



Contract Interpretation: in the event of flooding

June 1, 2011

In recent weeks, many BC communities have experienced flood warnings or evacuation orders. What are your rights in the event of flooding?

Q: I work at a hospital that is subject to flooding if the river rises too high. My manager has told me that in the event of a flood, I may be relocated for my job. Can my employer do that?

A: The River Forecast Centre of British Columbia has predicted that spring runoff could be higher than normal this year, and that there is potential for flooding in some communities.

Your employer has an obligation to deliver services to the community, and in an emergency the demands will increase. If your facility is evacuated, patients will need to be relocated, and staff will have to be redeployed to ensure patients are receiving the care they require.

In the event of an emergency, your employer has the right to reassign you to a different location, cancel your vacation, change your hours, and even reassign you to a different job, provided you are qualified and physically able to do that job. If you are assigned to a job at a lower pay scale than your regular job, you will maintain your regular rate of pay.

Q: The road between my home and my facility is subject to closure because of flooding. What if I can't get to work?

A: If you live in an area that may be affected by flooding, you should be making necessary arrangements now to be able to get to work in an emergency.

During a natural disaster, health care workers are critical to emergency services. Demand for services increases, and employers need to have the staff in place to deliver the services. If you are having trouble making arrangements, contact your manager.

If access to work is a potential problem, you should be making plans now for alternate routes to work, or to find a place closer to work where you can stay in an emergency. If you do relocate during an emergency, you must ensure your employer has your contact information.

Do you have other questions? Contact your steward through www.hsabc.org > Contact > Find your steward, or call the HSA office.

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