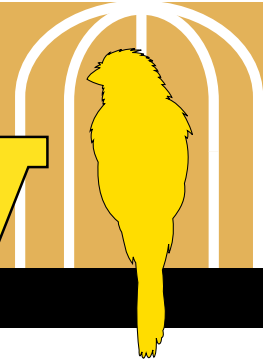


# THE **canary**



SUMMER 2014

## RESOURCES **CANCER PREVENTION**

# CAREX: A cancer prevention resource for Canadians

Worried about exposure to cancer-causing carcinogens in your workplace? There's an online resource that can help.

CAREX (short for CARcinogen EXposure) is a free online resource (visit [carexcanada.ca](http://carexcanada.ca)) that provides information about 85 carcinogenic substances.

CAREX Canada aims to identify the carcinogens Canadians are exposed to, determine where exposures are occurring, the number of Canadians exposed, and their levels of exposure.

The estimates provided by CAREX are designed to support exposure reduction strategies and cancer prevention programs. They also offer an entire page of exposure reduction resources.

Perhaps the most interesting item on the site is the Profiles & Estimates section. For each of the 85 substances, users can get a

chemical profile, and in many cases a summary report of the occupational or environmental estimates.

Want an example? The CAREX profile for diesel exhaust indicates it to be Group 1 (definitely carcinogenic to humans) based on sufficient evidence for lung cancer and limited evidence for bladder

cancer in humans. The page also contains a compilation of regulations and guidelines for diesel fuel use in Canada. The profile covers how occupational and environmental exposures occur, but more importantly offers an entire page of resources on exposure reduction resources. The occupational estimates page estimates diesel exhaust to affect 105,000 workers in the transit and ground passenger transportation.

According to their website, "Since 2007, CAREX Canada has been funded by the Canadian



**Transit workers are at a higher risk of exposure to diesel exhaust, says CAREX.**

Partnership Against Cancer, an independent organization funded by Health Canada to accelerate action on cancer control."

Check out [carexcanada.ca](http://carexcanada.ca)

■ **Troy Winters**

## INSIDE

**2 SURVEY**  
All members who work alone face hazards

**3 NEWS**  
CUPE pleased with jury recommendations in coroner's inquest

**3 RESOURCES**  
Summer heat is here: Use this tool to stay safe

**4 SAFE@WORK**  
Moulds



## SURVEY RESULTS WORKING ALONE

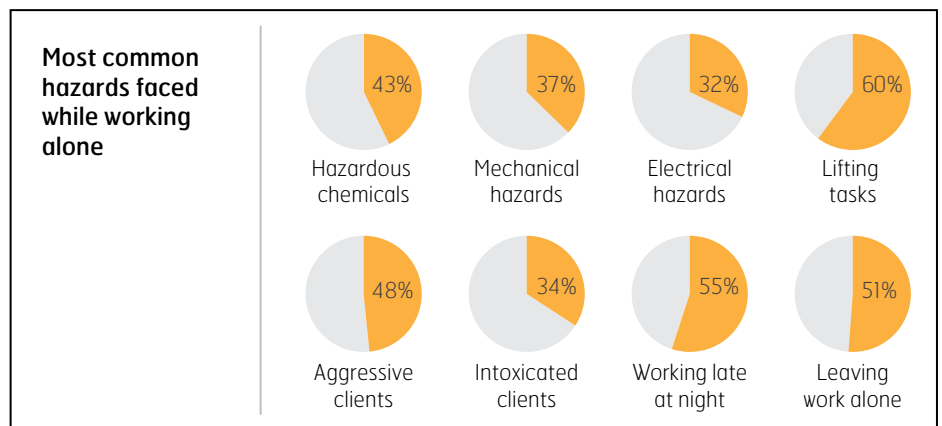
# Almost all members who work alone face additional hazards: survey



The results are in, and they're concerning. Of all CUPE members surveyed who indicated they work alone, 94 per cent said they face at least one other hazard during that period. The most common additional hazards identified were lifting or carrying heavy objects/people, leaving work alone at the end of a late shift, working late at night, and aggressive or violent clients/patients.

