

KTTA Health and Safety Chair Report (2017-18)

Gregg Hafeli

It was a privilege to have served as Health and Safety Chair this past year. It has been a very busy for me and for Health and Safety committees in the district. Here is a summary of my experiences and of a wide range of health and safety topics/events from the past nine months.

Summer Conference

Summer conference was cancelled due to the wildfires and Zones picked up some of the training aspects that Summer Conference typically dealt with.

Ongoing Training

I attended Risk Assessment Training with other sector representatives in Kamloops on October 31st for a full day. It was enlightening and I earned certification in Risk Assessments through the BCFed. I also attended the Canadian Labour Congress Pacific Region Winter School in February where I earned certification in worksite inspections, risk assessments, violence prevention, and incident investigations. I learned a lot of great stuff from the instructors, especially about the Worker's Compensation Act and Regulations, but also from brothers and sisters in other sectors who are dealing with both provincial and federal laws and regulations.

WorkSafe Orders

Following complaints to WorkSafe, orders were issued in the Spring of 2017 to the district directing them to rectify an unsafe condition at Westsyde Secondary. The KTTA felt that the district should replace a faulty and outdated dust collection system in the woodshop. The district has been exceptionally slow to fulfil their obligation in the orders, to the detriment of staff and students, and have since been directed to replace the equipment this summer. Please view details at the KTTA H&S page (<https://goo.gl/Ih3qT8>). Following up on orders from last year and as a result of slow or non-compliance by the district, WorkSafe officers embarked on a series of inspections at different facilities which have resulted in orders at NorKam and Brock and recommendations for updating woodshop systems to improve air quality in secondary schools. These orders included some detailed prescriptive actions that the district needed to take immediately to become compliant. It seems that the new Manager of Health and Safety is more inclined to be in compliance this year than in previous years. Members directing complaints about unsafe work conditions through the KTTA has contributed a great deal to WorkSafe taking action, for example an ongoing air quality issue at Lloyd George has been addressed and action has been taken to mitigate concerns, though it is still not up to the standards of employees in the building as of yet. Last year's risk assessment has been somewhat helpful in urging the district to address ongoing safety issues related to violence in the workplace, though identification of violent students often results in dismissive rhetoric from the district, calling certain actions as "baseline behaviours". I encourage members not to accept this rhetoric, our district seems to be the only one attempting this in our region. No violence is acceptable and past violent behaviour does not excuse current violent behaviour. Report incidents to your admin and to the KTTA. District inaction should result in WorkSafe complaints.

Zone Meetings

I attended Zone meetings, held at the Penticton Lakeside Resort in October and at the Prestige Lakefront in Salmon Arm last weekend. **October topics:** workplace violence, the new training and reporting regulations for new/young committee members, and annual committee evaluations. Many comparisons between locals was discussed extensively. It was very interesting to note the huge variance in attention to safety among the different districts. **May topics:** We discussed compliance issues among districts and how TTOC shortages are impacting Health and Safety around the region. We reviewed SURT training and discussed varying degrees of WorkSafe response to complaints.

Annual District Training

Throughout February and March of this year, our new Manager of Health and Safety, Melissa McGarry, conducted training sessions that included all KTTA, admin, and CUPE members who sit on site committees. For the most part, there has been fairly positive feedback from KTTA members who attended. Ms. McGarry has agreed to plan training for new committee members in the fall and conduct mandated supplemental training for all committee members earlier in the school year. She will seek input from committees and the district reps on topics that will be covered in training. This reflects a change in attitude around Health and Safety in the district, we are hoping it continues.

KTTA Health and Safety SURT Training

Health and Safety reps came together at the Cottonwood Community Centre on November 10th. Training focused mainly on terms of reference for committees, release for committee duties, inspections, reporting incidents, investigations, violence in the workplace, risk assessments, and safety plans. We were lucky to have local WorkSafe officer Vince Strain in the afternoon to speak to school reps. He clarified a number of issues around investigations, including near misses, how to file claims, the right to refuse unsafe work, reporting, 6A forms, and took member questions. All in all, it was a very informative session.

Health and Safety Page on the KTTA Website (<https://goo.gl/Ih3qT8>)

Please take a few minutes to browse the valuable information that has been posted on the Health and Safety page. Links to meeting minutes, BCTF services, forms, and other important Health and Safety information is there. Thanks to Laurel Macpherson for adding district committee minutes and orders.

Monthly Joint Health and Safety Meetings

Meetings occurred as scheduled. ** Please refer to monthly meeting minutes posted at schools or on the KTTA Health and Safety webpage for detailed information about monthly meeting topics.

Some Highlights...

This year was a bit of a roller coaster, but the district seems to be moving in the right direction around compliance with regulations and training. A positive is that our new manager, Ms. McGarry, seems to want to have safe workplaces and does not seem to fall into line with typical district inaction. Though she had to catch up on a number of unfinished or poorly dealt with items from last year, as well as run committee member training, the KTTA reps on the committee seem to agree that her focus seems to be more in-line with worker safety and prevention than simply reactive. She seems to be willing to change how things are done at the SBO. Last year I tried to get minutes approved by the district chair and the committee refused. This year, Ms. McGarry convinced admin that it made sense and they complied - district minutes now must be approved by all three chairs prior to them going to schools. As well, Ms. McGarry agreed to collaborate with me on the new annual committee evaluations. We worked together on creating them and they will be sent to schools this month. Proactivity is creeping into the OHS department at the SBO, let's hope it is ongoing. I am cautiously optimistic about next year.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregg Hafeli
KTTA Health and Safety Chair