver – 36 Years Service**
- **Richard Green – Electrician – 36 Years Service**
- **Ronald Sewell – HD Mechanic – 36 Years Service**
- **Daryl Hascarl – Shovel Operator – 35 Years Service**
- **Sheldon Hopkins – Shovel Operator – 34 Years Service**
- **Leonard Gray – Blaster – 34 Years Service**
- **John Gillespie – Loader Operator – 40 Years Service**
- **Leslie Lemke – Machinist – 42 Years Service**
- **Gloria Belhumeur – Senior Analyst – 39 Years Service**
- **John Howard – Driller – 38 Years Service**
- **Ricky Bauer – Electrician – 37 Years Service**
- **David Hamilton – Equipment Operator – 37 Years Service**
- **Garth Fisher – Equipment Operator – 37 Years Service**
- **Donna Berg – Driller – 37 Years Service**
- **Parbesh Parhar – Driller – 36 Years Service**
- **Peter Vanderlinden – Haulage Driver – 36 Years Service**
- **Donald James – Carpenter – 36 Years Service**
- **Henry Maciejewski – Senior Process Operator – 35 Years**
- **Peter Kliment – Welder – 35 Years Service**
- **Michael Bobak – Shovel Operator – 35 Years Service**
- **Edward Bremner – Welder – 26 Years Service**
- **Ronald Hernandez – Service Person HE – 11 Years Service**
- **Brent Kisch – HD Mechanic – 36 Years Service**
- **Derek Endicott – Senior Process Operator – 35 Years**
- **James Stone – Blaster – 35 Years Service**
- **Helmut Klima – Warehouseman – 10 Years Service**