

Church-Run Store Fired Worker for Exercising Safety Rights



A worker for a church-run store supervised the book room, which was located in the basement of the store. She'd complained about the air quality in the room to her superiors but they did nothing. So she complained to the MOL, which sent an inspector to investigate. As a result, the inspector issued 12 compliance orders to the store. Then an unusually large order of books arrived in bad condition. The worker told her supervisor it was unsafe for her to process the load on her own. Instead of giving the worker help, the supervisor issued her a disciplinary warning, demoted her in front of her co-workers and then fired her. The worker claimed illegal reprisal and the Labour Relations Board agreed. When she was fired, the store was clearly aware of her attempts to exercise her rights under OHS law. And its claim that restructuring was the reason for her termination was disingenuous as the changes would, in fact, require hiring *more* employees. So the Board ordered the store to pay her more than \$15,000 in damages [*Leah Podobnik v. Society of St. Vincent de Paul Stores (Ottawa) Inc.*, [2016] CanLII 65109 (ON LRB), Sept. 27, 2016].