



USW LOCAL 9346

Your monthly news & updates

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Upcoming Events

General Membership Meeting - Our next scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at 5:30pm at the Union Hall located at 111 Centennial Square, Sparwood.

Shop Steward Meeting - January 13, 2025 at 4:30pm at the Union Hall

Safety Rep Meeting - February 20, 2025 at 4:30pm at the Union Hall



Apprenticeships

In order to be considered for an apprenticeship, you need to write an assessment exam. Exams are held at the College of the Rockies in Fernie. Elkview will also pay for Math upgrading if you need it. Also, the exam has been revised recently and aligned better with Industry Standards.

We have received the updated Apprenticeship Exam Date poster from EVR. Click the link below to view.

[APPRENTICESHIP EXAM POSTER](#)



Union Assistance Plan - Beneficiary Cards

The Union Assistance Plan is a program run out of our United Steelworkers District 3. If you belong to this program, a benefit of \$2500 is paid out to your beneficiary immediately upon your death. If you see \$0.70 coming off your paycheck once a month called **'Union Dues USW Assist Vol.'** then you belong to this program. (If you do not belong and want to sign up, please come see Sarah at the Union Hall.) You will have also signed a yellow beneficiary card and we keep these at the Union Hall.

A lot of our members forget about this benefit and forget to keep their beneficiary cards current. We can only pay out to the beneficiary listed on your beneficiary card. If your life situations change over the years, please make sure you are also coming in to the Union Hall to check/update your beneficiary cards.



Shop Stewards and Safety Reps Needed

Shop Stewards Needed:

Operations - B and C Crew
Maintenance - All Crews
Plant - C and D Crew

Safety Reps Needed:

Maintenance - All Crews except E and F Crew
Plant - A Crew

If you are interested in becoming a rep, please call the Union Hall at 250-425-0131 or stop in during business hours (111 Centennial Square Sparwood, M-F 8:30am - 4:30pm)



Congratulations to our Retirees from the Last 6 Months



Kieron Ross Retired August 8, 2024 from the Plant at EVO. He started at EVO in 2004.



Larry McGregor Retired on October 4, 2024. He started on site in 2012.



Gaetan Dube Retired from EVO on December 2, 2024. He started on the claim on Feb 16, 1976 underground.

Retiree's Not Pictured...

Calvin Dyer - May 12, 2024
Randy Battel - June 3, 2024

Rick Worobey - August 1, 2024
Grant Burnett - August 8, 2024
Victor (Joe) Lavallee - November 1, 2024
Neil Fiss - November 25, 2024
John McNeil - November 29, 2024
Peter Rosner - December 3, 2024
Bob Lepine - December 5, 2024
Rick Klassen - December 12, 2024

We wish all of our Retiree's health and happiness in the next chapter of their lives.

Messages from your Local Union Executive

President's Message

Brothers, Sisters, and Friends:

As 2024 comes to a close we have seen many things this last year that have surprised even the veteran miners.

We have now seen several collisions between autonomous haul trucks and multiple course outs. All things that Management told us could never happen because the robots are safer drivers than humans. We have seen a massive increase in discipline because you got in the way of the robot's permission lines and slowed the trucks down, and we have gone from the most productive mine in the Valley to the least productive one, all because of the fact there has been so much money thrown at these robots to try to make them as productive as human beings. These robot trucks are being run at such speeds that they are tearing themselves apart. The company has now decided to help the robot trucks be more productive by allowing them to be dumped a -2% grade on the dumps. Back when I first got hired if your dump wasn't going uphill, you were pulled off your dozer and written up for it.

The company will claim it's safe because no one is driving the trucks - but how soon before one of them tries to back itself over the berm? Oh, wait that's happened already too.

We can only hope our new owners Glencore can see thru the BS that management is spreading about these trucks.

Please stay diligent and if you notice anything out of the ordinary with these robot trucks, please inform your Supervisor and Safety Rep.

There have been concerns brought up with the use of contractors in the Dry at the AMC building. This is being done temporarily so we can figure out how many more Dry attendants are going to be needed, and this also cuts down on our permanent Dry Attendants having to train new people every few days.

We would also like to address the concerns around contractor scraper operators. The operators have come with the rental equipment as a package deal. We are waiting on parts and repairs to our scrapers once these repairs have been completed the contractors will be replaced by our people running our equipment.

Management seems to be coming down hard on the use of cell phones and sleeping. The use of cell phones on site is going to get you fired so ensure they are turned off and left in your locker. Everyone knows what it's like to sit on a broken piece of equipment or in the fuel bay on a night shift can get pretty tiresome very quickly, so if you're getting tired, please call your supervisor have a chat with them or get them to bring you some coffee.

