

RSI DAY

On February 28, UFCW Canada will join workers and other labour groups around the world to recognize Repetitive Strain Injury Awareness Day. Health and safety activists initiated the day of awareness over ten years ago to help bring attention to an occupational hazard that affects thousands of people in many different sectors, and members working in UFCW Canada core industries in particular.

Also known as musculoskeletal disorder (MSD), the term repetitive strain injury (RSI) refers to a number of injuries that affect the body's muscles, nerves and tendons. Some common examples of RSI's are tenosynovitis, and carpal tunnel syndrome.

One out of ten Canadian workers is afflicted with RSI's and, apart from the emotional strain these injuries can have on affected workers and their families, the net cost of RSI's exceeds \$26 billion – or 3% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) – every year.

Despite the massive negative impact RSI's have on workers and the national economy, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia are the only provinces that have so far recognized the need for regulatory action. The most progressive RSI prevention legislation exists in B.C., where the law requires employers to consult with joint health and safety committee members in identifying, assessing and controlling RSI risks.

RSI's are a painful reality for thousands of workers in Canada, and a tremendous source of frustration for worker advocates because most repetitive strain injuries are so preventable.