International Companies Taking Steps to Protect Workers in Egypt



Canadian employers have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of their workers’no matter where they work. So for international corporations, that duty extends to workers in various countries. And when circumstances in another country become hazardous due to, say, a natural disaster or political unrest, these companies must take action to protect workers there.

For example, due to the current unrest and violence in Egypt, particularly Cairo, several international companies have suspended their operations there due to safety concerns.

Companies including General Motors, Electrolux AB, Royal Dutch Shell PLC, Heineken N.V., Toyota Motor, Suzuki Motor and BASF SE closed their facilities and told workers to stay home.

A spokesman for Swedish appliance maker Electrolux said it ‘a precautionary safety measure to ensure employees would not be exposed to risks travelling to and from work.’

Royal Dutch Shell closed its offices and restricted worker travel as the violence continued. (At least 700 people have been killed in and near Cairo.) And Heineken scaled back its six Egyptian breweries to minimum staff and increased security.

Read these 10 tips for ensuring your workers' safety when they're working abroad.

You may also have a duty to protect workers from harassment in other countries. For more on protecting workers from harassment outside of the workplace, go to our sister site, HRInsider.ca. Not an HR Insider subscriber' Sign up for a free trial subscription.