



BULLETIN

Kitimat Smelter and Kemano Power Operations Workers

TAKING SHORTCUTS PERFORMING YOUR WORK

The Union has a message for members and supervision that needs to be heard loud and clear. This message is focused on the Reduction Area but applies equally to all Areas of the Plant where workers are taking shortcuts to complete their work and supervisors are aware of this and condoning it.

In Reduction, there have been ongoing attempts to reduce the staffing levels resulting in the remaining workers having to pick up the extra tasks within their existing shift. Employers are always looking to reduce costs and reducing staffing levels is one way to do this. The problem that we identified prior to KMP and argued strongly in 2012 and 2017 negotiations is that the new smelter has never had enough planned manpower to safely operate.

At every point in time when the workers in Reduction demonstrated efficiencies, management has used it as an opportunity to reduce staffing levels. Once staffing levels are reduced, management leaves it to the hourlies to figure out a way to get the work done. The Company usually puts together a workshop to pick our brains and make it look like they're listening to our feedback, but in the end, they implement the changes they always had in mind in spite of our experts telling them it won't work or can't be done safely. This is where you as the hourly doing the work comes into play.

Workers in Reduction can tell you what their daily work used to look like and how this has increased at different times since KMP was commissioned. Each time there was an increase in work, the Company challenged the workers to get the job done and pitted us against each other to add additional pressure on the individual not completing as much work as the next person. We've been informed that certain individuals are called out in front of their peers for performing at a lesser level and workers have been called into the supervisor's office at the end of their shift and asked to justify not completing work. These tactics do nothing to improve our working environment and add unnecessary pressure on workers affecting their mental health. Ask yourself how this helps to promote "mind on task" which used to be an important fundamental safety belief prior to KMP.

Not so long ago, in Reduction, one of the changes introduced by Management was to reduce the number of tappers to the point that it became a one-person operation. At that time the Union challenged this as being unsafe as the tapper was expected to perform various duties while in control of the suspended load and holding the crane remote. This became a back and forth with the Company as they tried different versions of the same unsafe operation. The WCB eventually got involved and seemingly supported the Union's concerns, in the end they permitted the worker to be in control of the load while activating the quarter point alarm and left the rest to interpretation. The Union's concerns were in-line with a similar situation in another industry where a worker was in control of a suspended load and, while in control, performed other tasks that resulted in the suspended load crushing a worker to death.

Since raising this issue, the Union has knowledge of tappers doing other tasks while in control of a suspended load and supervisors condoning this. The Company has cameras in most parts of Reduction which would have captured this happening. Why are our members performing this work in an unsafe manner and

why is management condoning it? What we've been able to learn is that our members are rushed to complete the work as there are fewer workers resulting in more running around, in some cases people want to finish the work so they take leave and go home early and for the supervisors, their goal is to get the work completed and they don't seem to want to step in.

The Reduction workers need to understand that in most cases, the Company will have a safe operating procedure in place that has been shared with the workers and signed off to cover their liability. Should an accident happen, the Company will fall back on the fact that you have been trained to perform the work safely leaving you to face the consequences and as you can imagine at that time nobody will admit to have had knowledge this was going on. **Safety must be first in everything you do and nobody should take shortcuts to get the job completed.**

The members of our Union are paid by the hour as opposed to performing piecework where you are paid according to the amount produced. The Company has established expectations in their operation but we want to be clear, **Company expectations are not to be met at the expense of your safety or the safety of your co-workers. Under no circumstances are you to perform work in an unsafe manner and under no circumstances are you to take shortcuts in the performance of your work. Work at a safe and comfortable pace, report unsafe conditions, use your right to refuse unsafe work when faced with a situation that warrants it and always take your minimum three (3) breaks during your shift.**

More recently, the Reduction Area has seen the return of the Gantry work to the bargaining unit. This work had been given to SLB during the pot turn around project and became the subject of a grievance. In returning this task to the Potline Operator classification there was a workshop held to figure out how it could work. The worker's representatives stressed the problems it would create given that the staffing levels had been reduced in the time the work went away. The task was added to the classification with no return to previous staffing levels and now we've seen an increased number of shortcuts being taken to compensate for the additional work. The examples that were provided to the Union are as follows:

Tapper Issues – sweeping the cruce/lid interface while wearing the crane remote, opening and closing tapping doors while wearing the crane remote, cleaning tapping holes while wearing the crane remote, rattling the tip by themselves while wearing the crane remote, pot tending while wearing the crane remote.

Other Issues – barring out buried holes by hand instead of using the PTA crane or arranging a PTA crane to come open the buried hole, poking plugged tips with a pry bar to unplug it which is considered under a suspended load with additional danger of being burned by molten metal, not performing the crane or tapping lid inspections.

The Union is calling on our members to be vigilant in following the standard practices, taking the time to complete all necessary forms, reporting all unsafe conditions, refusing to perform unsafe work when warranted and STOP taking shortcuts. If you are not able to complete your work you must report this to your supervisor giving them the opportunity to make arrangements to have it completed by alternative means and in the case of a safety concern, take actions to address the hazard.

We come to work to perform a fair day's work for a fair day's pay and return home to our families safely at the end of the day. Please take the time to consider the message we are sending and don't hesitate to talk with your safety representative on shift if you are unsure.

YOUR UNION AT WORK!