

January 18, 2010

Snow Removal around Mailboxes

The winter of 2008-09 was particularly difficult for delivery personnel in both the urban operations and RSMC bargaining units. Not only did they have to deal with snow, ice, cold and wind, but also with Canada Post neglecting to remove the snow around street furniture. In many areas of the country, delivery personnel were regularly put at risk because of snow and ice build-up around relay boxes, street letter boxes and community or group mailboxes. The employer would take days to rectify problems, putting both workers and the public at risk. Not a day would go by without a major daily newspaper reporting horror stories of customers waiting weeks before ice was removed around their community mailboxes or of seniors having to climb over snow banks and ice mounds to get to their mailbox.

The Union takes this issue very seriously and has raised it at National Health and Safety Committee meetings. Faced with the Union's arguments, the employer finally admitted, at the July 22, 2009 meeting, that it was unacceptable for delivery personnel not

to be able to access street furniture. The employer agreed to review its snow removal policy. Under the contract between Canada Post and Profac, the company responsible for the national implementation of measures, snow will automatically be removed upon request around all CMBs and other street furniture when more than five centimetres of snow has accumulated by 9:00 a.m. The list of street furniture locations was updated and reviewed with snow removal contractors. The issue of snow being pushed back around street furniture by municipal snowploughs will also be addressed. At the local level, supervisors of post offices where street furniture has not been cleared properly will also be able to fill out work orders on line to have the snow removed. The Union has requested that the issue of snow removal around street furniture be placed on the agenda of Local Joint Health and Safety Committee (LJHSC) monthly meetings across the country.

When faced with street furniture that hasn't been cleared properly, don't put

.../2

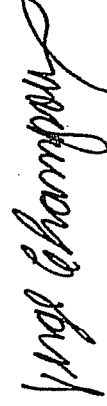
yourself at risk. Assess the situation and advise your supervisor of the problem as soon as possible. Supervisors immediately have to take measures to ensure the problem locations are cleared. If the situation isn't rectified within 24 hours, ask your union representative for assistance in filling out the "Dangerous Situations Report." This document serves as a written complaint and the supervisor will have to explain what measures he or she intends to take to remedy the situation.

Taking pictures of the problem locations, for example using a cell phone, could be helpful in documenting the complaint. A copy of this report must be provided to the grievor and the LJHSC or the health and safety representative. These reports must be discussed by the LJHSC. Committee members can investigate and issue recommendations to remedy the situation. A joint inspection in the field to assess the clearing of street furniture could also be an option to consider. Issues that cannot be resolved by the LJHSC must be referred to regional consultation, as provided for in the urban unit's collective agreement.

A Canada Post spokesperson once stated about the number of injuries caused by snow and ice that: "*Every one of the injuries represents a real person, real*

pain and suffering. The vast majority of those could have been prevented by simply shovelling a sidewalk or putting down some ice melt." It's about time Canada Post starts practising what it preaches, and ensure that street furniture is cleared properly in the interest of both the public and the workers.

In solidarity,



Serge Champoux
National Union Representative,
Health and Safety

2008-2011/Bulletin n° 231
SC/jl cope 225
/mp cupe 1979

