



Saskatchewan Federation of Labour
#220-2445 13th Avenue
Regina, SK, S4P 0W1

p: 1 (306) 525-0197
f: 1 (306) 525-8960
w: www.sfl.sk.ca

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SASK. PARTY GOVERNMENT UNSURE OF WHO IS DOING WHAT IN THE OH&S DIVISION

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) is alarmed to discover that the Sask. Party government does not know how many inspections each of its workplace inspectors in the Occupational Health and Safety Division are conducting.

“It has been a deadly year for Saskatchewan workers and the SFL has tried to assist the provincial government in strengthening its workplace inspection regime so that we can reduce injuries and deaths,” said SFL president Larry Hubich, “throughout that process we discovered that the government actually has no idea how many inspections each of its inspectors are conducting,” he added.

Through a series of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests the SFL compiled aggregate data on the number of workplace inspections and contraventions. However, recently a FOI request was denied, and follow-up efforts proved fruitless, when the SFL asked for a breakdown of how many inspections each inspector was conducting.

“This is very frustrating and it should be alarming to workers and policy-makers. Minister Don Morgan is all too happy to go in front of television cameras and boast that the government has 55 inspectors. What he fails to say – because he actually doesn’t know – is how many inspections each of those people are doing,” said Hubich, “for all the government knows, many of those inspectors could be stuck behind a desk, buried in paperwork, and not able to or allowed to go out into workplaces to conduct actual inspections. How can we help improve this system when the provincial government can’t even keep track of who is doing what?” he added.

On two separate occasions this year alone the SFL has called on the provincial government to immediately quadruple the number of random workplace inspections it conducts, while maintaining targeted inspections – and to hire as many new inspectors as is required to fulfill such a commitment. Furthermore, the SFL has asked the provincial government to invest more into injury prevention, safety training, and awareness.

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For additional information, contact:

Kent Peterson
Strategic Advisor
Saskatchewan Federation of Labour
o: 1 (306) 525-0197
m: 1 (306) 570-1855
e: k.peterson@sfl.sk.ca