

the company but they never utilized it during these years. We were the first in Canada to sign it. It was a first in Canada. PSM exists mostly in the U.S. where it is actually part of the law.

PSM includes what is called Management of Change (MOC) but we are not getting it the way it should be. We are put in a situation in which we could have an incident and we are not involved.

To give you an example, the company makes a reduction in a unit, going from two operators to one. According to the PSM there should be a Management of Change, in which all the hazards that we are going to come up against by reducing the unit are shown. There is supposed to be a process through which all the obstacles that are going to be faced regarding health and safety are listed, where new procedures are spelled out if they are going to be needed, emergency response is planned, and so on. There has to be a process that draws you to reach these conclusions, how workers are going to be safe, and workers need to be involved in the process. Workers have a right to know what the new procedures are going to be.

What is happening is that if they do not consult us, we end up going to the government. When I met the Minister, she said that she had 163 directives that were issued to the company and the company is in compliance. But we are telling the Minister that these 163 directives mean that we are not safe there, that is why we have these 163 directives. Because if the process was implemented, we would not have those directives, we would be involved. The process is supposed to resolve the issues without directives.

We are reminded of the situation we lived in 1998 when we had an explosion at the refinery in which two brothers died. There also, they did not have the proper process of management of change. The whole thing went back to the relationship between the company and the union, to the Joint Health and Safety Committee; us versus them. The same scenario is repeating itself, instead of the problems being solved.

We asked a year ago to sit down with the company and the government, to work this out and do a proper Process Safety Management. We never heard back from them.

WF: When you met the Minister, you presented demands regarding your situation.

GN: We presented two demands. One is that we want to be part of the Process Safety Management, as we are supposed to be. Second is that our joint health and safety committee should not be dysfunctional the way it is. The director of safety on the company's side is dictating what is going to happen. The committee is not operating. The unionized part of the committee cannot function when the other side will not listen.

We are going to keep fighting to represent the workers no matter what happens. This fight is not over until the work is made safe for the workers. It was not like that at the plant before the new owners came in and started their bullying. To have a say is critical. This is our safety. It cannot be dictated to us.

I do not believe that we should have to do this but we are going to do it again if needed. We received a lot more support than we expected. People all along the trip were showing their support and we got the inspiration of these emails, people saying, "we are behind you," "whatever you need we will back you," "how can we help you?" The response is the same inside the plant.



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