



# SafeTalk



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## Four students awarded David Ellis Scholarships in District 3



**RACHEL MISQUITTA** – the daughter of a Local 9302 member and a graduate of the Archbishop MacDonald High School in Edmonton, Rachel is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Alberta

This fall, four children of USW members in District 3 have had their education costs lightened after being declared winners of the David Ellis Scholarship contest.

The winners were Rachel Misquitta from Edmonton (\$1,000) while \$500 winners were Jeff Profili from Castlegar, BC; Tenielle Koob from Saskatoon and Ann-Alise Keeping from Lantzville on Vancouver Island. All are continuing with their post-secondary education.

David Ellis Scholarship Awards are given out each year to commemorate Ellis who was killed on his second day of work at the age of 18.

On average, 60 Canadian

youth are killed on the job each year.

The scholarship is part of the USW's Young Worker Awareness Program, which reaches out to students to ensure that our youth are made aware about their workplace rights and about risks and hazards on the job.

Sons, daughters and grandchildren of USW members are eligible and this year there was no shortage of entries, making judging difficult.

District 3 Director Steve Hunt notified all four winners, thanking them for their insight and ideas on how to "reach other young people with the critical message of health and safety on the job."

### AD CAMPAIGN FOCUSES ATTENTION ON NEED FOR SAFETY TRAINING IN MANITOBA

The latest SAFE Work ad campaign emphasizes the importance of workplace safety training.

The campaign aims for maximum impact by featuring young children doing adult jobs amidst a host of workplace hazards, with little direction from their supervisor other than to be careful. The campaign drives home the message that safe workers are not born that way, they need training.

Training is especially important for the young workers in Manitoba who make up 18 percent of the province's workforce. These workers are often more vulnerable to injury because of their lack of experience rules and procedures to work safely.

To further protect the safety and health of all working Manitobans, government will add 20 new workplace safety and health officers across the province. The province's time loss injury rate has decreased by 22 percent since 2000.

## Coming Events

*December 6 BC Fed Incident Investigation, Invermere BC*

*December 7 BC Fed Basic OH&S, Golden BC*

*December 13 BC Fed Incident Investigation, Trail BC*

*January 21-24 Local 1-423 H&S School,, Kelowna BC*

*May 11-15 National HS&E Conference, Toronto Ontario*

### Late Shift Work is Linked to Cancer

Next month, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the cancer arm of the World Health Organization, will classify shift work as a "probable" carcinogen.

That will put shift work in the same category as cancer-causing agents like anabolic steroids, ultraviolet radiation, and diesel engine exhaust.

If the shift work theory proves correct, millions of people worldwide could be affected. Experts estimate that nearly 20 percent of the working population in developed countries work night shifts.

In recent years, several studies have found that women working at night for many years are indeed more prone to breast cancer, and that animals who have their light-dark schedules switched grow more cancerous tumors and die quicker.

Some research has also shown that men working at night may have a higher rate of prostate cancer.

Because these studies have been done mainly in nurses and airline crews, bigger studies in different populations are needed to confirm or disprove the findings.

The idea that shift work might increase your cancer risk is still viewed with skepticism by some, but many doubters will likely be won over when IARC publishes the results of its analysis, the result of an expert panel convened in October, in the December issue of *The Lancet Oncology*.

The American Cancer Society said it would most likely add shift work to its list of "known and probable carcinogens" when the IARC makes its reclassification. Up to now, the society has labeled it an "uncertain, controversial or unproven effect."

Experts acknowledge the evidence is limited, but the "probable" tag means that a link between shift work and cancer is plausible.

"The indications are positive," said Vincent Coglianò, director of the Monographs program at IARC, which decides on carcinogen classifications. "There was enough of a pattern in people who do shift work to recognize that there's an increase in cancer, but we can't rule out the possibility of other factors."

The research suggests a correlation between people who work at night and increased cancer rates. But the cause of the cancer might still be something else that people who work at night do that is unaccounted for in the research.

Scientists suspect that shift work is dangerous because it disrupts the circadian rhythm, the body's biological clock. The hormone melatonin, which can suppress tumor development, is normally produced at night.

