

December 14, 2017



# In-Touch

A message from your health and safety committee

Dear member,

As the year draws to a close, we thought it would be timely to provide an update on some of the more important issues that the Union has worked on this past year to ensure a healthy and safe workplace for our members. Should you be interested in knowing more about an issue not covered here, please reach out to us at [sante.health@acomponent.ca](mailto:sante.health@acomponent.ca), and it will be our pleasure to provide you an update by email or phone.

From your Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Committee, Happy Holidays and New Year!

#### **Delhi Air Quality Information**

It has come to our attention that a link we previously provided is not updating and gives outdated data. For future reference, please click [HERE](#) for data on the Delhi air quality index, and select the "R.K. Puram monitoring station", which is closest to the crew hotel. The site also has band graph which has the Air Quality Index (AQI) results for the whole day, and allows you to view results from previous dates. Please note that when viewing older dates, the main Air Quality Index (AQI) number shown is often the 11PM reading, please ensure you view the daytime figures using the band graph.

#### **Right to Contact the Union**

It is every employee's responsibility to promptly report any potential safety hazards to the employer, we can't stress enough how important this is. ***However, it is also every unionized employee's right to seek counsel and representation from their Union.*** Recently it has come to our attention that some members may have been told or encouraged otherwise.

The Union **CAN** offer support to its members if established programs, policies, statutory rights (Labour Code), or bargained items are being violated. Furthermore, your Union Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) representatives may raise issues directly at the Policy Health & Safety Committee if they are system-wide in nature. ***As such, it is perfectly acceptable, and necessary to maintain a dialogue with the Union about your experience as an employee when it comes to health and safety.***

If you have any questions about your health and safety rights and responsibilities under the Collective Agreement or the Canada Labour Code, or the process, we will be pleased to discuss this with you.

#### **Keep the Union In the Loop**

While we do try to follow Facebook for OHS-related threads, and have asked moderators to tag us when these pop up, as we simply can't monitor these groups 24/7. Please make sure to at least **copy/paste your comments/questions into an email and send it our way.** If in doubt, send your email to [sante.health@acomponent.ca](mailto:sante.health@acomponent.ca) and we will forward it to the right place.

#### **You've Only Got One Back...**

This year, the In-Flight Service Policy Health and Safety Committee Policy Committee at Mainline has worked hard with the Company to obtain a new third party back safety training at In-Flight Service. This started in spring 2017, when all your Union Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) representatives undertook the instructor training in Toronto. We are now working with the Company to get this important, updated training added to recurrent training as a module. The new program is engaging, simple, and practical, and has been demonstrated to significantly reduce back injuries in other aviation workplaces. Most recently, your Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) representatives participated in the development and filming of all new training videos.

In the meantime, whether you work at Mainline or Rouge, you can avoid injury by:

- ***ALWAYS using two people to bring a bar cart to the front of the cabin.*** Some

new short-haul service sequences have made this more difficult, but it's your right to take the time necessary to ensure you don't hurt yourself. Everyone in management is aware that full-size bar carts must be moved up the cabin using two people.

- **Not using broken equipment.** If a drawer is jammed, a canister/trolley cannot be pulled out, don't injure yourself. The official procedure is to properly identify the broken equipment using reporting tools in chapter 2 of your manual, log any non-removable equipment issues, and modify the service accordingly. Ensure to file a report documenting the need to modify service as a result of inoperative equipment and/or inaccessible supplies.

It is very costly to the Company when workers are injured on the job, and *much more importantly*, it is very challenging for you to recover from a back injury such that you can come back to work and enjoy your life at home. **Safe work practices are a win for everyone, let's not lose sight of that in the name of service and OTP.**

#### **Continuing Education for Union Representatives**

To better serve you, we have attended the following trainings over the past year:

- Fall 2016, 1-day training hosted at Component with Brian Murray, a specialist in trauma and workplace stress, Safety management from Rouge and Mainline, as well as Mainline training also attended.
- Spring 2017, 2-day Transport Canada Fit-to-Fly conference. This focussed on the upcoming changes to cannabis laws in Canada and the role of well-being, employee assistance, and critical incident support programs in the workplace. Attended by Occupational Health & Safety (OHS), EAP, Committees and certain Air Canada Component Executive (ACCEX) members.
- Summer 2017, 4-day Flight Attendant Drug and Alcohol Program Conference. This focussed on a variety of substance use disorders and process addictions and mental health specific to our work as cabin crew. Attended by Occupational Health & Safety (OHS), EAP Committees and certain Air Canada Component Executive (ACCEX) members.
- Fall 2017, 2-day training organized by your Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) with subject matter experts regarding layover safety and security. Attended by Occupational Health & Safety (OHS), Hotels, and EAP Committees.

#### **New Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Representatives for Rouge!**

We would like to welcome Jeremy Perreault-Côté, Myriam Khazzari, and Christina Di Minno to the Component Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Committee team. In October, they did their Union Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) representative training in Toronto, and will be taking over from Robyn Jenkins who has assumed the role of Local 4098 President, and Kimberly Duarte Vasconcelos who is away on maternity leave. Thank you, Robyn, for your hard work, and we can't wait to have you back Kim!

