

## President's Message

### A Shared Commitment to Health & Safety

Dear CUPE Members,

Across the province, our members show up every day with dedication, skill, and a commitment to public service. Whether you're working in an office, a plant, in the field, or behind the scenes—your health and safety matter. You are the heart of our workplaces, and nothing is more important than making sure each and every one of you gets home safely at the end of the day.

Over the past year, we've seen a concerning increase in workplace and off-the-job incidents. Some of these have had tragic outcomes. They remind us that health and safety isn't just a checklist—it's a way of thinking, acting, and supporting one another.

At CUPE, we believe that *safety is a collective responsibility*. It takes all of us—members, union leaders, employers, and health and safety committees—working together to build and maintain a culture where safety is not an afterthought, but a priority.

This issue, you'll find an article that speaks to the importance of practicing **Care and Caution** in our daily lives. These simple words carry powerful meaning. They encourage us to stay alert, be thoughtful, and protect not only ourselves, but those around us.

Let's continue to create a work culture that empowers workers to speak up about unsafe conditions, follow proper protocols, and look out for one another. And let's also take that mindset home—to our families, communities, and everyday lives.

On behalf of CUPE, thank you for everything you do. Your safety is not negotiable, and your union is here to ensure your rights are respected, your voice is heard, and your wellbeing is protected—today and every day.

In solidarity,  
**Michelle Bergen**  
President, CUPE 998

## Practicing Care and Caution

### A Union Members Perspective

By: Nick Ogryzlo

### Making Safety a Priority: Practicing Care and Caution Together

Over the past several months—and particularly within the last year—we've seen a troubling rise in accidents, both at work and at home. Tragically, some of these incidents have resulted in serious injury and even loss of life. In some cases, these were our coworkers, friends, and fellow union members. These moments of loss serve as stark reminders of just how essential safety is in every aspect of our lives.

As union members, we understand that safety isn't just an individual responsibility—it's a shared one. When I was responsible for preparing job safety plans, one of the most critical steps was identifying potential hazards and putting the right controls in place to reduce the risks. At the top of every plan, I would always write a simple reminder: **"Care and Caution."**

### What Does "Care and Caution" Really Mean?

To practice *care and caution* means being alert, thoughtful, and intentional in everything we do—especially in high-risk environments. It's about taking proactive steps to prevent harm before it happens.

**Care** reflects our responsibility to protect not only ourselves but also those around us. It means taking time to plan, prepare, and act in ways that reduce the chance of injury or harm.

**Caution** means staying aware and using good judgment, especially in unpredictable or potentially hazardous situations. It's about thinking things through and avoiding impulsive decisions.

### Practicing Care and Caution Includes:

- Recognizing hazards before they become incidents
- Taking time to assess risks before acting
- Using proper safety equipment and procedures
- Staying alert and focused during tasks
- Avoiding shortcuts or unnecessary risks
- Being ready for the unexpected

### Real-World Examples:

- A driver slowing down and scanning for pedestrians before turning
- A worker wearing PPE and following all site safety protocols
- A company taking time to do its homework before major decisions
- Someone navigating icy sidewalks with patience and awareness

### Final Thought

As union members, safety is one of the most important values we share. It protects our health, our families, and our ability to keep doing the work we care about. Practicing care and caution isn't just about policies or procedures—it's about looking out for one another and choosing to act with intention.

**Safety doesn't happen by accident—it happens when we make it a priority, together.**