



Memorandum

The Alberta Teachers' Association

INFORMATION AND ACTION MEMO

Date 2025 02 10
To School Leaders of the Calgary Separate Schools Local No 55
From Sean D Brown, Coordinator, Teacher Employment Services (TES)
Re HVAC Issues

It has come to the Alberta Teachers' Association's (Association) attention that, because of the potential CUPE strike in your school division, that school leaders may be asked to monitor or possibly manage aspects of the HVAC system or take on other equipment-related tasks.

The Association has sent a communication to your employer regarding this situation, which is attached below. In its view, the Association believes it would be unreasonable for the Division to expect school leaders to perform any monitoring or maintenance on HVAC systems or equipment in schools because school leaders would not normally expect, and be expected, to perform such duties since the Division's maintenance personnel would complete them.

In addition, school leaders do not have the proper skills, training, and/or credentials to monitor or maintain HVAC systems or equipment. This presents an issue in terms of compliance with manufacturers' specifications.

Monitoring and maintenance of HVAC systems or equipment may also present an imminent danger for school leaders (as well as potentially others present in the school), given the higher occupational health and safety risk that HVAC systems and equipment can present in terms of hazard exposure, including respiratory hazards (hazardous substances, such as chemical or particulate matter), electrical hazards, exposure to hot water and/or hot appliances and equipment, exposure to gas and other explosive or flammable substances, as well as potentially heavy lifting and climbing (including ladder risks). Should you, as the school leader, choose the template below relating to "imminent danger," you are strongly advised to contact Teacher Employment Services **before** you send in that version of the letter. Imminent danger is a high bar and could require other steps to be taken, like calling 911 and reporting the danger, contacting parents and sending students home. Essentially, if you are reporting an imminent danger, you need to be prepared to act accordingly.

The Association expects the Division to make the arrangements necessary to monitor, maintain, and repair HVAC systems or equipment in schools that do not directly involve teachers or school leaders.

. . . continued

Should you be asked or directed to complete such tasks, you can contact Teacher Employment Services for assistance. As well, you can provide a letter to your employer outlining your concerns. Below, you will find a template for your use:

Hi *(addressed to school leader's immediate supervisor in central office)*,

I have been asked to *(describe the HVAC system or equipment-related task the administrator has been asked to perform)*.

With respect, I do not believe it is reasonable for the Division to ask me to perform this task because I do not normally do this kind of work as a school leader, nor would I be expected to, since it would be handled by other personnel in the Division.

[OPTION 1, (two paragraphs)] I am not comfortable performing this task since I do not feel that I have the proper skills or training. I do not want to damage any system or equipment. There are also several potential hazards involved, including respiratory hazards, electrical hazards, exposure to hot water and/or hot appliances and equipment, exposure to gas and other explosive or flammable substances that I am not properly trained to identify and control.

As a result, I do not believe it appropriate for me to perform this task, and I request that the Division make arrangements to have this work done by a qualified professional.

OR

[OPTION 2 (two paragraphs), IF THE SCHOOL LEADER PERFORMING THE TASK CONSTITUTES AN IMMINENT DANGER TO THEM AND/OR OTHERS IN SCHOOL, under Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Act they should refuse to carry out work and state the following] I am not comfortable performing this task since I do not feel that I have the proper skills or training. Several hazards are involved, including respiratory, electrical, exposure to hot water and/or hot appliances and equipment, and exposure to gas and other explosive or flammable substances that I am not properly trained to identify and control.

As a result, I believe it is my duty under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to refuse to carry out this task because it presents an imminent danger to my health or safety **and that of staff and students in the school**. I request that the Division arrange to have this work done by a qualified professional.

Thank you.

Your Name
Title and School

Should you, as a school leader, need assistance in this or any other area, please call Teacher Employment Services (1800-232-7208).

SDB/dmc/ejl
Enc

cc J C Schilling, President, The Alberta Teachers' Association
K L Kempt, D J Moroz, A L Scott Davies, District Representatives, Calgary City
TES Staff Officers