#### **Communication – Exciting New Tools for Our Members**

We have listened and learned from members who have been affected by incidents over the past two years. This has resulted in a **huge effort** to develop new tools and processes to reach you, and allow you to reach us. These include:

- **Developing and testing email and/or phone access to the emergency line from anywhere in the world.** Click to download the contact sheet below for more details.
- Creation of a one-stop shop "Important Contacts" list as a downloadable PDF. It can be downloaded click [HERE](#). Print a copy for your bag, and keep the PDF on your device!
- A procedure to rapidly send important information to the *personal emails* of members following an incident. If you are unsure whether we have your **personal email** on file, send it to us at [contact@accomponent.ca](mailto:contact@accomponent.ca).
- Creation of the following email addresses, which send automated responses including crucial information, downloads, as well as CUPE important contacts (*all up and running by December 31, 2017*).
  - [incident@accomponent.ca](mailto:incident@accomponent.ca) - Info about layover safety and security, and follow-up.
  - [air@accomponent.ca](mailto:air@accomponent.ca) - What to do immediately following a fume event and other info.
  - [fatigue@accomponent.ca](mailto:fatigue@accomponent.ca) - Document your fatigue experience and help drive change!
  - [injury@accomponent.ca](mailto:injury@accomponent.ca) - Essential injury-on-duty and extended disability/WCB info.
  - [luggage@accomponent.ca](mailto:luggage@accomponent.ca) - Update us on luggage issues both at Mainline and Rouge.
  - [radiation@accomponent.ca](mailto:radiation@accomponent.ca) - Info, links, how to verify exposure using PCAire.
  - [rtr@accomponent.ca](mailto:rtr@accomponent.ca) - 24/7 access to Union's info and Labour Canada pamphlet.
- Ongoing development of an app, tied to the upcoming new Component website, which will allow for push notifications from the Union to the membership at large or

to specific groups or individuals.

#### **Are You Receiving Our Bulletins?**

If in doubt, send your info to [contact@acomponent.ca](mailto:contact@acomponent.ca). Please use your *personal* email.

#### **Luggage and Uniform – A Mini-Update from the Uniform and Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Committee**

Are you from Rouge and feeling left out with all the uniform/luggage talk at Mainline? No need. We included you on the luggage survey and got a huge response! As Rouge begins exploring new uniform and luggage options, the Component and your Local have uniform/luggage and Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) representatives ready to begin working with the company on this important project. You have not been forgotten!

Over at Mainline, Union Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) and Uniform Committee representatives, worked diligently over the past 14 months, to ensure that you get a new uniform, and new luggage allotment which is safe.

For the uniform, we focussed on ensuring that there were **quick-release** options for the tie/scarf. The uniform was also evaluated for **maximum range of movement** (and in some cases sent back for major design changes). Also addressed, was the need to **de-identify ourselves when away on layover**, resulting in almost no permanent visible branding, especially on outerwear, accessories, and luggage components. Lastly, a major concern for our membership was having a **warm coat for winter** and **fabric breathability** for the summer. Although we will get it a bit later than our ground colleagues due to manufacturing capacity limits, the new and improved warm winter parka is back! Our shirts, vests, and jackets also underwent numerous changes throughout the process to ensure comfort during the hot summer months, including the creation of a short-sleeved option.

For the luggage, we turned to the comments you provided in the Union survey, as well as our accident/injury statistics at the joint workplace Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Committees. We focused on maximum storable size, shape, **lowest possible weight**, **good balance**, **wheel quality** and type (spinner or 2-wheel), zipper types (YKK), **premium integrated locking mechanisms**, **stronger handle styles**, double stitching, worldwide warranty, and smart interior design since this affects whether we can bring appropriate food and clothing to eat well and dress appropriately while away.

An unpopular, *but necessary decision* that we must address, was not to incorporate expansion zippers. This was based on serious injuries, breakage, as well as clear guidance from Transport Canada that our bags need to fit the specs of the Company's carry-on baggage program. The reality is that expansion zippers not only create a major structural weak-point (many of you have witnessed this first-hand), but also greatly alter the overall balance of the bag, resulting in poor ergonomics (how many times has your bag toppled over?). Add to that the increased weight and stowage problems on smaller aircraft, and it is an injury waiting to occur. The Union maintains that the solution for long-layover pairings remains a checked luggage program, with large, hard-case suitcases, similar to those in place at most other major airlines.

Knowing that returning to a traditional luggage size would be difficult, we worked hard with the uniform/luggage committee to ensure that internal storage would be as versatile as possible, yet include all the essentials. We requested that smart options be included for electronics without creating dedicated compartments, and that the lunchbox be the full width of the suitcase to increase storage, while maintaining a low profile to prevent collapse and maintain low center of gravity. Most importantly, the luggage was tested as if packing for a 4-day reserve pairing – manuals, boots, sweaters and all! Just to be sure, we still asked for, and received a half inch width increase on the shoulder tote.

