New Safety Glasses Policy Upheld over Union Challenge



A food processing facility introduced a new policy on safety glasses in which regular prescription eyeglasses would no longer be sufficient; all workers were now required to wear safety glasses, including those that can be worn over prescription glasses. If workers buy a pair of prescription safety glasses at a specified store, the facility will reimburse them up to $75. If a worker wants to buy safety glasses with a progressive lens, he must pay a $35 co-pay. And the facility will only reimburse a worker once for the purchase of prescription safety glasses. The union challenged the new policy. An arbitrator upheld the policy, finding that the evidence showed that the facility provides a minimum, but sufficient, level of PPE in general and that workers are free to buy a higher quality piece of equipment at their own cost. The free 'over' safety glasses provide adequate protection and allow workers to comply with the new policy at no personal cost [*United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 175 & 663 v. Cavendish Appetizers (Cavendish Farms Corp.)*, [2017] CanLII 26404 (ON LA), April 17, 2017].