

THUNDER BAY & DISTRICT INJURED
WORKERS SUPPORT GROUP
PRESENTS:
Your Voice Matters Series



WAYNE GODERRE

A meeting had been scheduled with Ministry of Labour representatives from Toronto in order to address various safety issues on the job. As Wayne walked into the room, the general foreman of the company grabbed him by the collar, got right up in his face, and in no uncertain terms told him he better keep his mouth shut, this particular experience impacted Wayne incredibly.

This intimidation by management was commonplace on the RB4 job and resulted in the designated safety workers feeling unsafe to share their concerns openly.

Wayne Goddard is a career construction electrician with a diverse range of experience in both paper mills as well as oil and gas industries. Throughout his career, Wayne held a number of certifications in the construction and electrical trades.

Wayne began his employment on the Dryden Mill project in 2002 and for 16 months worked as the health and safety representative of the electricians' union. As the 4th person hired on the job, Wayne recalled no specific training for his role aside from a 10-minute safety video on the first day of the job. Equipped with a half-mask containing purple filters designed for only working 8 hours a day and a meter to measure various chemicals such as H₂S, Oxygen, Chlorine, and Co₂, Wayne was sent on his way to address any safety concerns of the electricians on the job.

From his first day on the job, Wayne could tell that completing the job quickly was the top priority of management, while safety was not taken seriously at all. For example, Wayne recalls a zipper door that connected to the lunchroom which was supposed to be closed at all times. However, any time he would attempt to close the door, someone would come and open it up again because the chemical sensor alarms would start to go off if the door was closed.

When alarms would go off, Wayne would receive calls on his radio to measure the chemical levels in that area. However, there was very little documentation completed when levels were detected to be high. Workers would be told to stay out of an area for a while and they would eventually return when they believed the gasses had dissipated. As well, the alarms were designed to only go off at sustained levels over 10 Parts Per Million (PPM). This meant that gas levels would reach 9PPM or go over the limit, but a bit of wind would cause the alarms not to be set off.

During the Dryden Mill project, Wayne was exposed to countless chemicals. After the project finished, Wayne's hair was tested, and high levels of mercury were detected. While Wayne did not incur any injuries that he can directly connect to the Dryden project, his story exemplifies how worker safety was not taken seriously during the project and any worker who attempted to speak up about the dangers on the job would be silenced. Wayne was ultimately terminated by the company before the project was completed.