

Dealing with Occupational Health and Safety Issues/Concerns

UNA Local 196

You and your fellow members/dues payers have the **right to raise concerns regarding health and safety matters in your workplace**. Your employer is legally responsible to provide you with a safe and healthy workplace. Your workplace is defined as any place that you perform work as directed by your employer.

Your Collective Agreement sets out a **specific process** for dealing with OH&S issues/concerns. Article 34: Occupational Health and Safety requires that there be an **Occupational Health and Safety Committee** with representatives of the Union (Local 196) and the Employer (Alberta Health Services). This committee meets monthly and Local 196 OH&S Committee representatives are elected at the Local Annual General Meeting.

Your representatives on the OH&S Committee are:

Sandi Johnson (Chair): email: sjohnson@una.ab.ca; phone: (780) 430-4616

Kathleen McKenna: email: kmckenna@una.ab.ca

Judi Doniak: email: jdoniak@una.ab.ca

Brenda Venesia: email: bvenesia@una.ab.ca

In addition to the OH&S Committee set up under the Collective Agreement **Alberta Health Services (AHS) has chosen to set up a separate system of office specific OH&S committees**. These committees **are not part of the agreed upon process** for dealing with OH&S concerns as outlined in Article 34.

Representatives to these office- based committees are **not elected** by the membership of Local 196. These committees operate under **terms of reference** developed by the Employer that are quite different than the language of the collective agreement.

If a concern/issue is brought to an employer office based committee and is not resolved then there is no ability to pursue the issue further to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or to the AHS Board as per the Collective Agreement (unless the issue is then brought forward to the Local 196 OH&S Committee to take to the Joint OH&S Committee).

It is vitally important that concerns be addressed at the committee set up under the Agreement to ensure that the Local fulfills its legal obligation to represent its members.

Process for dealing with OH&S Issues/Concerns:

1. Once an OH&S concern is raised you, and the nurse raising the concern and/or your Local representative **must first discuss the issue with your supervisor/Manager (management)** and attempt to resolve the concern at that level. If the concern is not resolved before the next monthly meeting of the OH&S committee (as outlined in Article 34 of the Collective Agreement) it will be discussed at the committee meeting. The concern is presented to the committee on a **UNA OH&S Form** that has been filled out and signed by the nurse, raising the concern or a union representative.
2. Your Local 196 representatives will **present the concern to the committee members and make recommendations** for eliminating or controlling the workplace hazard. If the issue is not resolved at the OH&S committee then it moves to the CEO level.
3. Once the issue is referred to the CEO a **resolution meeting is set up to discuss the issue within 21 calendar days**. The CEO must provide the Local with a written reply within 7 calendar days. If the issue remains unresolved then it moves to the Board.
4. Local representatives have the **right to present its concern and recommendations to the AHS Board**. The Board then has 14 calendar days to provide a response to the Local.

What Are My Responsibilities as a Local 196 Office Representative?

1. If one of your co-workers raises a concern regarding their own health and safety or the health and safety of others you should **encourage them to contact one of the Local 196 OH&S representatives**.
2. You should be prepared to **explain the Collective Agreement process** for dealing with OH&S concerns and explain the importance of making sure the concern is addressed at the right committee (the OH&S committee set up under the Agreement versus the Employers office based committees).
3. You should assist the nurse in filling out the **UNA OH&S report form** or fill out and sign the form based on the information provided by the nurse.
4. You may be required to **accompany the nurse** if she/he is not comfortable discussing the issue with the supervisor/manager alone. If the nurse does not wish to deal with the supervisor/manager for fear of reprisal, then you would be expected to address the concern with the supervisor/manager.
5. You may be asked to **assist the Local OH&S representatives** in pursuing the concern by providing information specific to your workplace or job functions.