

## **October 15, 2020 Notes on Session #2 discussion**

### **Hierarchy of prevention: implications**

- It's not just about PPE – there is a whole hierarchy of protection/prevention – Communicate, Clean, Handwashing, Ventilate, Distance, Screen, Mask. PPE is the last line of defence. This means that activists must look at the complete hierarchy in developing our strategies and demands. This opens the door to winning victories on some fronts even if progress is harder on others.
- Priorities: ventilation, distance, PPE

### **Precautionary principle**

- Vital importance of the precautionary principle

### **Participating at the central/provincial and strategic level as well as the workplace level**

- Having a strong voice at central tables and high level summits with public health, government and employers.
- Fighting for strategic solutions such as financial investment in planning, technical advice and implementing improved ventilation in workplaces such as schools and longterm care.

### **Resources for the members**

- Connect with central unions, OFL, WHSC, OHCOW for tools and resources.

### **Engaging the members**

- Engaging the membership themselves is very important; education on their rights, including limited right to refuse work in some sectors.
- Form a health and safety committee in your union if you don't have one already.

### **Don't hesitate to call in MOL**

- Try to use IRS but be willing to call in MOL.

### **Seven key areas**

#### **Communications**

- The communications have been overwhelming and sometimes contradictory. Messages need to be simple, consistent.

- Employers won't let workers know where the positive cases are, or even if there are cases at all.

## **Clean**

- Cleaning has often been insufficient in risky situations. There are lots of good resources on cleaning chemicals, some of which are hazardous.

## **Handwashing**

- Implementation has often been problematic. E.g., location of handwashing stations.

## **Ventilation**

- The government could have acted on ventilation many months and years ago
- A huge problem in older buildings especially. In many sectors.
- Your individual workspace may not have its own ventilation controls. Often there are layers of approvals to have anything done. It's often hard to investigate more generally whether it is working properly.
- Need air purifiers in the lunchroom; do regular air quality tests.
- We need inspections, checklists

## **Distancing**

- Overall, distancing is a huge and challenging issue in many settings.
- A challenge in many office settings.
- A huge issue especially with younger children in schools. Need reduced class sizes.

## **Screen**

- The temperature gun can be triggering for some people. Also the need to protect confidentiality.
- Screening protocols are easily circumvented. Often it's based on the "honour system".
- We could do more pre-screening before the person reaches the workplace.

## **Mask**

- We must make progress on PPE and especially N95s
- Some masks are not very effective.
- There are also issues with clients/customers who refuse to wear masks. We need to manage this better – notes from health professionals verifying that a person cannot wear a mask; planning for any dealings with people who can't wear masks.
- Masks sometimes have a negative impact on the wearer (e.g., rashes).