The results are based on responses from over 2000 CUPE members surveyed online and with paper surveys between October 15, 2013 and March 1, 2014. Of the people who filled out the survey, 64 per cent indicated that they work alone.

The survey also made it clear that employers need to do more to educate and protect workers. Less than half (47%) of the respondents who work alone reported *knowing* whether their employer had a working alone policy or not, and 27 per cent indicated that their



employer does not have a policy. Of the remaining 20 per cent who confirmed their employer has a policy, less than half (43%) had received training for working alone.

Working alone often means help is not readily available, and the survey results confirmed it, as almost half of the respondents (48.5%) who work alone stated that they would have to wait at least 2 hours before someone noticed they were missing in case of a serious injury. More than 16 per cent said they would have to wait eight hours or more.

The survey results will inform future working alone resources from CUPE's Health and Safety Branch, including a detailed report of the results and some best practices for contract language related to working alone.

If working alone is a concern in your workplace, check out the working alone fact sheet at [cupe.ca/health-and-safety](http://cupe.ca/health-and-safety) or contact the health and safety branch for a copy of our new working alone guidelines at [health\\_safety@cupe.ca](mailto:health_safety@cupe.ca)

■ **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.

Find past issues online at [cupe.ca/canary](http://cupe.ca/canary)

Subscribe to the email edition at [cupe.ca/subscribe](http://cupe.ca/subscribe)

**CUPE** Canadian Union  
of Public Employees

COPE 491

# CUPE pleased with jury recommendations in coroner's inquest

Following a two-week coroner's inquest into the 2009 death of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario city worker James (Jamie) Vecchio, CUPE 3 expressed appreciation for the jury's

would not endanger a worker," said Moist. "It's up to municipalities to ensure that they never contract with companies who fail to comply with safety standards and regulations."

lost a friend, a co-worker that day. They know his family lost a dad and a husband. They understood how important it was to get to the bottom of what happened so that everyone can do what's needed to make sure this never happens again," Beauchamp said.

Beauchamp thanked the coroner's jury for their work: "We were so impressed by the compassion and interest the jury showed in their questioning."

■ **Andrea Addario**

**"It's up to municipalities to ensure that they never contract with companies who fail to comply with safety standards and regulations."**

recommendations. Vecchio was doing sewage work in an excavated hole when a mobile crane contracted by the city backed into the hole and crushed him.

"The jury accepted a number of CUPE's recommendations in their verdict," said CUPE 3 President Paul Beauchamp. "In particular, CUPE pushed for a tightening of rules and inspections concerning mobile cranes. The jury heard that, and accepted the need for clear certification procedures and annual inspections. We also pushed for mandatory carriage of air horns where heavy equipment is used, and the jury accepted that, too."

The jury made nine recommendations to the Ministry of Transportation, to the City of Sault Ste. Marie, and to the Ministry of Labour. Beauchamp stressed that CUPE 3 will work to ensure the recommendations are implemented. CUPE National President Paul Moist emphasized the responsibility of municipalities like Sault Ste. Marie to maintain safe workplaces.

"The Ministry of Labour convicted Millennium Crane Rentals of failing to ensure the crane was maintained in a condition that

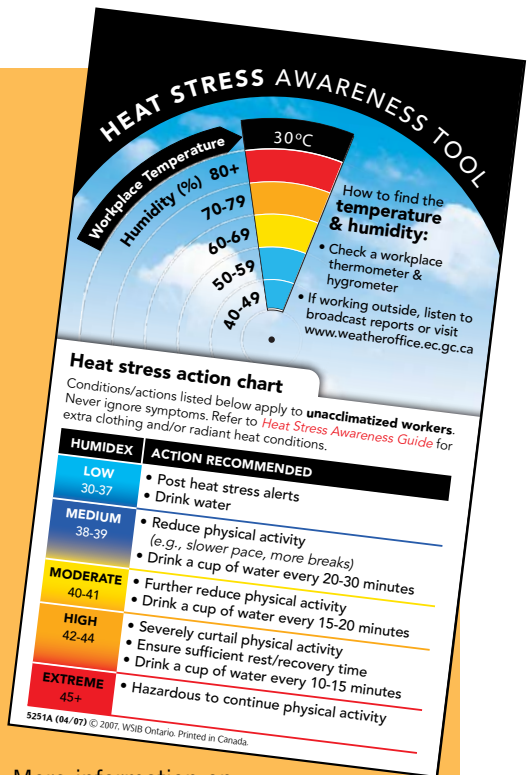
Beauchamp stressed how difficult it was for the many members who were on site the day Vecchio was killed to appear before the inquest and relive the tragedy. "They

