



**FYI**



**September 14, 2021**

**To: All BCGEU Members who work for the Ministry of Transportation  
& Infrastructure in Commercial Vehicle Safety & Enforcement (CVSE)**  
**Re: CVSE's WorkSafeBC Compliance Agreement, Update #3**

Since the spring, our union has continued to monitor the CVSE's progress towards meeting the terms of the [WorkSafeBC compliance agreement](#), and to engage with the employer about the health and safety of CVSE staff. We'd like to provide you another update.

### **Violence risk assessment**

The PSA is progressing with its work on violence risk assessment for CVSE.

Over the past few weeks, PSA staff have been conducting assessments of the physical environment of CVSE worksites around the province – you may have seen them at your workplace already. We reached out to many staff ahead of these assessments to encourage BCGEU members to speak with the PSA staff about their experiences and concerns related to violence at work.

As noted in our [previous update](#), BCGEU representatives Megan Scott (BCGEU OHS Officer), and Myke Labelle (CTEO, Victoria) are participating in a working group that is supporting the PSA in the risk assessment. The working group had an initial meeting in June, and provided feedback on plans and the draft staff survey. The group met again in late August, receiving an update from the PSA and the employer, as well as copies of the staff survey results.

The PSA anticipates that a draft report on the risk assessment will be completed by the end of September. Once this report is available, the BCGEU will be reaching out for your feedback and advice about the assessment results and next steps. However, your representatives on the working group are happy to hear from you anytime about your experiences and your ideas about improvements that could be made to prevent workplace violence. You can reach them by email at [megan.scott@bcgeu.ca](mailto:megan.scott@bcgeu.ca) and/or [mykelabelle@gmail.com](mailto:mykelabelle@gmail.com).

## **Staff survey on workplace violence**

As you know, in July the PSA conducted a [staff survey](#) as a key part of conducting its workplace violence risk assessment. At the time, we strongly encouraged you to participate in the survey and to be candid in your responses.

There was an incredible response to the employer's survey – 148 CVSE staff completed the survey, an amazing 74% response rate! Many of you also provided detailed comments with concrete examples of your experiences at work, and practical suggestions about how to better address violence at work.

For us, the key takeaways from the survey results are:

### ***CVSE officers reported experiencing a high level of violence at work.***

- More than half of survey respondents reported experiencing a violent incident in the last 3 years, and nearly a third of these workers said that weapons were involved in an incident they experienced.
- 1 in 4 CVSE staff reported experiencing sexual harassment and/or violence on the job.

### ***There are huge gaps and delays in providing training.***

- Nearly a third of respondents said they've **never** received training in violence prevention.
- 1 in 5 respondents said they weren't trained until more than two years after they were hired.

### ***Staff don't think existing training is adequate.***

- Less than 5% of respondents thought their training on recognizing and responding to violence and obtaining assistance was "very effective," and nearly a third said it was "not effective."

### ***The new Aware 360 system has significant shortcomings, and staff believe a centralized dispatch system would be more effective.***

- Most staff thought the system is user friendly, and some acknowledged it is an improvement over the previous system.
- However, survey respondents identified a number of issues with the new Aware 360 system, including:
  - Limited coverage and functionality
  - Questionable reliability
  - An emergency function that is too difficult to activate
  - System is cumbersome to use and distracting for officers that have to maintain situational awareness.
- Many respondents commented that they want a centralized dispatch system, and believe it will be significantly more effective than the Aware 360 system.

***Staff have good, practical ideas to effectively address workplace violence, including:***

- Significantly expanding and improving training.
- Replacing the current policy of disengagement to provide better guidance for officers
- Providing officers with more and better information about clients they interact with, and in real time
- Improving communications systems, including establishing direct contact with emergency services and implementing a centralized radio dispatch system
- Increasing staffing to reduce working alone
- Making physical improvements to CVSE worksites, like better lighting, separate entrances/ exits for staff, and barriers to separate staff from clients
- Actively promoting CVSE, and educating both the public and other police agencies about the role and work of CVSE
- Taking steps to address the weak safety culture and low morale in CVSE
- Seriously considering additional enforcement/ protection tools for officers, like batons and OC spray

**What's Next?**

Through your Article 29 committee and the working group on the CVSE violence risk assessment, your BCGEU representatives are continuing to push for your feedback to be heard and acted on, and for real safety improvements to be made in CVSE.

We encourage you to join the effort by talking to your colleagues, OHS reps, supervisors and managers about your safety concerns, and the changes you think will make your workplace safer. There will be a CVSE employer-led townhall meeting on September 15, which provides an opportunity for you to ask hard questions, put forward your suggestions, and support your colleagues that are raising safety related issues.

You can also make a difference by becoming a BCGEU OHS representative at your worksite. Under your collective agreement, every worksite – no matter how small – should have a joint health and safety committee or a worker health and safety representative designated by the BCGEU (see Article 22.3). If you are interested in becoming a BCGEU OHS representative, read the job description and complete the form at [https://ohs.bcgeu.ca/ohs\\_rep](https://ohs.bcgeu.ca/ohs_rep). With your help, we can build a strong network of workplace leaders dedicated to the health and safety of CVSE staff.

In solidarity,

Rob Davis, Component 20 Vice President  
Maria Middlemiss, Component 12 Vice President  
Megan Scott, BCGEU OHS Officer