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## HAZARD ALERT

- A worker clearing a jammed board in a MSR machine had his hand crushed. The worker reached into the area with a pike pole, which became caught in the process. He indicates his hand was crushed between the tool and a guide block.
- A grapple yarder hook tender was seriously injured when he was struck on the leg by the yarding grapple after he had signalled the operator to cast the yarding grapple sideways (which was flying a choker) in his direction in order to choke two logs that had slid away from the yarding area.
- A young worker was pinned between the moving structural framework of the left hand arbor assembly (centreline) and a metal column of the canter structural framework. He succumbed to his injuries.
- A worker, working alone, was in the process of securing a dozer boat to a log boom when the worker tripped over the bowline and fell into the Fraser River. The worker was able to grab onto a log from the boom but was unable to escape and remained in the water for approximately 10 - 20 minutes. Co-workers found the worker clinging to the log suffering from the effects of hypothermia.
- Two feed sources were being utilized to fuel the boiler of the Mill Power House. The worker was running controls for the Bin feed and monitoring fuel levels visually, ensuring the feeders were full. Without observation, a large amount of sander dust came up in the process and fell down into the furnace resulting in an internal explosion that backed up the feed chutes and caused the access doors (on the floor) to blow open with sander dust filling the room which then ignited from flames shooting out the doors. The worker suffered serious burns.
- A loaded logging truck was travelling down a short hill into a corner on a secondary road. The driver reported that the steering on the truck failed to respond to the turn, the truck then travelled across the road into the ditch and rolled.
- A Trim Saw operator was accessing the area under a conveyor to get to another workstation to assist a co-worker. On his way back to his station, he got his left hand caught in between a belt and roller on an out feed conveyer system. A second worker sustained head injury when he fell enroute to turn off the machine.

### Late Shift Work is Linked to Cancer continued

Light shuts down melatonin production, so people working in artificial light at night may have lower melatonin levels, which scientists think can raise their chances of developing cancer.

Sleep deprivation may also be a factor. People who work at night are not usually able to completely reverse their day and night cycles.

"Night shift people tend to be day shift people who are trying to stay awake at night," said Mark Rea, director of the Light Research Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, who is not connected to IARC or its expert panel.

Not getting enough sleep makes your immune system vulnerable to attack, and less able to fight off potentially cancerous cells.

Confusing your body's natural rhythm can also lead to a breakdown of other essential tasks. "Timing is very important," Rea said. Certain processes like cell division and DNA repair happen at regular times.

But if the body needs to do something at an unusual time like produce insulin in the middle of the night to help digest food that can set off a chain reaction of biological mistakes.

Even worse than working the night shift would be to frequently flip between day and night shifts.

"The problem is re-setting your body's clock," said Aaron Blair, of the United States' National Cancer Institute, who chaired IARC's recent meeting on shift work. "If you worked at night and stayed on it, that would be less disruptive than constantly changing shifts."

Anyone whose light and dark schedule was frequently disrupted including frequent long-haul travelers or insomniacs could theoretically face the same increased cancer risks, Stephens said.

Scientists are now trying to figure out what might be possible to reduce shift workers' risk of developing cancer. Melatonin can be taken as a supplement, but experts don't recommend taking it long-term, since that could ruin the body's ability to produce it naturally.

Some companies are also experimenting with different types of light, hoping to create one that doesn't affect melatonin production. So far, the color that seems to have the least impact on melatonin is one that few people would enjoy working under: red.

With no answers at the moment, experts say it's best to avoid shift work in the long-term. But if that is impossible, there may be a simpler solution.

"The balance between light and dark is very important for your body," Stevens said, advising workers to make sure they sleep in a darkened room when they get back from work. "Just get a dark night's sleep," he said.

### Raids turn up possible fraud; Three arrests made in alleged cover-up scam

A superintendent and a former manager from Smurfit-Stone Container Corp.'s Salinas, Calif., facility were arrested Wednesday on suspicion of dissuading employees from filing workers' compensation claims, The Salinas Californian reported Nov. 1.

Douglas Tateoka, a superintendent at Smurfit-Stone, and David Polk, a former human relations manager, were taken into custody at Monterey County Jail after county authorities raided the box manufacturing plant Wednesday morning. Also arrested was Eugene Guzman, a physician assistant at Pinnacles Urgent Care.

They are accused of falsifying claims or statements and knowingly conspiring against a person, according to the authorities. Polk and Guzman were also booked on suspicion of felony conspiracy, The Salinas Californian reported.

Monterey County Managing Deputy District Attorney Ed Hazel said that this type of fraud is not unusual.

"Premiums for (workers' compensation) insurance policies are based on the number of claims a company has every year," Hazel said. "If the company is dissuading people from reporting injuries, under the insurance code and the penal code, that's a felony."

Investigators have not decided how many counts each person gets, but each of the three will face felony charges, which carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison for each offense and a \$50,000 fine,