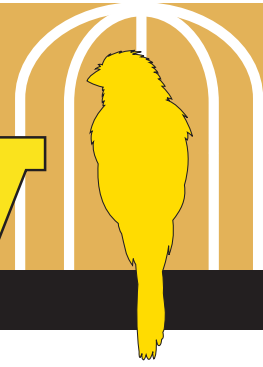


# THE **canary**

SUMMER 2012



## INJURIES AND DEATHS **DAY OF MOURNING**

# Day of Mourning: CUPE honours lost members, fights for the living

Every April 28, workers across the country and around the globe gather to remember those that were killed or injured at work. CUPE members honoured these workers this year in ceremonies held across the country at local, division, and national levels.

In Canada, on average, a worker dies every eight hours. Since the last Day of Mourning, five CUPE members have lost their lives serving the public.

Two of those members, Anne Marie Chassie and Ute Merritt, were flight attendants who died in a plane crash near Resolute, NU that also claimed the lives of two pilots and eight passengers. A full investigation into the crash by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Transport Canada is continuing. Emmanuel Hudon and Éric Goyette, workers at Hydro-Québec, were killed in a car crash. They were carpooling on

*continues on page 2*



Left to right: Victoria Labour Council President Mike Eso, Compensation Employees' Union Director David Clarabut, Victoria City Councillor Ben Isitt, CUPE National President Paul Moist, and CUPE BC President Barry O'Neill spoke at a Day of Mourning ceremony in Victoria. PHOTO: JOSHUA BERSON PHOTOGRAPHY

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**CUPE** / Canadian Union of Public Employees

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their way to work. A fifth member, Stephanie Chaisson, a receptionist at a medical clinic in De Grau, NL, was gunned down at work by her estranged husband. CUPE will call for a provincial inquiry into this tragic incident.

Along with these five members, hundreds, perhaps thousands more CUPE members have been sick or injured because their workplaces are not safe. Some members are sick with a disease that was caused by, but never linked to, their workplace. Other members are injured because of cutbacks, understaffing, and improper or insufficient training. Some are sick or injured because employers have not followed the legislation in their province or jurisdiction. Others are sick or injured because the government has failed to enforce these laws. In some jurisdictions, governments are cutting back on inspectors and leaving it to employers to police themselves.

Our members deserve better.

It was CUPE's National Health and Safety Committee that, in 1984, first proposed a day to remember workers who are injured or killed on the job. On April 28, we pause to remember the workers that have been injured, made ill, or killed because they went to work to serve the public, and provide for themselves and their families. The day after April 28, and every other day, we must continue to fight for the living. We must hold employers

## WORKPLACE DEATHS ENFORCEMENTS

# Westario Power fined in workplace death of employee

**W**estario Power Inc. of Walkerton, ON was fined \$110,000 and an added \$27,500 in victim surcharges in the death of Brodie Schwartz.

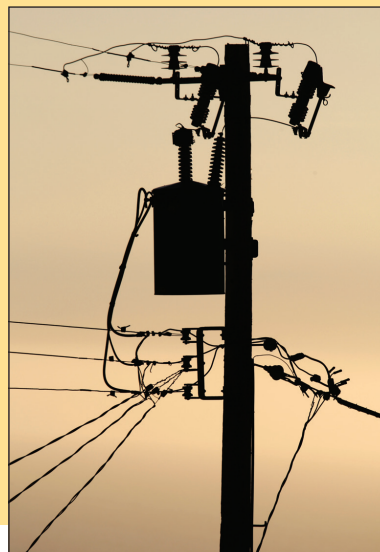
Schwartz, a member of CUPE 255, was electrocuted at his workplace, a Westario sub-station at Port Elgin, ON on Sept. 21, 2010. Westario plead guilty under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, section 25 (2) (a), for failing to provide information, instruction, training and supervision to a worker.

"This case sends a clear message to all employers

that they will be held responsible for providing appropriate training and competent supervision to their employees," said CUPE national health and safety representative Blain Morin.

"This is particularly important as more and more public utilities

CUPE is demanding a full inquest into the details surrounding this avoidable death.



are sold off to smaller private companies. This is an example of how the law works to hold employers responsible for the safety of their employees and their workplaces," Morin continued.

CUPE is demanding a full inquest into the details surrounding this avoidable death.

■ Wendy Forbes

accountable, to make sure they abide by health and safety laws. We must hold governments accountable as well, to ensure they enforce the laws they pass. We must con-

tinue our struggle to ensure that all workers come home to their family safe and healthy, because at the end of the day, that's what matters most.

■ Troy Winters

The Canary, CUPE's health and safety newsletter, is published four times a year. Canaries were once used in mines to warn mineworkers about changes in air quality. Since then, the canary has become a symbol of workplace safety, and an important reminder of dangerous working conditions. For more information on the importance of the symbol, check out [cupe.ca/canary](http://cupe.ca/canary).