## RESOURCES **HEAT STRESS**

### Summer heat is here: Use this tool to stay safe

With memories of the long winter we just suffered still lingering, many of us are embracing the summer heat. But it's important to be aware of the hazard heat can be this time of year if you're working outdoors or indoors without proper ventilation.

To help improve awareness of the hazard and help keep workers safe, CUPE's Health and Safety Branch included the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers' Heat Stress Awareness Tool in the latest national general mailing. It's a simple wheel that helps determine the severity of heat affecting workers. Simply dial in the current temperature and level of humidity. The colour code on the disc indicates the level of risk, and the legend indicates the proper action workers should take to protect themselves.



More information on preventing injury and illness from heat stress, and a downloadable file to make your own heat stress wheel, can be found at [ohcow.on.ca/heatstressawarenesstoolkit](http://ohcow.on.ca/heatstressawarenesstoolkit). Plus, check out the CUPE fact sheet on preventing heat stress at [cupe.ca/heat-stress](http://cupe.ca/heat-stress)



## Moulds

### What are Moulds?

Moulds are microorganisms that can grow on virtually any substance, indoor and outdoor, as long as moisture, oxygen, and an organic source are present.

### How do moulds affect the health of workers?

Moulds produce thousands of tiny particles called spores as part of their reproductive cycle. When disturbed by air movement or contact, moulds release these spores into the air. The inhalation of spores, moulds or mould fragments can affect your health or make certain health conditions worse.

Workers exposed to mould can have different symptoms. Some may have no reaction at all. The most common effects of mould exposure are:

- Irritation to the skin, eyes, nose, throat
- Burning in the nose, nosebleeds
- Difficulty breathing, asthmatic attacks
- Watery eyes, runny nose
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Fatigue, difficulty concentrating
- Impairment of the immune system

### How are mould hazards identified?

Visual inspections are the most reliable method of identifying mould problems. When conducting a visual inspection, look for signs of water damage such as discolouration and staining. Air sampling, surface sampling and bulk sampling (taking bits of drywall, flooring, etc.) are also methods used to identify the presence of moulds.

### How to prevent moulds from forming in your workplace

The following can help prevent mould growth in your workplace:

- Keep relative humidity in the workplace between 30 and 60 per cent.
- Conduct regular inspections and be diligent, particularly if you work in a sewage treatment plant or composting facility.
- Make sure landscaping and eavestrough downspouts direct water away from buildings.
- Ensure any high moisture areas are properly ventilated with local exhaust ventilation that captures the moisture and directs it out of the building.
- Get employers to insulate cold surfaces to prevent condensation on pipes, windows, walls, roofs and floors.
- Perform regular maintenance and cleaning of heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.
- Perform regular maintenance of buildings, especially roofs, basements and other locations where leaks occur.

### What should you do if there is mould in your workplace?

Mould should be reported to management immediately. If the problem is not immediately rectified, report it to your health and safety committee.

Fixing a mould problem includes identification and correction of the condition that allows the mould to grow, and safe removal of materials damaged by mould. Appropriate personal protective equipment and training (based on the size of the problem) should be provided before remediation begins. The cleaning and removal process depends on the size and type of mould growth, the extent of the damage, and the location.

**FIND THE FULL FACT SHEET ON MOULDS**  
at [cupe.ca/health-and-safety](http://cupe.ca/health-and-safety)

**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