



H1N1 Facts

Here are a few important things to know about the H1N1 virus. (More information is available on SEIU's website, www.seiulocal1.org.)

SEIU Local 1 Canada encourages all members to get the H1N1 flu shot, unless you have an underlying medical condition. If so, consult your doctor.

In the workplace, members should take all precautions, including the wearing of N95 masks, washing hands and using the alcohol-based cleaners, and use gloves and gowns when interacting with patients.

All members are encouraged to self screen for H1N1 symptoms. (Symptoms include fever, runny nose, cough, sore throat, body aches, tiredness, diarrhea and vomiting).

If you become sick, it is recommended you isolate yourself until 24 hours after fever and respiratory symptoms have subsided.

All members should be aware of their Joint Health and Safety Committee members, and report to their JHSC representatives on any conditions and outbreaks of flu they think may compromise members' health and safety.

Ready, set, elect!

SEIU's Health & Safety Committee has proposed some more democracy into its health and safety committees. The proposal is simple: H&S reps will now be elected by members. These elections will occur at the same time as steward elections.

More needlestick progress needed on the east coast

SEIU continues its campaign to introduce safe needles throughout Canada. Newfoundland's chief medical officer is supportive of the idea and her government may introduce needlestick legislation in the future. Some small progress is being made in New Brunswick.

H&S Committee focusing on MRSA

In January 2009 a nurse in a London hospital died from a Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) infection. MRSA is a bacteria (not to be mistaken for a virus) that has been appearing at a growing rate in hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities across the country.

MRSA is resistant to many antibiotics and can be fatal.

That's why SEIU Local 1 Canada is working on a health and safety plan and protocol document that

will help H&S reps to protect members in their workplaces.

First, SEIU will create a protocol

checklist for H&S workplaces to give to members in their units. This checklist will assist H&S reps in controlling the spread of the bacteria, identify anything employers should do to protect staff



from MRSA, VRE C. difficile and other lethal bacteria either by law or the collective agreement, and provide quarterly reports to unit members through their JHSCs.

Facts on MRSA

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus is a bacteria (not to be mistaken for a virus) that has been appearing at a growing rate in hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities across North America.

MRSA is resistant to many antibiotics and can be fatal if left untreated.

There are two ways people contract MRSA. The first is physical contact with someone who is either infected or is a carrier (carriers are not infected but are colonized with the bacteria on their body).

The second way is for people to physically contact MRSA on objects such as door handles, floors, sinks, or towels that have been touched by an MRSA-infected person or carrier.

Some of the symptoms include small red bumps on the skin, pus-filled hair follicles, eyelid and skin infections.

The best way to prevent MRSA is to treat and cover any skin wounds with antiseptic creams and band-aids, as well as excellent hygiene practices including handwashing.

MRSA bacteria can cause permanent or fatal organ damage.

According to a 2007 study completed by the Kaiser Foundation, 4-10% of MRSA victims will die from the infection. The mortality rate for children is much lower at only 1%.

But there is good news. Doctors can still treat MRSA with certain kinds of antibiotics, as well as apply other complementary treatments once diagnosis.

Workplace violence law

“Anti-violence laws will help change workplace attitudes and behaviours just as anti-sexual harassment laws did a few years ago.”

Dr. Lisa M.S. Barrow

The Ontario Government is drafting a new law that will crack down on workplace violence. Bill 168, which passed 2nd reading in the Ontario legislature in October, will require employers to introduce new approaches to curb aggressive behaviour to other co-workers.

“Workplace violence” is when workers verbally harass, threaten, socially isolate, over-work and physically threaten their co-workers.

Bill 168 would:

- Implement new measures that would reduce workplace violence
- Provide immediate assistance whenever workplace violence occurs
- Report incidents or threats of workplace violence to the employer
- Establish new ways for employers to deal with incidents or complaints.

“Citizens should contact their MPPs and urge them to support Bill 168,” said workplace justice activist Dr. Lisa M.S. Barrow said. Bullying is

“profoundly and powerfully destructive. Day after day, bullies intimidate and torment their prey, putting the self-esteem and overall health of targeted individuals at risk.”

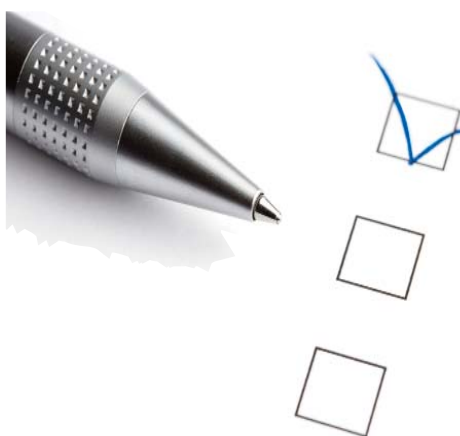
Health & Safety training planned for Spring 2010

MRSA. H1N1. SARS. In this day and age, health care workers need to take precautions to protect themselves from a life-threatening virus or bacteria. SEIU’s H&S committees need to be armed with the best knowledge, tools and best practices to protect members from workplace hazards. That’s why SEIU will be travelling to several regions throughout Ontario to educate, inform and train its H&S committee reps on health and safety best practices.

Some of the topics that will be covered include:

- Operating effective health & safety committees
 - Investigating accidents properly
 - Proper emergency procedures
 - Taking necessary precautions against MRSA, H1N1 and VRE
 - Fighting employer attendance management policies
 - Preparing quarterly reports on MRSA, H1N1 and VRE
 - Following needlestick rules
- Stay tuned for dates and locations.

H&S Survey results



workplace inspections, reports, presentations, newsletters, emails, e-postings, as well as organizing activities during health and safety week.

However, SEIU’s Joint Health and Safety Committee members have identified several areas that need to be improved.

One issue is the lack of training. A small but significant number of committee reps report that they do not fully understand all the steps that need to be taken to ensure a safe working environment. That’s why SEIU is proposing training roadshow to educate H&S reps on H&S standards (see article above).

Another area that needs improvement is the lack of submitted incident reports. Incident reports are not in all cases being submitted to SEIU’s H&S committees. This protocol is required in most collective agreements and by law.

SEIU’s Health and Safety Committee will do everything in its power to assist SEIU’s JHSC reps in preventing workplace injuries.

SEIU’s Joint Health and Safety Committee members in workplaces across Ontario recently completed a health and safety survey. The purpose of this survey was to examine how health and safety issues are resolved in their workplaces.

The results were encouraging. Most committee reps meet at least once every three months. The committees are also doing a good job providing health and safety news to members with postings, sharing information during

Do you have an interesting story to tell about health and safety in your workplace? Then give us a call at 1-800-267-7348 x 3059.

Health & Safety Committee Members

David Blake
Niagara Health System

Louise Burbidge
Cambridge Memorial Hospital

Carol Cooke
Quinte Health Care Corp.

Kathy Decarlo
Extencicare

Caroline Jaeger
Dale Brain Injury Services

Ted Marcotte
MICs Group of Health Services

Carrie Moore
McCausland Hospital

Nancy Rieger
Baycrest Centre & Jewish Home for the Aged

Julianna Stewart
Niagara Health System

Judith Weldon
Community Visions & Networking



SEIU Local 1 Canada - 1-877-MRC-SEIU

SEIU Local 1 Canada - Human Rights Committee, 2180 Steeles Avenue West, Suite 200, Concord, ON L4K 2Z5