
**REPORT OF THE
SAFETY, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
TO THE MGEU 65TH CONVENTION 2018**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Area 1 Mike Tavener

Area 2 Susan Grandbois

Area 3 Brian Latimer

Area 4 Evelyn Green

Area 5 Susan Smerchanski

Area 6 Bev Smith

Area 7 Steve Smith / Joe Dooley

Area 8 Ron Bruneau

Chair Charlotte McWilliams

Staff Blaine Duncan, Health and Safety Specialist
Sandy Ironside, Administrative Assistant
Betty Harrison, Administrative Assistant

The MGEU standing committee on Safety, Health, & Environment has convened twelve (12) times since Convention 2016.

INITIATIVES

The committee focused on environment and mental health issues as priorities for this term. Cannabis legalization has also become an important emerging issue for the committee. The committee received a presentation from the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba on Cannabis Legalization. It was also the goal of the committee to reinforce and promote the "Safety and Health" tab on the MGEU website detailing resolution to common issues, your rights and frequently asked questions, as Standing Committee members are responsible for sharing information with their respective Area Councils.

The committee participated in the annual April 28th Dauphin Day of Mourning walk in 2017 and the Leaders Walk from Union Centre to Memorial Park (new site for the Workers Memorial) in 2018 as well the Brandon Flag Raising ceremony. Many thanks to the Dauphin and District Labour Council, Safe Workers of Tomorrow and Brandon and District Labour Council for organizing these important days of remembrance.

MGEU fulfilled its obligation for sponsorship of the Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium Bursaries. The committee reviewed the continued support of this project or to go in a different direction for an alternate environmental initiative that could have a more widespread impact. The committee put forth a recommendation for the Union Centre to conduct an energy audit. Coincidentally, the Union Centre Board had plans of installing LED lighting, waterless urinals and low-flow toilets, expanding the recycling program, future project to replace windows with energy efficient glass, installing bike racks and the committee's suggestion to explore solar energy.

The committee continues to encourage recycling. In particular, batteries and cell phones can be dropped off in the battery recycling stations at your local MGEU office. The committee reminds members that the program has now expanded beyond rechargeable batteries to include all batteries.

At the request of the Standing Committee, the MGEU distributed flower packets to 200 participants at the 2018 Women's Conference. The flower packets were confirmed to be local flowers to assist the bee population.

The April 2017 Manitoba Sustainable Energy Association conference was attended by Standing Committee Chair, Charlotte McWilliams. The focus of the conference was Carbon Tax and Sustainable Energy, emphasis on solar energy.

MGEU Workers Compensation Specialist, David Popke and MFL Executive Director, Anna Rothney presented information on the Workers Compensation Act review to the committee in December 2016.

The committee pursued Fentanyl education due to the opioid crisis in early 2017. The committee reviewed information from Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, local police enforcement training and various employer policies.

The National Union of Public and General Employees convened a conference call in November 2017 and subsequent meeting in June 2018 of safety and health specialists and members to discuss topics such as PTSD legislation, opioid crisis, provincial reports and identifying emerging issues. MGEU Staff Blaine Duncan and Standing Committee Chair, Charlotte McWilliams attend both the call and meeting.

MGEU Staff Blaine Duncan participated as a member of the Ministers Advisory Council on Matters Related to Workplace Safety and Health in the 2016 review of the Workplace Safety and Health Act. The Advisory Council also participated in the advisory note on Occupational Exposure Limits. Unfortunately, the Government has disbanded this advisory committee along with 24 other government appointed boards.

MGEU President, Michelle Gawronsky, and MFL President, Kevin Rebeck, did presentations to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Committee hearings to oppose the Red Tape Reduction Bill 24 which included proposed reductions in environmental protections. Charlotte McWilliams attended in support of maintaining current regulations.

The issue of cannabis legalization emerged in 2017. The committee recognized that this will have a potential impact on members and safety in the workplace. We have continued to pursue education and information on this social change and its potential impact on our membership. Karla Steele, Blaine Duncan and Charlotte McWilliams attended a "Marijuana in the Workplace" conference in Toronto in February 2018. A presentation was developed and provided to the MGEU Board of Directors in June 2018. The committee is working with the Communications Unit to share useful information about cannabis and the workplace with members.

The Chair, Charlotte McWilliams met with the Chairs of Membership Education and Equality & Human Rights standing committees to discuss and work collaboratively in the development and promotion of psychologically safe workplaces.

The committee toured Mother Earth Recycling in January 2018. MGEU Communications promoted the activities of the recycling/training organization through MGEU electronic media.

