

## 2012 Health & Safety Law Level II - Provincial

I would like to thank the Executive for allowing Enza and I to attend the Workers Health and Safety Level II Law (Provincial). The 10-week course which ran each Wednesday evening covered a lot of valuable information such as

- how laws are made (why after such a tragic incident as the warehouse fire involving women and young children locked in that building had to burn to death to bring about change);
- how a law becomes a law;
- right to refuse work
- different components of the Joint Health and Safety Committee (training, meetings and minutes, posting of members, inspections, confidentiality issues, etc.)
- duties of inspectors, orders and appeals
- Regulations

There were so many instances each evening where part of the book was covered but a lot of discussions took place by the participants involving workplace incidents, circumstances and how situations were handled. In particular, discussion was quite involved about the “Westray Bill” where in 1992, a spark from mining machinery in Nova Scotia ignited a pocket of methane gas causing a coal dust explosion. The entire shaft crew of 26 workers died. From the point of ignition to the finish, the event lasted less than a minute but had a profound effect on the law as workers and public united to have a public inquiry acknowledged. The employer had a history of safety violations, disregarded existing regulations, were guilty of collusion with government inspectors and officials – the list goes on. The Manager and Supervisors were never fined or prosecuted despite the many violations.

What a great learning experience which can be applied to any workplace. Although the fight still goes on to bring safety issues to workers, you never stop trying to make sure everyone goes home safely at the end of the day.

Yours in solidarity,

Marg Lemoine