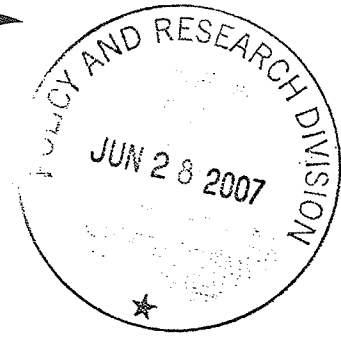


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June 25, 2007

WorkSafeBC  
Prevention Policy & Regulation Review Department  
Policy and Research Division  
PO Box 5350 Station Terminal  
Vancouver, BC  
V6B 5L5

Dear Sirs:

RE: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO OH&S REGULATION PART 4: GENERAL  
CONDITIONS

I am writing to provide comment on the above proposed amendment.

The definition of "to work alone or in isolation" is far too inclusive. Including "in ill health" as criteria is problematic for employers. No employer is able to predict or assess when an employee will be "in ill health". There are many employees in the workplace who currently take medications to treat their medical conditions and I would suggest, most supervisors and managers are not aware of an employee's specific medical condition and any possible risks. Workers would need to disclose this medical information to employers so that the appropriate controls are put in place. This would constitute a significant invasion of privacy with the disclosure of this confidential medical data.

The existing regulation 4.21 (1) provides a more workable framework for safeguarding the workforce with respect to Working Alone or In Isolation matters. The proposed 4.21, with the removal of "under conditions which present a risk of disabling injury", would mean every employer in the province would need to create a written procedure for nearly every employee. Examples would be a secretary who is alone in the office over lunch time, or someone who arrives at the office earlier or stays later than everyone else. In situations where there is no risk of disabling injury due to the type of work, the employee could become ill with the flu and not be able to call for help. The requirement on the employer is too onerous and, as a result, full compliance will unlikely occur.

Employee health & safety is important to all of us. That being said, employers should not be held responsible for medical conditions which result in workplace incidents when they are not aware of and do not control such conditions.

The Risk Assessment process should be incorporated so that an employer looks at situations where there is a reasonable risk of injury. Every worker could be at risk of ill health. The proposed changes are too broad to be workable or enforceable.

The existing Regulation is a more balanced and reasonable approach, where the requirements apply to situations where workers are alone, where there is a risk of injury, and where they would not be able to secure immediate assistance.

The City of Victoria is fully supportive of efforts to protect workers who work in all-night retail outlets such as gas stations and convenience stores. Providing a safer place for them to work is important. The impact of applying too broad of a brush in order to achieve that, will make any changes unworkable.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to these changes.

Yours truly,



Alan Robb

Manager, Health Safety Rehabilitation and Training