

Hidden Danger of Sales Receipts

Could toxic sales receipts be making you sick?

Simply touching thermal receipt papers, which are widely used at workplaces throughout Ontario, exposes workers and consumers to the harmful hormone disruptor, BPA (Bisphenol A). The presence of BPA has a huge impact on our health, affecting male and female reproduction, breast development, risk of cancer, obesity, thyroid, metabolism, and cardiovascular endocrinology.

Environmental Defence, a Canadian advocacy organization, reports that even when steps are taken by governments and industry to eliminate BPA, nearly identical chemicals such as Bisphenol S (BPS) have replaced it. In fact, BPS is believed to not only have the same adverse health risks as BPA, but is also suspected to be more easily absorbed by our bodies. Switzerland has banned BPA and BPS as a substitute.

“Due to our capacity to quickly absorb large quantities of BPA/BPS after very short exposure times, these products are hazards anywhere thermal receipt paper is present,” said Rick Young, 1006A Health and Safety Representative.

Young said **thermal receipt papers are found in many of Local 1006A’s bargaining units. These include grocery stores (receipts) restaurants (order slips), movie theaters (tickets), public transportation (tickets and transfers) hotels and warehouses.**

Environmental Defence researchers found **BPA levels were up to 42 per cent higher and BPS levels were up to 115 per cent higher after handling thermal receipts for just 17 minutes.** Wet or moist hands increase the absorption rate of the toxic substance into our bodies. Using hand sanitizer or moisturizing creams also cause a faster absorption rate of these substances.

Your union believes it is vital to take action on this important issue. According to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, your employer must take every precaution reasonable to protect your health and safety.

“Your union encourages you to insist on non-allergenic Nitrile and/or Neoprene disposable gloves from your employer to handle thermal receipt paper,” said Young. In addition, contact your union’s Health and Safety

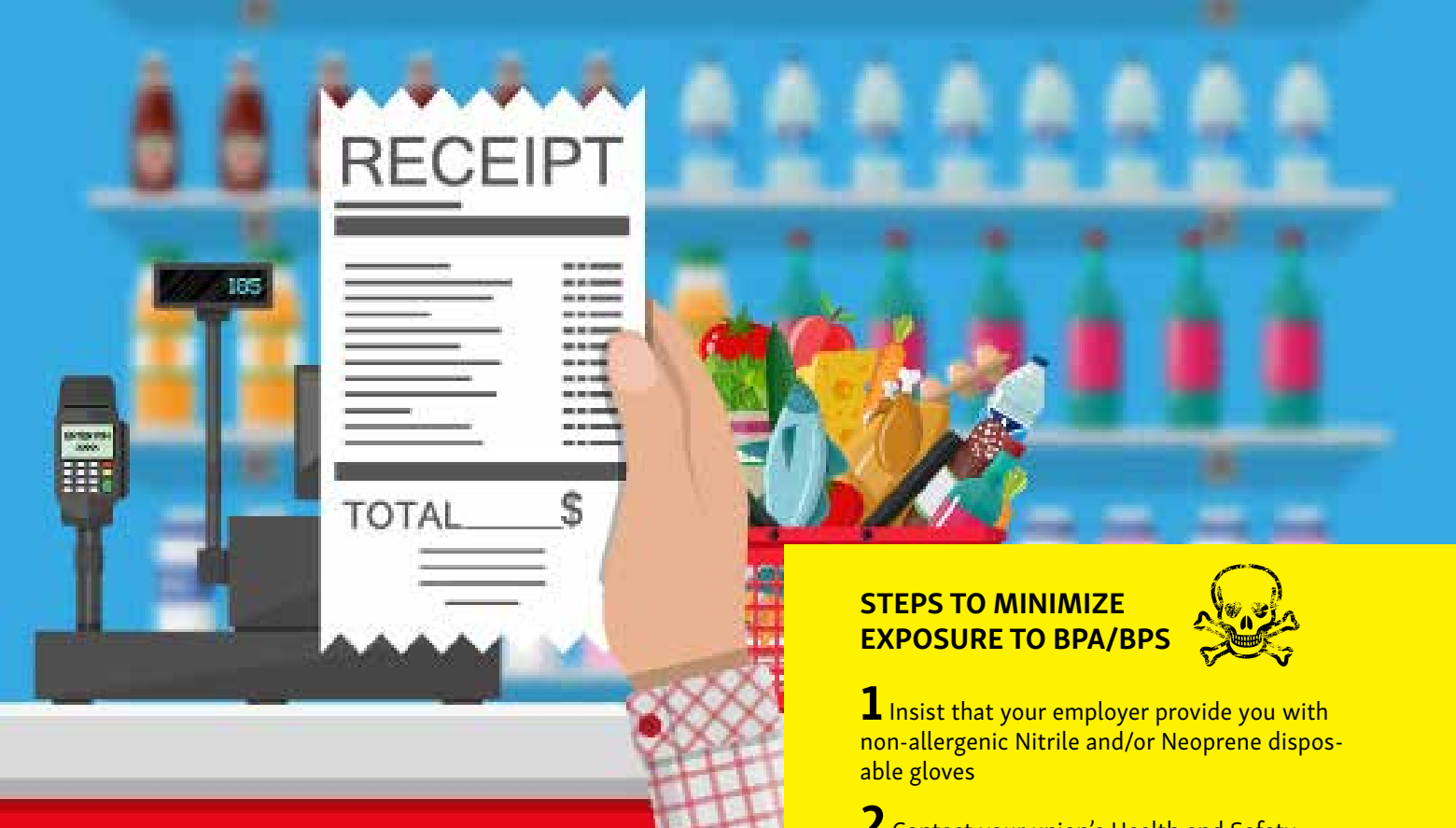
Department so we can assist you should your employer choose not to provide you with the proper personal protective equipment. If you have any questions, contact Rick Young at 416.557.6939 or ryoung@ufcw1006a.ca.

