



CUPE 4153 Update

April 17th, 2025

WSIB Accommodations

After a stewards meeting yesterday, I was encouraged to share again a very important piece when there's a workplace injury.

When there's a workplace injury - WSIB will have a list of modifications they have determined based on the reported injury that are acceptable for the employer to offer you to get you back to work. We have asked at Staff Relations that all WSIB offers of modification come from the ESW Department in writing. We have had members called on their personal phone by their supervisor and ask them if they'll accept those modifications over the phone and yes, some of those phone calls have come while members are still in urgent care or emergency in hospital. The problem or issue with doing any of this verbally is that there's no record of it and in the moment in a crowded emergency room - are you able to understand the modifications you're being offered? I don't think so. An email from ESW outlining the modifications being offered is the best practice way to go in our opinion.

When you have received the offer of modifications - the advice and opinion of the Local is that you **DO NOT DECLINE THEM**. Declining WSIB modifications is the easiest way to have your claim denied. And yes, they can do that based on the powers given to WSIB through legislation. This could potentially leave members in a repayment position with the HWDSB for repayment of sick days and nobody wants to owe their employer money.

The advice and opinion of the Local is that you accept the WSIB modifications - try them for at least one shift. If there's pain, discomfortability or you just can't do the modified work no matter what you try - you need to contact ESW and ask for a meeting with them to look at the modifications and if they are suitable or not. You should also be in touch with your doctor and get their opinion on what you should be doing at work. Explain your job to your doctor - lifting, walking, stairs, garbage removal, mopping, vacuuming, etc. - and how your injury will affect your ability to do that safely while making a full return to work. Have them fill out an FAF with their input and opinion on what your return to work should look like. It is ultimately the responsibility of the board to ensure you have a safe and practical return to the workplace.

See You Around Joe!

If you see Joe Febbraro around work today - please take a moment to wish him well in his retirement - today is his last day with the board. It's because of members like Joe that the board is able to keep buildings open and functioning with the amount of use our buildings get on a daily basis. Joe has always been a friendly face around work with a great attitude towards everyone and we want to wish him well in his retirement. You've earned it Joe - go and enjoy it!

I wasn't sure what to call this last part so I didn't put a title to it.

As some of you already know, Dave Dickhout our Chief Steward got some very disturbing news over the Christmas break about his health. Dave has been off work since then and we've had a few conversations since he's been off but largely we've tried not to bother him while he's dealing with some health issues and deserves his privacy. Well, on Tuesday I had a good long phone call with Dave and he told me it was his intention to resign his union positions. He followed that up with a letter to the Executive Tuesday afternoon. So, as of the end of this month, our Chief Steward position will be vacant and will be up for election in June.

Dave has been a big part of this Local for a number of years and was involved with other unions before coming to CUPE. Dave has always had a very strong sense of service to our members and looking out for the Local and its future. Dave was never one to shy away from lobbying for better treatment of our members by the employer and our own elected reps. I've had the opportunity and the pleasure of serving with Dave for a number of years and while we've had some good old arguments - we always had the same goal in mind - what's best for the Local and our members in

the long term. We joked on the phone the other day about it never being personal between us and that was the truth. I know Dave to be a great husband, father and son. There was many a day that we would talk on his drive home and I knew how close to home he was when the call would go mute for about 4-5 seconds (due to a drop zone of coverage) and then we would carry on and in a few more minutes he'd be home.

Dave is not retiring yet - just resigning his positions so that they can be filled and the Local can be fully staffed and ready for mobilizing, organizing and bargaining coming up within the next year or so.

The Executive and Stewards all want to thank Dave for his dedication and service to the Local and it's members for a number of years. Without his skills and leadership our Local wouldn't be at the point it is today. If you have the opportunity today or this weekend, please let Dave know you appreciate his service to the Local for nearly 15 years. Let's flood his email with good stories and thanks and wish him good health moving forward!

Cheers,

Blake