

Union Update September 23, 2020

As some of you may be aware SGI is shifting back to in car driver exams.

We have heard concerns from members and we the Union also are concerned about the health and safety of our members. We have been told that the return to in-vehicle testing has been approved by the Government (Minister) and this has been in the works for the past two months.

Although we believe that there are alternatives to moving forward, it is not just SGI that we have to battle on this, the Government has approved this and has not been much of a “Leader” when it comes to making these difficult decisions. They seem to be following the other Provinces.

Members have the “right to refuse unsafe work”. If that right is exercised, an investigation by health and safety would follow and they would check to see that protocols are sufficient and in place to protect workers.

#### **Article 6.8          Right to Refuse Unsafe Work**

**6.8.1          No Employee shall be discharged, penalized or disciplined for refusing to work on a job or in any workplace or to operate any equipment where they believe that it would be unsafe or unhealthy to themselves, or a co-worker.**

**6.8.2          An Employee may refuse to perform any particular act or series of acts where the Employee has reasonable grounds to believe that the act or series of acts is dangerous to the Employee’s safety or health or the safety or health of any other Employee until:**

**(a)            sufficient steps have been taken to satisfy the Employee otherwise; or**

**(b)            the Occupational Health Committee has investigated the matter and advised the Employee otherwise.**

**If not satisfactorily resolved, this issue may be referred to the Occupational Health and Safety Branch.**

**6.8.3 Where a refusal has occurred, no other Employee shall be requested or assigned to perform the work without being advised of the previous refusal(s) and the reason(s) for the refusal(s).**

Other options for members with compromised immune systems, illness and/or other medical reasons, is to get the medical documentation needed for an accommodation or change in work duties. You can obtain the paperwork from Employee Health.

COVID has changed the way business is done, it is inevitable that the “return to normal” will be met with challenges and concerns. We need to make sure that there are sufficient rules put in place to protect our members and families. Proper PPE (personal protection equipment), cleaning supplies, barriers if needed, sanitization, etc. must be supplied and adhered to.

The Union has requested that the in-car testing be further delayed for one month. This delay provides some time to monitor COVID counts with the schools reopening, gatherings moving in doors causing concerns about safety and social distancing. Talks are continuing with SGI.

As with any citizen in Saskatchewan, you can contact your MLA, the Minister of SGI, Minister of Health, the Premier, etc. to state your concerns. This is a decision that was not made solely by SGI.

MASKS are not mandatory, we cannot force anyone to wear a mask, COPE strongly recommends that whenever you cannot maintain a safe social distance that you wear a mask.

Stay Safe!

Together We Are Stronger!

In Solidarity,

Kim Wilson  
Rhonda Derby  
Stacey Landin