

NEWSLETTER TO MEMBERS No. 14 – 9 JUNE 2010

EXHAUST EXTRACTION SYSTEMS

Members will be aware that the Fire Service has recently, in several locations, accused members of refusing to carry out instructions. This was in relation to the parking of appliances outside of Fire Stations due the Fire Service's reluctance to put exhaust extraction systems into some Fire Stations throughout New Zealand.

Our members were, quite rightly in the opinion of the Union, under the impression that the Union was taking lawful strike action in regards to matters of Safety and Health by leaving appliances outside. The Union and representatives of Human Resources discussed the matter and a verbal agreement was reached regarding mitigating the risks to our members before the appliances would be placed inside.

In the ensuing period, but before the mitigating measures had been installed, some Area Managers ordered their Senior Station Officers (SSO) to place the appliances back inside the Fire Stations. The SSO's refused as they were acting under Union instruction during a lawful strike. The SSO's were then deemed by the Fire Service to have refused a lawful order.

The Fire Service still refuses to believe that the Union conducted a lawful strike, and despite the fact that they never challenged the actions of the Union, contend that there was no strike at all.

Members of a union that are engaged in lawful strike action cannot be penalized individually.

The Union will within the next couple of days proceed this matter to the Employment Relations Authority to have the strike action declared a lawful strike.

In the meantime the Union has written to Mike Hall the CEO/ National Commander asking that any further meetings to discuss the alleged refusal of lawful orders be deferred until the outcome of the ERA findings.

A copy of this letter herewith.

NZPFU

9 June 2010

Mike Hall
Chief Executive/National Commander
N.Z. Fire Service
P.O. Box 2133
WELLINGTON

Dear Mike,

This letter relates to the Union's strike actions regarding the parking of appliances outside of Fire Stations in regards to exhaust fumes.

The Union wishes to advise you that we will, within two days, be filing in the E.R.A., for a determination that the actions taken by our members in relation to parking appliances outside of Fire Stations was indeed a legal strike by the Union on the grounds of Safety & Health.

Accordingly, we would request that the proposed meetings between your Area Managers in Invercargill, Dunedin, Timaru, Palmerston North and anywhere else where our members have been accused of refusing to follow orders, be deferred until an outcome is received from the E.R.A.

Yours sincerely,

S.C. WARNER
NATIONAL PRESIDENT