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Director, Brad Buck
Workplace Health & Safety
Health Promotion & Safety Section
Letter sent via email to Brad.Buck@gov.bc.ca

Regarding: steps to be taken when a manager accuses an employee of making a female co-worker fear for her safety

To the Director of Workplace Health & Safety, Health Promotion & Safety Section, Mr. Brad Buck,

Mr. Buck, I write to you given your role as Director of Workplace Health & Safety, Health Promotion & Safety Section as this appears to be the position most able to address what steps should be taken when **a manager accuses an employee of making a female co-worker fear for her safety.**ⁱ

1. *How is such an accusation to proceed?*
2. *Is the accused allowed to ask what behaviour made the co-worker fear for her safety?*
3. *Is the manager required to describe to the accused what behaviour made the co-worker fear for her safety?*
4. *Can the requests by the accused for protection under the law to be ignored?*
5. *Is the employee required to file a grievance to be allowed mediation / resolution?*
6. *Is it acceptable that the resolution is that there be no resolution?*
7. *Is it acceptable that the accused be threatened with having to pay for stress that the co-worker would have if a grievance were to proceed?*
8. *Is it acceptable that the accused be required to have an assessment of a believed behavioural problem?*
9. *Should the fact that the accusation was made after the accused had raised concerns regarding incorrect methods and data accompanying ungrounded numbers disseminated to the public be taken into consideration?*

Please allow me to explain what happened to me.

I had worked for over 4 years as a BC Public Service provider and had an excellent work record having made many improvements to the methods, choice of data, and models as per my job description.

I had asked for assistance from the BCGEU and the BCPSA to address the problems in the Section including publishing incorrect methods and data to accompany so called findings, as well as aggressive yelling and many false accusations made against me particularly when I made improvements as per my job description. A HR rep had asked me to get "buy in" from the manager for Workplace Skills courses. The union rep agreed with these courses. In response to my request, the manager said that these courses would only make things worse.

I asked for a meeting with the HR and Union reps and the manager. At this meeting, I read out my list of concerns regarding the aggressive yelling directed at me particularly after I made improvements. Before

I could finish reading my statement, the manager became very angry and began yelling, saying things such as: liar; that my co-workers tried to work with me but that didn't work out (may I suggest that he meant that the yelling and false accusations didn't make me quit); and that I made a female co-worker fear for her safety. The new shop steward (who wrote that the manager was a good man) told me that the best solution was that I quit. Bizarre. Later, the manager described my requests for assistance as a "game of chicken".

The HR rep stopped the meeting saying that my request for Work Place Skills courses (offered by HR and supported by the BCGEU rep) would have to be handled using a different procedure.

The next day, I went to the co-worker to talk to her about the Work Place Skills courses and the accusation, to make sure that she was not feeling unsafe. At the end of our conversation she thanked me for coming to speak with her.

Also, the new manager (a long-time employee / shop steward who was given the manager position after the Deputy Minister restricted the job posting to ensure only he would get the job) had accused me of the same thing several months earlier; however, he withdrew his accusation during a meeting with the new shop steward saying that the co-worker was a frustrated manager (she was in the position of a Cartographer) and that this was the reason she had raised her voice, pointing at me, and telling me what to do at a section meeting. To be clear, my co-worker had targeted me, but I was accused of verbally attacking her. This does not make sense of course until one realizes the manager motives.

After the second time the manager used this accusation, I should mention, I was told by the Executive Director that if I wanted mediation / resolution of the second time the manager accused me of making a female co-worker feel unsafe, I would have to file a grievance against the manager.

The Executive Director investigated and though he found deep problems, the resolution was that there be no resolution. Since there was no mediation / resolution, I forwarded my request (in the form of a grievance) to the Deputy Minister as per the Master Agreement.

Before the Deputy Minister replied, the manager and the shop steward came to my office and told me to close the window, leave the computer on, turn in my security pass, and leave the building. The shop steward helped me carry my books and other belongings. To be clear, I was fired while a grievance was proceeding.

I was ordered to return to work and was registered in a program specifically limited to employees with documented work performance problems (I had none) including an assessment of a believed behavioural problem, namely, being "aggressive". I insisted on mediation but instead was dismissed for insubordination.

Years after being fired (with no superannuation nor allowed to file for unemployment insurance), I received my Freedom of Information request where in the Executive Director was asked if and how I was aggressive. The Executive Director replied that I was not aggressive but rather "intense". I was never told that the accusation of being aggressive had been changed.

Several years later again, I received a document from Statistics Canada wherein I discovered that the same people who had run me off the job, leaving me unable to earn a living, had falsified a study I did while employed with the provincial government of BC and gave the false information to Statistics Canada and Finance Canada for a study into refinements of methods and data to determine Canada's Equalization Payments programme (a multi-billion dollar programme annually).

Mr. Buck, as you can appreciate, I would very much like to be able to work again without the burden of the false accusations and the unjustifiable dismissal for insubordination. As things stand, this could

happen again – a Provincial Government of British Columbia Public Service Provider could be threatened with a true or false accusation of making a female co-worker fear for their safety with no hope of a fair hearing; therefore, I would like an investigation to be allowed to proceed including the fact that while the manager and the Executive Director and the Deputy Minister were accusing me (but not allowing mediation or resolution) of making a female co-worker fear for her safety, these same people falsified work, work I was intimately familiar with, submitted to the federal government. Herein lay to motive for the egregious behaviour directed towards me and my family.

To be clear, for answering the request by these people to figure out why our methods and data produced numbers of such poor quality, for figuring out what was wrong and for providing an easily implementable solution, I was in a government position where I would likely discover false reporting; therefore, I was a threat to their being caught and possibly being reprimanded and their ambitions of higher pay which they all achieved by having me discredited, fired, denied protection under the law, and unable to earn a living.

Even after stating there would be no resolution, the BCPSA used both accusations of making female co-workers fear for their safety, even the first one that had been withdrawn, to justify their request to block a fair hearing into the real matters in dispute including disclosure.

In closing, I should also point out that years after being falsely accused and fired, I was denied a copy of, or even the title of, the source of a quote used to assert the “integrity” of information disseminated by the Provincial Government of British Columbia claiming: “disclosure harmful to intergovernmental relations or negotiations”ⁱⁱ. Perhaps the denial of the freedom of information request should read “disclosure helpful to everyone but harmful to BC Government Officials’ careers”.

I look forward to your answers to my questions.

Cordially,

William Warren Munroe

A Former Provincial Government of British Columbia Public Service Provider, advocating information users verify and replicate information used to guide public services, having written hundreds of letters for years and years requesting the removal of the block to a fair hearing into the real matters in dispute.

ⁱ Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 3.26 requires Employers to conduct an annual written evaluation of their Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JOHSC). The BCGEU and BCPSA have developed this JOHSC annual evaluation tool (DOCX, 150KB) with the goals of: Measuring Compliance with The Workers Compensation Act and Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (the minimum regulatory standards that must be achieved), Measuring compliance with the BCGEU-BCPSA Provincial Government Collective Agreement (also a minimum standard that must be achieved), Assisting with annual Committee activity planning, Helping the Committee have effective meetings, Helping Committee members work as a team Reviewing overall effectiveness of the Committee, The Annual Evaluation is a chance for the Committee to look back on their past year to celebrate their successes and identify opportunities for improvement.

It’s a chance for the committee members to discuss with each other how they think the Committee is functioning and how they work together. There is an also an opportunity for member self-reflection that does not have to be shared with the Committee.

ⁱⁱ Cindy Elbahir, Manager Central Agency Team Information Access Operations, June 22, 2012