



To: Local Coordinators, Bargaining Unit Presidents, Health and Safety Network Leads, and Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) members from the Executive Booklet

From: Alan Warrington, RN, Vice-President Region 5 (Occupational Health and Safety Portfolio)

Date: November 29, 2022

Re: **Health and Safety Memo – IV Fluid Fires**

C: Board of Directors, Regional Service Teams, Litigation, Provincial Services Team, Membership Education Team, Communications and Government Relations Team, Professional Practice Team

On September 22, 2022, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) issued an alert pertaining to the increased risk of fire caused by intravenous (IV) fluids leaking into electrical outlets.

The alert provides measures that employers should take to protect workers, including:

- Only IVs on pumps and/or attached to the patient should be hung on the articulating arms/IV poles
- If an IV bag is not attached to a patient, it should be clamped and removed away from the patient area
- Adapters for equipment such as IV pumps should be level with the outlet to eliminate any gaps for liquid to drip into the outlet

Our Position

ONA considers the above measures to be reasonable precautions for the protection of the worker, in alignment with clause 25(2)(h) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*.

Next Steps

As outlined in O. Reg. 67/93, employers must consult with the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) when developing new or revising existing measures and procedures for the health and safety of workers. Considering this current knowledge about the hazard of fires caused by IV fluids leaking into electrical outlets, JHSC members should add IV Fluid Fires to their JHSC meeting agenda and request that the employer, in consultation

with the JHSC, perform a risk assessment and update all relevant policies on the proper use, maintenance and operation of IV pumps.

JHSC members should also ensure that the employer provides education to staff on the hazard as well as changes to existing policies and procedures to prevent fires related to IV fluids leaking into electrical outlets.

If you encounter the above fire hazard in your workplace, please report it to your supervisor and if necessary, to the ONA representative on your JHSC.