

**REPORT OF THE  
SAFETY, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
TO THE MGEU 66<sup>TH</sup> CONVENTION 2021**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Area 1** Cherie Lauk

**Area 2** Susan Grandbois

**Area 3** Rita Machado-Tichit/Brian Latimer

**Area 4** Robert Smith

**Area 5** Susan Smerchanski

**Area 6** Diana Stafford/Brenda Buleziuk

**Area 7** Gary McLeod

**Area 8** Monique Braconnier

**Chair** Michelle Scebenski/Charlotte McWilliams/Bev Smith

**Staff** Blaine Duncan, Health and Safety Specialist  
Janelle Sherry, Administrative Assistant  
Betty Harrison, Administrative Assistant

The MGEU standing committee on Safety, Health, and Environment has convened periodically since Convention 2018. The pandemic has necessitated a transition to virtual meetings.

**INITIATIVES**

The Committee continued mental health awareness as a priority for this term. We are pleased to support the MGEU Healthy Minds at Work campaign, in partnership with The Canadian Mental Health Association. The campaign has been shared with our participation at Area Councils, via webinars, webpage, and through MGEU educationals. The Committee thanks: Jill Stockwell, Jean-Guy Bourgeois, John Baert, and Michelle Gawronsky for campaign updates. Thanks to Blaine Duncan and Susan Smerchanski for participating in the MGEU Healthy Minds at Work Advisory Committee.

Chairpersons Charlotte McWilliams and Michelle Scebenski participated in the National Union of Public and General Employees' Advisory Committee on the Environment.

The Committee attended the Occupational Health Centre RSI Day Virtual Event - Making the Link between Psychosocial Factors & Musculoskeletal Injuries (MSI) February 2021.

The Committee also explored "Regenerative Agriculture" as an environmentally sustainable practice. Regenerative agriculture practices promote biodiversity via cover crops and crop rotation, eliminates or decreases tillage, reduces the use of artificial fertilizers, and includes regenerative grazing management for livestock.

The Committee participated in the University of Manitoba Climate Action research project "Workers, Unions, and Climate Change - Share Your Views". Thanks to Mark Hudson, project lead, for involving MGEU members.

Area 8 Standing Committee member Monique Braconnier attended the Construction Safety Association of Manitoba Safety Conference January 2019.

COVID-19 dominated discussions at recent meetings and included prevention measures/public health orders and recommendations, evolution of knowledge, working remotely, mental health during COVID-19, employer obligations, and lack of workplace standards. On April 27, 2021, the Committee attended the Aird Berlis webinar "Lessons learned from the Pandemic".

Due to COVID-19 restrictions preventing Local and Area meetings, MGEU utilized standing committee members, MGEU Resource Centre, and our website to get information to members. Please visit the MGEU homepage (“Workplace Safety and Health” tab) for answers to frequently asked questions on resolving common issues and worker rights as well as the COVID-19 Information webpage.

The Committee participated in the annual April 28<sup>th</sup> Day of Mourning events in 2019, 2020, and 2021. Many thanks to Safe Workers of Tomorrow and the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL) for organizing these important days of remembrance.

### **AFFILIATES**

Manitoba Federation of Labour Health and Safety Committee:

- Monique Braconnier
- Rita Machado-Tichit
- Brian Latimer/Bev Smith/Robert Smith

The Committee participated in the annual MFL Safety, Health, and Environment Conference in fall 2019 in Thompson. Unfortunately, the Conference was cancelled fall of 2020 due to the pandemic. The MFL has tentatively planned the next Conference for January 2022.

### **SAFE WORKERS OF TOMORROW**

The MGEU Safety, Health, and Environment Committee continues its support of the Safe Workers of Tomorrow organization. The organization makes presentations to students, young adults, and newcomers 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.

### **EDUCATION**

We strive to equip members with knowledge to address safety and health concerns within their workplaces. Since Convention 2018, each of the following courses were delivered in Winnipeg, Brandon/Dauphin, and Thompson/The Pas:

- Basic Health and Safety
- Violence in the Workplace
- Workplace Wellness/Stress
- Safety and Health Programs
- Ergonomics
- Committee Co-Chair Basics and Management Responsibility
- Building a Respectful Workplace
- Environmental Stewardship

With in-person courses being interrupted by COVID-19 during 2020/2021, MGEU courses have also been delivered using the online platform “Adobe Connect”.

A number of safety and health seminars were also held for Components, Locals, and Joint Work Location Safety and Health Committees.

**RECOGNITION**

The Committee would like to thank past members: Brenda Buleziuk, Susan Grandbois, Brian Latimer, Robert Smith, Bev Smith, and Charlotte McWilliams for their participation.

We would like to recognize the important contribution of the facilitators of our safety, health, and environment course: Blaine Duncan, Susan Smerchanski, Charlotte McWilliams, Umberto Wilner, Ron Bruneau, Michelle Scebenski, Tannis Chwartacki, Richard Hines, and Dean Werbiski.

A thank you to Blaine Duncan for all your work in overseeing the support for the Safety, Health, and Environment Committee and ensuring we stayed on track.

To Janelle Sherry - special thanks for administrative support to the Committee. Also an extension of appreciation to Laurie Bleeks and the MGEU Membership Education Standing Committee for their continued support of our course work and membership training.

With the global pandemic and the challenges of COVID-19, our members and the MGEU as a whole have had to rethink the way day-to-day business and life goes on. A huge thanks to all the MGEU staff and organization for the constant modifications to the way we deliver our services to members while ensuring a safe work environment for all involved during these times.

In Solidarity,

MGEU Safety, Health, and Environment Standing Committee

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