



OCCUPATIONAL FIRST AID ATTENDANTS ASSOCIATION NEWS

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Standards and Regulations

By Barney Pratt

Barney Pratt is a Director here at the OFAAA and the chairperson for the WCB Policy and Regulation Committee. The following is a large section of his report, which he submitted for the AGM. I feel that it is worth sharing with the members.

It has been a roller coaster ride this past year. Starting with the demise of the First Aid Section at WCB and the downloading of exams to the training agencies and now having Part 33 cut and turned into part 3. How will this new OFA Regulation affect the workers of British Columbia?

During the year 2003 I have had the opportunity to travel the province quite a bit and I have noticed many things that would have caused the WCB concern in the past. There was a time that conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest would have resulted in disciplinary action at the board level. Today, however, that seems to be a regular practice at the agency level with no action or appearance of action being taken by WCB. Students are being examined by their instructors in many cases. In quite a few of these cases, the evaluators are agency owners. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that most of these evaluators are protecting their business interest first and considering standards second. It is a natural thing to do and the board



Never give up!

photo submitted by Ted Stroman

was warned about this right from the start of this plan to phase out OFA certification. If you owned a business,

“The employers will be able to determine their own level of Occupational First Aid”

wouldn't you want your clientele to come back? Do you think they will come back if you did not pass them?

Next up for discussion is the audit that agencies will have to go through and justify their marking sheets. This may prove to be a lame duck exercise. By their own standard, that is having to have taught a class or done so many exams to maintain evaluator

statue.....their own auditor isn't qualified. To the best of my knowledge no auditor at the board does exams and has not for some time.....and isn't allowed to teach. No auditor at the board has taught OFA Level 3 for years, and there is a conflict of interest issue here also.

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The New regulation of Part 3, with the removal of part 33, is a major issue. The employers will be able to determine their own level of Occupational First Aid and what services and supplies that they will have on their site. If employers want to downgrade their current service they will only have to go through a few steps to justify it.

I have just returned from a few weeks up North and have seen a few cases where the employer is providing totally inadequate first aid in a very dangerous and remote area. When contacted the Safety Officer (who enforces the OFA Regs today) merely quoted what was supposed to be. It's been this way for months. Thanks for calling in!

In two cases I did not recertify two OFA level 1 ticket holders. In their class they were not expected to demonstrate any practical skills. What a surprise they got this time. I have also heard similar stories from a few other Level 1 instructors.

I would like to ask what is the Provincial pass or fail rate? Nobody can tell me. As long as there are few or no complaints this situation will continue. I truly believe that we are witnessing the beginning of the end of Occupational First Aid as we know it, in British Columbia. At the very least the standards that were in place appear to be sinking like a stone.

I would also like to point out that I also believe that this situation does not necessarily reflect negatively on the ability of the remaining certification officers or their current manager. These professionals are working within a framework that limits them severely both conceptually and financially and for the most part was not of their own design. Good luck to you all.

This is my thought on the state of Occupational First Aid in B.C. today. I've been in the business for quite a few years now, at all levels. There is no one in my world that deserves a better deal than the Occupational First Aid Attendant. God bless you all.

EFFECTIVE MARCH 30,2004

- Amendments to Occupational First Aid Reg's

Every worker and employer in British Columbia should read the Amendments to Occupation First Aid regulations which are effective March 30, 2004. A direct link to the policy is www.healthandsafetycentre.org/fwd/g34.htm

There will be Employers Advisers Seminars at many locations and times throughout B.C. Dates and locations can be found at www.healthandsafetycentre.fwd/g35.htm

If you do not have access to the internet the phone number **for workplace safety and health inquiries** call 604 276-3100 in the Lower Mainland or toll-free within B.C. at 1 888 621-7233.