

## What every member should know about...

### REDUCING STRESS

Stressed workers are unhappy workers. Generally demands of the job, home or both are the cause for feeling stressed. There is a feeling of being weighted down with too much responsibility and an inability to manage it all. Things like, working in areas where there is consistently too much noise, poor physical environment, including overcrowded classrooms and cramped workspace, or working in spaces that are uncomfortably hot. Stress can manifest itself in various forms but most commonly persons who are "stressed out" are easily irritated, quick to anger, feel lethargic, tired and often depressed. Physical symptoms may include headaches, gastrointestinal problems, lower back pain, insomnia, and/or rapid weight loss or gain. If nothing is done to alleviate stress more serious illness may result.

#### **Talk to the union**

Job stress due to conditions such as unreasonable workloads, high demands, and low control should be addressed to try and bring permanent solutions to the problem. Labor/management committees, training, and negotiations are tools that can be used to resolve such issues.

#### **Talk with co-workers**

Isolation can make stress-related problems worse. Support from co-workers can help reduce the stress. Develop friendships and discuss problems and concerns.

#### **Exercise**

Take a walk. Either by your self or with a co-worker, friend or family member three to four times a week can substantially reduce stress.

#### **Practice muscle relaxation exercises**

Relaxation excises - through breathing techniques and methods on how to relax major muscle groups - can be effective in reducing stress.

#### **Eat right**

Eating at regular times and avoiding excess sugar, salt, fat and alcohol will reduce drowsiness, headaches and irritability.

#### **Find personal time**

Time every day (20 minutes at least) away from the demands of school and family can help relieve stress. Stress relievers could include bubble bathes and music, meditation or simply escaping to a quiet place.

#### **Support network**

Call on family and friends. Develop a network of co-workers that meet regularly and exchange ideas.

#### **Join a club**

Become part of a club or organization, social or sports oriented, which focuses on other than school.