With Safety being a big issue on site these days and with there being a lot of people voicing their concerns about the Robot trucks, the Union has once again inquired about a full time Safety Chair position to which Management has told us that is a "Bargaining issue" "we don't need Safety Police." Well, the Union takes the stance if you are truly committed to safety there should be no reason to not have a Full time Safety Chair position and unfortunately the Union has been given several reasons to feel the need to police safety issues. If we have to wait for Bargaining this is definitely going to be one of our top issues.

Please keep an eye out for those around you! It's up to each and everyone of us to ensure we go safe at the end of every shift. If you see someone doing something that could get them injured or worse, please do not hesitate to stop them and make sure that they are aware of the risks while they do their job. Reach out to a supervisor or Union rep if you are unsure about how to do assigned tasks safely.

Local 9346 wishes you and your family Seasons Greetings and Best Wishes for the Holiday Season and the Happiest New Year.

In Solidarity,

Scott Liddle
President
scottl@usw9346.ca

Vice President's Message

HOT CHANGES/RUN-THROUGHS

Running through breaks has been around for awhile, it was a means to keep up with the production the company was trying to achieve by running equipment like tramming loaders through breaks to feed the plant without any interruptions. Later it moved on to other equipment like drills or graders in the winter months to keep the roads open.

It carried on like that for awhile until the company started asking for more run-throughs from shovel operators and truck drivers. It got to the point where operators felt like they were being pushed or bullied into running through their breaks. In 2014, the union stepped in to push back on these practices. The union felt breaks were needed to overcome fatigue and maintain a safe work environment. The company argued it wasn't forcing anyone to run through breaks, but still needed to remain productive on site. It was later agreed on, that members could work their breaks if they wished, but could also decline without any repercussions or discipline.

Time went on, the company continued to offer more and more opportunities to run-through breaks. As people agree to run-through their breaks they started to see the reward on their paychecks. Every run through made payday that much better. This went on until it seemed to become more normal operating practices. People started expecting to run through their breaks with very little complaints from anyone. Of course, anyone that felt they needed a break could turn down the run through, but the inflated pay checks were making a big impact.

Now, here lays a couple of problems. Some people have come to rely on this increased cash flow in their everyday lives. Whether it's to buy the extra toys in life, spending it on their loved ones, or just to help pay for the increased cost of living the world has thrown at us. Some find it tough to make ends meet when those run-throughs are not there. Now the rumors are starting to circulate that a few people are calling in run-throughs daily, that they haven't earned. This is starting to attract the attention of management. Which, no doubt about it, is time theft. Caught doing this can result in serious discipline up to and including termination. That leaves the union in a very difficult position to fight for your job. We are not here to tell you how to live your lives, just trying to inform you of the consequences of said actions.

As for the second issue, management has been handing out this perk freely and can see that people are really enjoying this. It appears that this is being used as the proverbial carrot on a string to help management keep individuals towing the company line. Stepping away from this is resulting in having that carrot snatched from them. This is something that can't be proven and management will always deny it, but watching the tell tail signs it's pretty apparent its happening.

Just a reminder that hot changes, run-throughs and even overtime are not guaranteed. Please try not to rely on them as part of your normal wages.

In Solidarity,
Ray Banga Jr.
Vice President

Safety Chair's Message

Dear Union Members,

As your Union Occupational Health & Safety Chair, I am committed to advocating for your rights in the workplace and ensuring that you are aware of the protections and entitlements that you have as a Canadian worker. Whether you're just starting your career in mining or have years of experience, it's important to know the basic rights that protect you and help ensure a safe, fair, and respectful working environment.

Today, I am highlighting three important fundamental rights that every worker has:

1 - The Right to Know

Every worker has the right to know about any hazards they may be exposed to in the workplace. This includes:

- **Right to Information:** Employers are required by law to inform workers about potential health and safety hazards that exist in the workplace, such as chemicals, machinery, or other risks. This also includes being included in or informed about information communicated during safety meetings and or tailgate meetings and incidents that had been taken place on site/sites.

Knowing about workplace hazards and how to protect yourself is the first step to ensuring a safe work environment.

2 - The Right to Participate

The right to participate in workplace health and safety is fundamental. This right allows workers to:

- **Report Hazards and Concerns:** You have the right to bring up concerns about unsafe working conditions to your employer or safety committee, and they are required to take appropriate action. Please read **Article 4 safety and health** in your Collective Bargaining agreement.

