



May 17, 2016

Forest Fires and Air Quality: Fort McMurray

Sisters/Brothers:

The heartbreaking situation in Fort McMurray speaks for itself. Once again, forest fires have hit Northern Alberta and threaten nearby communities. They also affect air quality, which may make physical work even more difficult now and in the weeks ahead.

For now, mail delivery has been suspended in Fort McMurray. However, neighbouring towns will also be dealing, if they are not already, with poor air quality, which may deteriorate to the point where working outside becomes very difficult.

People with respiratory issues may be at risk and should monitor the situation closely.

Canada Post has taken precautionary steps in locations where air quality is threatened because of the forest fires. The Local Joint Health and Safety Committee must be part of the decision-making process regarding such steps on a day-to-day basis. The following is a broad outline of the measures that will be implemented:

If the air quality reading reaches 10 or more (very high risk), based on the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI), Canada Post will apply the following measures:

- **Foot routes:** delivery is suspended;
- **Motorized routes:** delivery to apartment buildings and businesses only;
- **Employees with cardiac or pulmonary issues:** exempted from

delivery (but must inform their immediate supervisor);

- **Employees affected by air quality while covering their route:** must return to the postal facility and inform their immediate supervisor of the situation. No questions should be asked.

When air quality has improved, Canada Post will ask workers to attempt mail delivery and inform their supervisor of any delivery issues.

CUPW believes this process should be followed each time air quality is an issue.

If you feel that the air quality makes your work unsafe, discuss it with your health and safety representative or a member of your Local Joint Health and Safety Committee. You can exercise your right to refuse at any time. Urban members can refer to clause 33.13 of the collective agreement, while RSMCs and private sector unit members are governed by the health and safety provisions of the *Canada Labour Code*.

Report any incident or discomfort caused by air quality. An investigation will then have to be conducted by a supervisor in the presence of a union representative.

In Solidarity,



Marc Roussel
National Union Representative
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