



HEU recognizes National Day of Mourning

On April 28, HEU is joining unions across Canada to mark National Day of Mourning, which remembers workers killed, injured or disabled at work, and reaffirms our commitment to hold employers accountable for ensuring safe, healthy workplaces.

On this day, annual ceremonies throughout B.C. will honour workers injured or killed on the job and those who have died from work-related incidents or occupational disease.

The National Day of Mourning was officially recognized by the federal government in 1991, eight years after the day of remembrance was launched by the Canadian Labour Congress. The Day of Mourning has since spread to about 80 countries around the world.

According to WorkSafeBC's October 2016 stats report, there were 145,803 workers injured on the job; 2,970 occupational disease claims, and 122 workers who died because of a workplace incident in 2015 – a slight decrease from 2014.

“Health care continues to have the highest workplace injury rate of all sectors in this province,” said HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside. “And care aides – particularly those working in long-term care sites – are even more vulnerable to injuries and exposure to violence on the job.”

WorkSafeBC reports, “The top three incident types – assaults, hitting, and bodily reactions/exertions – account for 70 per cent of all acts of workplace violence within the Health Care and Social Services subsector.”

To raise awareness among HEU members and their families about the importance of the National Day of Mourning, the union's People with disAbilities Standing Committee is holding its popular children's colouring contest, as part of its Blue Poppy Campaign. Details are available at www.heu.org, under Hot Picks.

In many communities, labour organizations, unions and government agencies hold public ceremonies including speeches, lighting candles, wearing ribbons, laying flowers and wreaths, observing a moment of silence, unveiling monuments, planting trees, releasing balloons, and laying out empty shoes or hard hats to symbolize those who have died at work.

For events in your community, check with your local labour council or visit the B.C. Federation of Labour's website <bcfed.ca>.

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