

BULLETIN

Safer and Healthier Workplaces – Just One Election Away

April 28, 2015

Every year, thousands of Canadians are killed or injured on the job or die from work-related diseases. Yet, this is something few of us think about when we mark our ballots at election time.

This year, Canadians have an opportunity to elect a new federal government. Let's make sure that the people we vote for will go to Parliament and ensure the next government will properly enforce health and safety laws, including the criminal code when necessary.

In 2013, more than 900 workers died because of something that happened to them at work. That's just what was reported, but we know the real numbers are higher. Hundreds more die from under-reported illnesses and occupational diseases that go unrecognized by unfair government compensation rules or simply aren't reported because workers can't afford to take the time off.

Workers in Canada today are four times more likely to die because of something that happens to them at work than to be murdered. Yet, many of the men and women we elected to represent us in 2011, who claim to be "tough on crime," aren't so tough with employers and companies responsible for workers' injuries and deaths. In fact, many of them have supported new laws that take away long-standing health and safety rights from working people.

This year, we can change things by electing a new government and by making sure the people we vote for are committed to improving workplace health and safety.

We need a government that's finally willing to prosecute employers under the Westray laws and provide leadership and guidance to the provinces and territories.

We need a government that will seriously address the health and safety risks posed by asbestos to construction, renovation and building trade workers, as well as do-it-yourselfers and finally provide a registry of asbestos-containing buildings.

We need a government that is committed to creating new jobs that are full-time and safe, instead of the unstable precarious work that accounted for 75% of the new jobs created in recent years – work that is more likely to have higher rates of injury, exposure to hazards and risk of disease as well as a lower knowledge of safety laws, employer responsibilities and worker rights.

Later this year, let's remember those who have lost their lives because of their work, or who have been injured on the job. Let's vote for the candidate who will commit to safer, healthier workplaces. Let's vote in a federal government that will enforce the laws that will protect our health and safety at work.

Safer and healthier workplaces, just one election away. Just think about it.

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