

From: Provincial LRC Worker Safety Subcommittee
To: All CAS Employees
Date: December 19, 2013
Regarding: Background information about the Worker Safety Project

A Study of Worker Safety in Ontario Children's Aid Societies

a confidential study by SPR Associates, for the Child Welfare Sector in Ontario, directed by the joint labour-management Worker Safety Subcommittee

On November 26, 2013, the Worker Safety Subcommittee (a joint labour-management committee arising from the Provincial Discussion Table Consensus Agreement), initiated a study of worker safety in Ontario Children's Aid Societies. The study is being funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services and will be completed by March 31, 2014.

Key components of the study include:

- Research on best practices in worker safety and risk reduction: a Canadian and international literature and practice review;
- A current-state assessment of approaches to worker safety in Ontario. Key elements will include:
 - A confidential, on-line survey of CAS's as organizations and their safety-related practices
 - A confidential, on-line survey which all 8,000+ CAS employees will be asked to complete to assess their experiences and views of safety needs.
 - Facilitated conversations with key labour and management groups to highlight additional worker safety information
- Development of recommendations to inform provincial strategies for the protection of employees, including policies, procedures, training and technology support; and
- Development of recommendations for shared service opportunities for the implementation of the worker safety recommendations.

Work on the best practice and literature review is now nearing completion and work has commenced on the survey design. SPR Associates will prepare invitations to the survey for distribution by CASs to all employees. The survey invitations will be released to CASs on **January 24th, 2014** with expectations that the invitations will be redistributed to all employees within 2-3 days. The target is for approximately a 100% response rate.

Key stakeholder group consultation sessions will be scheduled for the week of February 3, 2014 with joint health & safety committee co-chairs, labour leaders & local union presidents, human resource leaders, and executive directors.

The researchers conducting the study on behalf of the Worker Safety Subcommittee are SPR Associates (www.spr.ca), a firm with an extensive track record in occupational health and safety (OHS) and social services. The SPR team is led by *Dr. Ted Harvey*, President of SPR, who has led many surveys and research studies on workplaces and social services over the past 25 years, and *Ms. Marianne Levitsky*, SPR's Senior OHS Consultant, who has been an active practitioner in OHS and occupational hygiene for agencies such as WSIB, the Ontario Ministry of Labour, for 25+ years.

For further information about the survey, contact: Dr. Ted Harvey – ted.harvey@spr.ca

For information about the project in general, contact a member of the Worker Safety Subcommittee (listed below), or workersafety@oacas.org

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