MGEU supported first aid, cardio pulmonary resuscitation and artificial external defibrillator training of the Safety, Health and Environment Committee and MGEU staff.

Blaine Duncan and Charlotte McWilliams attended Area 2 Council meeting on January 24, 2018.

AFFILIATES

- **Manitoba Federation of Labour: Safety, Health and Environment Committee – Bev Smith and Susan Smerchanski**

The MGEU standing committee members provide a valuable perspective to the MFL Safety, Health and Environment Committee. The committee supported appointed members of the Ministers Advisory Council on Safety and Health as well as those representing member interests in Workers Compensation. The committee has planned another Safety and Health Conference for November 2018 in Winnipeg. Cannabis legalization and psychologically safe workplaces will be featured topics.

- **Safe Workers of Tomorrow**

The MGEU Safety, Health and Environment Committee continues its support of the Safe Workers of Tomorrow. SWOT makes presentations to students, young adults and new comers entering the workforce in an effort to build awareness of safety and health issues that they may encounter in the course of their work as well as their rights to safe and healthy work.

EVENTS

The committee and/or various representatives of the committee have had the opportunity to participate in several safety, health and environment conferences. We've benefited from keynote speakers, expert presenters, dynamic tradeshow and liaising with hundreds of safety and health activists from across Manitoba. The following is a list of conferences attended: annual Safety Services Manitoba Conferences in 2017 and 2018; and the Manitoba Federation of Labour Safety, Health and Environment Conference 2017 and 2018 in Winnipeg; Construction Safety Association of Manitoba conference February 2018. The first annual "Safety's" award banquet was held in Winnipeg in September 2017. MGEU member organizations and individual members were recipients of awards for excellence in safety and health programming. MGEU Communications spotlighted MGEU member Arlene Pluchinski in her efforts to entrench safety and health in operational practices at the Pineland Provincial Forest Nursery. The committee is pursuing future environmental initiatives by attending the MARR conference and general meeting.

EDUCATION

The MGEU delivered 14 Basic Health and Safety classes in 2016/17 and 2017/18. The following courses were delivered on six (6) occasions on a rotational basis in Winnipeg, Brandon/Dauphin, and Thompson/The Pas annually: Violence in the Workplace, Workplace Wellness/Stress, Safety and Health Programs, Ergonomics, Committee Co-Chair Basics and Management Responsibility. In total 574 members attended safety and health training.

The MGEU has also been successful in the continuation of safety, health and environment training beyond our annual calendar of scheduled courses. “Building a Respectful Workplace” and “Environmental Stewardship” are offered as part of your Issues Seminar series. Letters were sent to Workplace Safety and Health Committee members in March 2018 to promote increased attendance at MGEU educationals. If you are a Safety and Health Committee member and have attended a Basic Safety and Health course by another provider, please let the MGEU Member Education Unit Administrative Assistant know so that you can be registered for additional advanced courses.

We strive to provide knowledge in an effort to assist members to better deal with safety, health and environment concerns within their workplaces. As a result, a number of safety and health seminars were held for Components, Locals, and Joint Workplace Safety and Health Committees.

As part of the MGEU educational programming, Susan Smerchanski, Charlotte McWilliams and Blaine Duncan are currently reviewing and updating materials as a result of emerging issues (e.g. psychologically safe workplaces, inspections/investigations, cannabis legalization, domestic violence leave, etc.).

RECOGNITION

We would like to recognize the important effort of the facilitators of our safety, health and environment schools (Blaine Duncan, Diana Delroy, Susan Smerchanski, Charlotte McWilliams, Umberto Willner, Dean Werbiski) and welcome the new facilitators joining the team (Ron Bruneau, Tannis Chwartacki, Michelle Scebenski, Richard Hines, Kevin Jacobs, and Derek Pearase).

A special thanks to Charlotte McWilliams and Susan Smerchanski for facilitating the “Ensuring a Psychologically Safe and Healthy Workplace” at the annual Manitoba Federation of Labour Safety and Health Conferences in 2016 and 2017.

To Sandy Ironside and Betty Harrison – special thanks for administrative support to the committee and fundamentally keeping us fed, watered and housed! An appreciation to Laurie Bleeks and Graham Dowdell and the MGEU Membership Education Standing Committee for their continued support of our course work and membership training.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Congratulations to Steve Smith on his retirement and contributions to the committee!

Respectfully submitted,
On behalf of the Committee,

Charlotte McWilliams, Chairperson
Safety, Health & Environment Committee