3 - The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

Perhaps the most powerful right you have as a worker is the right to refuse unsafe work. This means:

- **Work Refusal:** If you believe that the work you are being asked to do puts your health or safety at risk, you have the right to refuse to perform that work.
- **Protection Against Retaliation:** You cannot be penalized, disciplined, or fired for refusing unsafe work. The law protects you from any negative consequences as a result of standing up for your safety.
- **Employer's Responsibility:** When you refuse unsafe work, your employer must investigate the situation and take steps to eliminate the hazard. If the issue remains unresolved, you can escalate the situation to your Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee for further action.

It is essential to trust your instincts and use this right if you ever feel that your safety is at risk.

As your union OHSC, I am here to support you in asserting these rights. If you feel that your rights are being violated or if you have concerns regarding any of the issues above, do not hesitate to reach out. Together, we can ensure that your workplace remains a safe, fair, and respectful environment for all.

Stay informed, stay empowered, and never hesitate to contact me if you need support. Your rights matter!

In solidarity,

Frank Roesger
H&S Chair
JOHSEC - Co-Chair
frankr@usw9346.ca

Grievance Chair's Message

Brothers, Sisters, Siblings,

With the membership growing faster and faster and more senior members retiring, we are faced with the challenge of many new workers navigating the mining world with less available help from experienced co-workers. While all members are provided company based training, some of the best experience comes from learning from experienced peers.

I urge everyone to remember to look out for each other, help others when you can. For the members with years of experience, be patient with newer members and lend them your experience. For newer members, be a sponge and realize that there is a great deal of knowledge you can gain from each other, take your time to learn, and if you are not sure of how to do something, or you feel something is not safe or even does not feel right, STOP ask questions and never proceed with a task if you do not feel it is safe to do so.

With the AOE program still in its infancy, an ever growing membership, paired with the less senior membership mentioned above, we are noticing the rate we are having safety incidents to be climbing. If you ask any veteran miner, they will tell you how scary it can be when these trends start appearing. No one wants to see anyone hurt or killed at work, but never forget that we work in an industry where, if not taken seriously, these are very possible realities. With these concerns in mind, the Union has requested that the company consider having a full time safety chair working out of the union hall to help assist members and the company navigate these issues. The response from the company was that this is a bargaining issue, this means that it will not even be considered for another 2 years. With the safety concerns that we are seeing, 2 years is simply too long to wait.

On the topic of bargaining, our CBA expires in 2026. While many members have not been a part of bargaining a new contract, we would just like to remind everyone to start considering what that means to you. Prior to bargaining the membership will be provided a survey of important topics that will be brought forward in the bargaining process. While the goal is always to reach an agreement in good faith that has the best interest of the membership, the reality is that this does not always come easy and if it comes to a situation that leads to a worker strike, it is best to plan for that possibility as early as possible. This includes starting a strike fund. Start budgeting some money to put away and then in the event that we do end up in a strike we are all prepared to go the distance to get what we deserve.

As we roll into 2025 remember to stay safe, look out for each other, and stand strong in solidarity!!!

Happy holidays and a happy new year to all!

In Solidarity,

Dave Puszkas
Grievance Chair
250-425-0131
davep@usw9346.ca

WCB Chair's Message

There is a lot going on in the disability management front. From WCB appeals and dealing with Sunlife claims, things are quite busy.

We have had a lot of successes over this last year on WCB Appeals. A lot of people don't realize that the union can handle these appeals on your behalf and there is no cost to this for you for this service. All that is needed is for you to contact me to get some forms signed so that I can be your authorized representative. I don't get notice of your claims or potential appeals unless you authorize it to come to me.

I have heard from some members as well that they thought that reporting an incident to the employer was all that is needed when you are injured. This is incorrect. You need to file a claim with WCB and get a claim number. The easiest way to do this is call WorksafeBC at 1-888-WORKERS and file a teleclaim. They will ask you all the necessary questions to get your claim going. You should also be making an appointment with your doctor so they can send in the necessary medical reports in regards to your injury.

In NO case, should an injured worker NOT report a work injury to the WCB. Without a compensation claim, the worker's injury is not recognized as a work injury. The worker will have no rights to health care benefits, wage loss (if the injury gets worse), a pension in cases of permanent injuries, or coverage for any compensable consequences of worsening over time.

Filing a WCB claim does not mean it has to be a lost time incident, especially if the employer can offer safe, suitable work right away. WCB can accept claims for health care benefits only, if there is no wage loss. That way you will have the injury documented properly with the Board and have something to fall back on in case things change overtime. There is a one year deadline from date of injury to file a claim with WorksafeBC.

If you have any questions on any of this, please feel free to contact me.

I can be reached at the Union hall at 250-425-0131 for all of your administrative and disability management needs.

I would like to wish all of our members a Happy and Safe Holiday Season!

In Solidarity,

Sarah Thompson

Office Admin/WCB Chair/WOS Co-Chair
admin@usw9346.ca

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