

Safety Sound-off

VIDC Occupational Health & Safety Committee Newsletter

Screen Time

It starts the minute we wake up to our smart-phone's alarm and check the screen. Our close visual relationship with our electronic devices has begun and will continue until we go to sleep. The more we focus our eyesight on computers and electronic devices, the more strain our eyes endure. The term computer vision syndrome (CVS) or digital eye strain refers to vision problems related to working on computer-related (including desktop, laptop and tablets) and other electronic display-related (e.g. smartphones, smart-watches and e-readers) devices. CVS includes eyestrain, headaches, blurred vision, dry eyes, and neck and shoulder pain.

Many workers spend 7 hours a day on a computer and, according to a State University of New York Study, many individuals spend more than 10 hours per day viewing these displays, frequently without adequate breaks.

Here are some tips for preventing or reducing the symptoms of computer vision syndrome.

- ◆ Make sure you're wearing the right glasses for the job if you wear glasses for distance, reading or both; tell your optometrist about your job tasks.
- ◆ Adjust your computer screen so it is 20-30 inches from your eyes and angle so there is no glare
- ◆ Remember your chair; adjust your chair according to your desk or workstation
- ◆ Rest your eyes periodically; after 20 minutes of screen time, focus on something 20 feet away for at least 6 seconds
- ◆ Remember to blink, keeping your eyes moist to prevent dry eye
- ◆ Position reference materials so they are above the keyboard, below the monitor or use a document holder beside the monitor

Source: www.ccohs.ca

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Heath & Safety

Dates to Remember

- ◆ **Jan 21, 2018:** Joseph Mairs Memorial
- ◆ **Feb 28, 2018:** Stop Bullying Day

Fatal Ammonia Leak at Municipal Arena

Submitted by *Martha Higgins*

Condolences to the family and friends of those workers who lost their lives in Fernie this past October. Wayne Hornquist, 59, Lloyd Smith, 52, and Jason Podloski, 46, died October 17 while making emergency repairs to the refrigeration plant at the Fernie Memorial Arena. Hornquist and Smith were both City of Fernie employees and CUPE members, and Podloski was a CIMCO Refrigeration employee.

While the cause is still unknown and will take a while to determine, WorkSafeBC is undertaking an ammonia inspection initiative. From now until December 31, WorkSafeBC will be conducting an inspection initiative focused on risk assessment,

exposure control plans, and work procedures, as well as emergency response and evacuation plans for ammonia exposure.

The OH&S Coordinator at the City of Powell River volunteered the municipality's Recreation Complex to be first. The resulting Inspection Report brought to light some important issues to be addressed. These include the importance of a thorough risk assessment including clearly identifying all hazards and control options, and following through with an exposure control plan that identifies safe work procedures and emergency response procedures. Continuous monitors and alarms must also be visible and audible inside the chiller or compressor rooms or where

workers could encounter a hazardous situation; this also includes access to immediate access to an emergency shower or eyewash station within 5seconds walking distance of the hazard area. With 7 orders in total, it made our employer sit up and pay attention!

As a head's up to joint committees, things like these along with working alone procedures and respiratory protection are all things WorkSafeBC will be watching for as they make their rounds.

I would like to also recommend that committees take the proactive step and look at your chlorine systems with the same lens to bring items up to snuff safety wise.

Welcome to our VIDC Health and Safety Newsletter.

Our Committee members are:
Sarah Fairbrass, Chair;
Martha Higgins; Sherrene Ross.

www.vidc.cupe.ca



What's Wrong With This Picture?

There are some things seriously wrong with this picture!! See if you can spot the issues and send them by January 31, 2018 to: vpcupc374@gmail.com to have your name entered to win a prize. The lucky winner will be announced at the next VIDC meeting and list of issues will be published in the next newsletter along with the next photo!



Last Issue `s Winner:
Michele Faverger