

DEC Notes

Information for OPSEU members at
Driver Examination Centres
Ministry of Transportation of Ontario



Issue #9 March 2003

OPSEU members refuse work at eight DEC's due to lack of answers on SARS

Eight Driver Examination Centres in Southern Ontario have been at a standstill since March 27 because of massive work refusals under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). Driver Examiners at Metro East, Downsview, John Rhodes, Aurora, Orangeville, Guelph, Kitchener and Oakville have refused to work until the employer provides them with answers to questions about how to deal with the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

The employer failed to respond to the union's demands for information, procedures and equipment to protect them in cases where a client may have come in contact with SARS.

Under Section 43 of the OHSA, individuals can refuse unsafe work and the employer is obliged to address the situation before work is resumed. If the parties are unable to resolve the dispute at the workplace, they must inform the Ministry of Labour who will send an Inspector to investigate. The Ministry of Labour inspector then must determine whether or not the work is safe and give a written report of that decision to the employer and the refusing worker.

Staff at the Downsview DEC had eight questions which the employer has been unable to answer. The employer had promised to provide information by noon March 27 but did not. The Metro East DEC in Scarborough was the first location where work refusals took place, followed by the other locations. The Ministry of Labour is now involved at some of the DEC's but has not completed its investigation nor

made a decision about the safety of the work.

OPSEU is providing advice and support to its members at these DEC locations, and is posting SARS updates on its web site at opseu.org.

Pension questions?

There will be a special session Thursday April 3, 5:30-8:30 at the OPSEU Convention, Sheraton Centre, Conference Room E, about your pension benefits, rights and entitlements during the transfer. If you would like a similar presentation in your area, please contact Paul Dunseith (as below).

Organizing: Contact OPSEU at 1-800-268-7376. Organizers for the DEC campaign are Paul Dunseith at ext.355, Ed Ogibowski at ext. 362 and Connie Huziak at ext. 327.

Your Job Security Officer : Judith Marion, OPSEU x 370 jmarion@opseu.org

Your Reasonable Efforts Committee: John O'Brien, Hm. (807)-628-8066; cell (807)-628-4364; jobrien2@tbaytel.net; Gail Kreutzkamp home (519)-742-4017; Stephan Michnowiec, pager, 416-405-0050 gaillkreutzkamp@hotmail.com

Your MERC Team: John O'Brien (as above), Serge Valcourt (705) 472-7900 x 6490, Robert Houston (519) 372-4045, Peggy Maybury (416) 235-4218. Or contact your Staff Representative or the steward in your workplace.

Authorized for Distribution:

Leah Casselman, President

DEC Notes is published as a regular update for OPSEU staff in Driver Examiner Centres.
For more information see <http://www.opseu.org/campaign/mtooindex.htm> on the OPSEU web site.