



# FYI



**PLEASE POST – for BCGEU members at the B.C. Liquor Distribution Branch**

## April 2021 Safety Tip: Understaffing

When does understaffing become an Occupational Health and Safety issue?

It is the Employer's responsibility to make sure your work location is staffed appropriately. Understaffing becomes a health and safety issue when workers feel pressured to do work **quickly rather than safely**.

Understaffing is not our problem, it's the Employer's. Here are some scenarios where **timeliness should not come at the cost of safety**:

- We know liquor loads need to be done but they need to be done safely. If there is not adequate staffing to break down the load in the "normal" time frame, the Employer should not pressure you to work in an unsafe manner to get it broken down more quickly.
- COVID protocols need to continue to be adhered to. The additional protocols of sanitizing have been put into place to reduce the risk of transmission. These additional protocols protect both you and the customer.
  - Be sure to take time to sanitize the common touch points between customers when working the register or at the door.
  - Being sure a person is assigned to the door to keep customer numbers within the posted limit.
- Make sure tasks such as staffing the till, unloading, restocking and working in the ColdZone are rotated to avoid repetitive strain.
- **Take your full breaks!**
- **Fatigue may be an impairment.** If short staffing is resulting in short change-over shifts and last minute schedule changes, be aware of how fatigue may impact your ability to work safely.
- **You have the right to refuse unsafe work.** If you encounter a situation where the work is not safe for you to carry out, you must inform your supervisor and explain why it is unsafe.
- If you feel that situations are arising that are unsafe, bring it to the attention of your OHS committee. For example, not enough staffing at closing time, etc.

It is your responsibility to work safely and take the time that is needed to perform the tasks assigned to you without risking injury. Remember to stretch before working, take micro breaks and notify your OHS committee if you have any questions or concerns.



For more information on OHS at BCGEU please go to <http://ohs.bcgeu.ca>

For general inquiries, please contact [ohs@bcgeu.ca](mailto:ohs@bcgeu.ca)

In solidarity,  
BCGEU Component 5 (Retail Stores and Warehouse) Occupational Health and Safety  
Committee

RAB/CN/MoveUP  
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