

# NEWS LETTER



## Company Doctor or your own GP?

### WORK INJURY?

**The Union is aware of several instances where the employer is challenging whether or not an injury occurred in the workplace.**

**Workers need to ensure that they report ANY INCIDENT, no matter how trivial it may seem as this greatly enhances your chances of having fewer problems gaining cover and entitlements.**

**REPORT! REPORT!  
REPORT!**

**WORK DEATH  
TOLL for the year  
1 July 2009 -  
June 2010**

**(SOURCE—Safeguard  
Magazine)**

**25**

Members are often a bit confused about their rights in relation to medical treatment, in particular for work-related injuries and illnesses.

Some Collective Agreements have clauses stating that workers will attend a doctor appointed by the employer in certain circumstances, however workers are still free to obtain TREATMENT from a GP of their own choice.

The Union recommends that where possible, workers should always seek independent medical advice from a provider of their own choice.

We are aware that in some instances employers are referring workers for treatment without a doctor making a diagnosis and without an actual ACC claim being lodged (*on the basis that an injury has not been sustained, that it is only 'pain or discomfort' at that point and pain is not an injury*). It is therefore important that in situations like this a worker visits their own GP as soon as possible to ensure their injury is actually diagnosed and to ensure the correct treatment is being administered.

While some employers have 'preferred providers' for medical assistance to their workers, members are still entitled to seek medical attention from their own GP.



**The National Office of the Union  
wishes all members and officials a  
Happy and Safe Christmas.**



## General Secretary—*Dave Eastlake*

Wow, it's time for a Christmas newsletter already—where did the year go to?

The new export season has begun, albeit pretty slowly. Calf kills were much as expected but North Island beef kills remain slow. At a recent Hawera Plant meeting I attended a member pointed out they had not had a full week of work for 20 weeks!

The most recent Meat Board figures (early December) show lamb kill down 12% to date and mutton 34% behind last year. On the bright side national figures do show the annual kill will be on par with last season.

At this time of year we are busy with Employment Agreement re-negotiations and are involved in talks with all the major companies in either Collective Agreement negotiations or plant agreement negotiations. To date, progress has been slow.

The National Government continues to roll out changes that will affect our member's with reviews on the Holiday's Act and Accident Compensation legislation under way. At the moment proposed changes are signalled for the Rest Period laws, we ponder on what will be next!

The Union has presented submissions on the above to the appropriate committees but to be fair we don't hold out great hopes that our concerns will be seriously considered by National politicians.

With more production due to start in the deep south during the next week we hope all members can be back on the job and earning full weeks pay before Christmas.

From all of us at the National Office, have a great family Christmas and a lucrative season.

Cheers,

*Dave*

**D W Eastlake**  
**General Secretary**

**UNITED WE STAND**

## ACC CHANGES LIKELY

The Government is proposing changes that will have direct impacts upon seasonal workers. They plan to repeal the recent legislation which allowed injured workers (being seasonally terminated) to receive their holiday pay WITHOUT abatement against their ACC entitlements—the proposed changes to this would mean essentially a worker would be funding their own ACC until their holiday pay runs out.

The Government also plans to change the calculation of weekly compensation for seasonal workers so it will be calculated based on your annual earnings, and not on your income during the immediate period before you were injured. This means that your weekly earnings will be calculated (and averaged) over 52 weeks regardless of whether or not you made the earnings in only 36 weeks or less (or more).

The Government is proposing to remove the right to be covered by ACC for people who suffer a hearing loss threshold of less than 6%.

The Government is also proposing to remove the current requirement that the vocational assessment of suitable work takes into account a claimant's earnings prior to injury, and to reduce the minimum number of hours a claimant may be deemed fit to work in any assessed job from 35 hours per week to just 30 hours per week. Clearly this will mean injured workers losing their entitlements sooner. Also, if you were earning say \$800 per week before your injury and you are found to be fit for some job for 30 hours a week that pays only the minimum wage - that's just \$375 a week!

Currently the responsibility and cost for investigating a work-related gradual process, disease or infection claim rests with ACC and if a person has both work and non-work exposure to the cause of the injury, the person will receive cover only if the work exposure is deemed to be the more likely cause. The Government proposes to repeal this without any real justification being offered.

The effect would be to make it easier for ACC to deny cover for this type of injury, which would mean reduced cover and entitlements for a majority of our membership.

**FAIR AND  
EQUITABLE  
ACC ENTITLEMENTS**



NEW ZEALAND MEATWORKERS UNION

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TUC BUILDING  
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**Website:**  
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## Bits 'n' Pieces/Odds 'n' Sods

Food safety is commonsense. But if you're entertaining a crowd it's easy to forget the basics. And as we head into the BBQ season, the combination of warm summer temperatures and cooking food outdoors create ideal conditions for bugs to thrive on food and utensils. Follow these tips to keep your family and friends food safe this summer.

**Prepare** Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water and then dry them with a clean dry towel or paper towel *before* and *after* handling food.

- Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw meats and ready-to-eat foods. Wash all these thoroughly with hot soapy water after use.
- Defrost meat completely before cooking – this helps it to cook right through. Defrost slowly in the fridge over a couple of days (don't defrost on the kitchen bench).
- Free up fridge space for food. Drinks, pickles, jams and other acidic condiments don't require refrigeration to remain safe. Keep drinks cold in a chilly bin or buckets with ice. This also means the fridge gets opened less often and stays cooler.
- If you cook large amounts of food in advance, divide it into smaller portions or shallow containers. Once it's stopped steaming, cover it and put in the fridge.

- Don't overcrowd your fridge: overcrowding won't allow the cold air to circulate freely around the food.
- Preparing food ahead of time? Then make sure the fridge is still operating at between 2 and 4°C – even though you've loaded in all that extra food.

**Cook and serve** Cook meat properly. Minced meat and sausages should be cooked right through. (*Pre-cook* minced meat, sausages and poultry *before* barbecuing.)

- Keep food hot (60°C) until it's time to eat.
- Keep perishable nibbles (like dips and soft cheeses) in a cool spot. And don't leave them out for too long.

Rather than loading up the table, it's better to serve food in small amounts. Then you can replace the nearly-empty serving dishes with freshly-filled ones.

**After the party** -Throw out perishable food that you have left at room temperature for more than two hours; Refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible (but make sure they've stopped steaming). Use them within a few days.

Reheat leftovers until they're steaming hot all the way through.