April 11, 2018 |

Releases

Government’s mental trauma initiative for first responders a compassionate, important step forward says labour federation

Vancouver - The BC Federation of Labour is applauding new legislation introduced today by NDP Labour Minister Harry Bains, Bill 9, that will help first responders with mental disorders caused by traumatic working conditions receive the treatment and compensation they deserve.

“First responders work in incredibly traumatic and stressful conditions,” says BCFED President Irene Lanzinger, “and their efforts are crucial to the well-being of our society,” she says.

“This new legislation is a compassionate response by government to the frequently gut-wrenching circumstances in which they work and the effect it has on their physical and mental well-being” she says.

Called the mental disorder presumption, it applies to firefighters, police, ambulance paramedics, sheriffs and correctional officers. The legislation will amend the existing *Workers Compensation Act* by presuming that first responders with diagnosed mental disorders like PTSD resulted from work-related causes. It means that these workers will not have to prove that their illness is caused by their work.

Lanzinger is pleased that the legislation also creates a process for other high-risk occupations—like nurses and health care professionals, for whom trauma and stress is also part of day-to-day work

reality—to be covered by similar standards.