

Provincial Coordinator's Comments

As I sat across my family on Christmas day, watching them smile as they opened presents and enjoyed Christmas dinner, the word "purpose" suddenly became a focus in my mind. My family is my purpose. They are the reason I get up in the morning and fight the traffic to get to work and back home, they are the ones that guide my life decisions, influence my behavior and shape my goals. So, when I think about my life's "purpose" in the perspective of health and safety, I ask myself two rhetorical questions;

- Why do workers choose to work unsafely and not think of the consequences that may be left behind to the family? and;
- Do supervisors or employers, who fail to provide proper instruction, training or who fail to ensure that adequate personal protective equipment is utilized by their worker, ever imagine the turmoil or the emotional and financial stress that they put their own family through when they are the center of legal proceedings?

It is unfortunate that again this past Christmas, there were parents, spouses and children that will no longer see Christmas as a joyous time of year. It only reminds them of a traumatic time when they lost a love one as a result of a workplace fatality and that, in everyone's eyes, is unfair to any child, parent or spouse.

Health and safety has no room for selfish acts. This message has to be repeated in order for it to be imbedded in the minds of all: health and safety or lack thereof has a lasting effect on more people than just ourselves. Whether it is employers and the consequences they face when they have a history of workplace injuries (WSIB rates and their inability to secure work which in turn effects their employees), whether it is every taxpayer in this province and the burden put on the healthcare system or whether it is our families and the aftermath of a loss. What we do, the choices we make, effects the lives of many.

We have the benefit of starting a new year and with that a clean slate. Many people take this time to make New Year's resolutions or set goals and we should be no different. It is time that we show the results of all our efforts of shaping health and safety in this province. I put forward a challenge, to the construction industry in this province that we start by lowering the number of critical injuries and fatalities in the construction sector for 2019 in comparison to 2018. 2019 can be our springboard to the next five years and beyond. It can and should be achieved because this province has the people that care and who have the drive and knowledge to succeed. Your family, my family and the family of those in the construction industry will all thank us when we meet this challenge.

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