Editors: Wes Payne and Troy Winters

Please email Troy Winters at [health\\_safety@cupe.ca](mailto:health_safety@cupe.ca) with corrections, questions or suggestions.

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**CUPE** Canadian Union of Public Employees

COPE 491



PHOTO: PETER BOYLE, UNITED STEELWORKERS

## Remembering Westray

20 years after the coal mine tragedy, are we any safer at work?

**CHECK OUT** our special feature article online  
[cupe.ca/health-and-safety/westray](http://cupe.ca/health-and-safety/westray)

**Defending  
 Our workplace  
 Our environment  
 Our health**

CUPE PRESENTS

## 11<sup>th</sup> National Health and Safety Conference

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 Ottawa Convention Centre  
 Ottawa, ON

Registration packages will be provided to your local.

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## HAZARDS **REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURIES**

# CUPE supports release of new ergonomics standard from CSA



The Canadian Standards Association (CSA Group) has released a new ergonomics standard for workplace health and safety. CSA Z1004 — *Workplace Ergonomics, A management and implementation Standard* provides helpful information on the design of workplaces, equipment, devices, and tasks to reduce repetitive strain injuries (RSIs) at work.

The new standard provides information, checklists, and tables to identify ergonomic hazards, assess risks, and implement a prevention and control program. It can be applied to workplaces of all sizes, and includes a series of tools written specifically for people who are not ergonomics experts.

Poorly designed workstations and job processes frequently lead to RSIs, also known as musculo-skeletal disorders, which affect muscles, tendons, ligaments, and

nerves. Injury examples include back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and tendonitis.

Representatives from CUPE and other national unions played a major role in the development of the standard and tools. CUPE has endorsed the new standard, and recommends it to all local health and safety committees seeking to reduce the risk of RSIs in their workplace.

Ron Meyers, project manager for CSA Group's occupational health

and safety program, acknowledged the support CSA Group received from unions. "This standard has been a long time coming, but we're very pleased with the result," said Meyers. "There were a lot of very knowledgeable people who came together. The contributions from organized labour were invaluable."

■ Troy Winters

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

The new standard is available through the CSA Group website at [shopcsa.ca](http://shopcsa.ca)





## Preventing heat stress

**CUPE members working outside** should consider the effects heat can have on their health and safety. If you get too hot, serious illnesses or even death can occur.

### What causes heat stress?

Heat stress is caused by high temperatures and high humidity, but is made worse by intense physical work, direct sunlight, lack of breaks, or insufficient fluid intake. Poor ventilation, or working near warm machinery can also contribute to heat stress. Older workers, workers with a pre-existing medical condition, and workers unaccustomed to hot conditions are at greater risk.

### Watch for symptoms:

- **Heat fatigue** causes slow reactions and impaired concentration. Workers experiencing these symptoms should get out of the heat before more serious conditions develop.
- **Heat rash** appears as red bumps on the skin and can feel prickly.
- **Heat cramps** result from hard physical labour in a hot environment. Heat cramps are caused by a lack of water. When working in a hot environment, workers must stay hydrated.
- **Heat exhaustion** causes headache, nausea, dizziness, blurred vision, weakness, and feelings of excessive thirst. Usually a worker's skin is damp and looks flushed. Workers exhibiting these symptoms should be placed in a cool (not cold) area and given fluids.

- **Heatstroke** is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms include confusion, irrational behaviour, loss of consciousness, and convulsions. Often sweating ceases, leading to hot, dry-feeling skin. Workers can die from heatstroke. If you suspect a co-worker is suffering from heatstroke, call emergency responders immediately.

### How to reduce the hazard of heat stress

Your workplace health and safety committee can help ensure that minimum standards set out in laws and regulations are met, and should be consulted when developing written policies.

Employers can reduce the effects by:

- Providing proper ventilation and air conditioning.
- Ensuring workers have adequate access to water and are given adequate rest in a cooler or shaded area.
- Shielding, insulating, or moving hot surfaces away from the workplace.
- Planning work to perform the hardest tasks during cooler periods.
- Turning off equipment that generates heat when it's not being used.
- Implementing a proper acclimatization process for workers in hot environments.
- Pregnant workers should consult a physician if asked to work in high heat conditions.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Check out the *Heat Stress* fact sheet at [CUPE.ca/health-and-safety/heat-stress](http://CUPE.ca/health-and-safety/heat-stress)

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!** [cupe.ca/health-and-safety](http://cupe.ca/health-and-safety)

• more information on workplace health and safety issues • fact sheets and guidelines on a wide range of topics • the latest health and safety news AND MORE