The Committees still believe that locked storage that is quickly accessibly would be the best way to ensure security of our personal belongings onboard, but welcome the upgraded integrated zipper locks. As a result of losing the red zipper, your Union representatives suggested a **removable handle wrap** to prevent passengers from accidentally taking crew bags. We are pleased that this is being offered.

For any uniform/luggage suggestions or questions, please email [luggage@acomponent.ca](mailto:luggage@acomponent.ca).

***The new sleepwear survey is still open, have your say, click [HERE!](#)***

#### **Air Quality**

The Union continues to be heavily involved in addressing cabin air quality. To date this year, we have:

- Addressed cabin air quality with Transport Canada, *who recommended that the Union begin polling its membership on issues such as this*. Along with Air Canada

Pilots Association (ACPA), we are developing a survey.

- Attended a conference for unions and management in Fort Lauderdale, hosted by Spirit Airlines to discuss practical Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), technical, and training solutions for cabin air quality issues that can be implemented immediately.
- Participated in a cabin air quality conference in London, which was attended by industry and scientific experts to discuss the advances made in filtering cabin air, and diagnosing exposure to fumes.
- Through its continued membership and participation at the Global Cabin Air Quality Executive, an organization comprised of over 25 unions representing over 100,000 members:
  - Development of a mobile cabin fume event reporting system, based on International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) recommended reporting guidelines.
  - Ongoing research at a number of world-renowned educational institutions, with the goal of publishing papers on the mechanical causes of fume events, the physiological effects of exposure, as well as further development of testing methods.
  - Representation of labour interests at regulatory bodies including the European Aviation Safety Authority, and other relevant conferences.
- Ongoing work with other unions, including Air Canada Pilots Association (ACPA), to coordinate efforts regarding cabin air quality issues.
- The Union won it's judicial review of a no-danger decision related to a cabin air quality work refusal in 2014. The Federal Court has sent the file back to the Occupational Health and Safety Tribunal of Canada (OHSTC) for re-evaluation.
- Ongoing development of a nationwide program *for interested members* to have blood samples taken following fume events at the Union's expense. These would be frozen, with the goal of eventually sending them for testing at the University of Washington, when a definitive exposure test is completed (in the next 1 to 1.5 years).

#### **Cosmic Radiation**

The Union has addressed the issue of cosmic radiation with the company on a number of levels this past year. At the health and safety committees your representatives have overseen the implementation of further changes to the PCAire system for your Union and PBS bidding reps, with the goal of better assisting you with maintaining low levels. We have also addressed the company on a number of occasions in an attempt to better understand what options exist to mitigate crew exposure without infringing on seniority.

Most recently, we have raised the need for the Company to reach out to its best recruiters: front line employees. One of our biggest challenges is a shortage of language speakers for certain routes. By tapping into communities via its own employees, and hiring more people qualified in those languages, coverage awards could be avoided. This would allow everyone to bid a variety of flights in an effort to maintain lower overall exposure levels.

Should you know someone who speaks a route language and wants to apply to fly with us, please ensure that they apply via the Air Canada or Rouge hiring portal. We have been advised that some potential candidates had their resumes sent directly to management, ***which may actually result in them not finding their way to the hiring team.*** If you are at Mainline and want to personally refer someone, visit the Air Canada Aeronet Portal > HRConnex > Career & Development > AC Refer and Earn.

We would like to remind all our members that the current cosmic radiation program was **jointly developed and is jointly monitored by the policy committees**, and is also largely part of a memorandum of settlement resulting from a work refusal. For more information about the programs at Rouge and Mainline, and what resources are available please send a blank email to [radiation@accomponent.ca](mailto:radiation@accomponent.ca).

***If you are having difficulty with the cosmic radiation program, it is your right to seek counsel and representation from your Union.***

#### **Support Science That is Independent!**

There are endless charities and non-profits out there doing good work on countless issues. In this day and age where workers rights seem to be being chipped away, or downright trampled on, we would like to highlight the cause of Professor Colin Soskolne, a Montreal-based semi-retired epidemiologist.

In his "retirement" Colin is volunteering his time to counter the misuse of his discipline by ideological and moneyed interests. His organization the International Joint Policy Committee for the Societies of Epide (IJPC-SE) is well placed to help organizations like ours, by fulfilling its aim "to ensure health for all through ethical, independent and transparent science". The IJPC-SE has received some powerful endorsements from key members of society.

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The immediate goal of the IJPC is to have 500 **funding donors**. Presently, they need at least another 115 more donors by December 31, 2017. These are crucial – regardless of the amount contributed – to providing the organization credibility and give confidence to philanthropic foundations when submissions for more significant funding are required to move forward with projects. Colin has appealed for assistance in meeting this goal by making a donation (as little as US \$10 on-line) to the IJPC-SE. The **IJPC-SE** is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public charity based in the United States and donations are tax-deductible only in that country.

If you can spare \$10, think about contributing to this budding organization which is well-positioned to help protect public health now as well as in future generations.

For more information, [check out the IJPC-SE site](#), for the full list of contributing experts, public endorsements, and [to donate](#) should you wish.

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