The amount of BPA in receipts can be

1,000x greater

than the amount put into the lining of a food can.





Q What Are BPAs?

A BPA stands for Bisphenol A – a chemical used to produce plastics, resins and consumer goods such as food containers, hygiene products and thermal receipt paper. Used commonly since the 1950s, it's only recently that their potential harmful effects have been researched and understood.

Q How do BPAs enter your body?

A BPAs enter your body through ingestion and skin absorption. Thermal receipt paper contains BPA and leaves a fine undetectable dusty residue on your hands and fingers, which increases the chances of accidental ingestion and cross contamination into food products. Just touching thermal receipt paper is a hazard as BPA is easily absorbed through the skin.

Q How does BPA affect your endocrine system?

A BPA is an endocrine disruptor. The endocrine system is responsible for hormone production and affects every organ and cell in your body. The system regulates vital body functions like fertility, tissue function, metabolism, growth and development, sleep, mood, sexual function, heart rate, and digestion. It is comprised of the thyroid gland, pituitary gland, adrenal gland, parathyroid gland, the pancreas, ovaries and testicles.

STEPS TO MINIMIZE EXPOSURE TO BPA/BPS



- 1** Insist that your employer provide you with non-allergenic Nitrile and/or Neoprene disposable gloves
- 2** Contact your union's Health and Safety Department to assist you should your employer choose not provide you with the proper personal protective equipment.
- 3** Speak to your Worker Health and Safety Committee Member and ask that they discuss this issue at the next Joint Health and Safety Committee meeting.
- 4** In general, avoid contact with thermal receipts at stores, theatres and restaurants, etc. Be aware that BPA may also be found in the lining of canned food and reusable plastic food containers.
- 5** Work to educate co-workers and others about the need to completely remove this hazard from our workplaces and to advocate for safer alternatives.

Q What If My Employer Says That They Have Switched To BPS Receipt Paper?

A Some of our largest employers have switched from BPA receipts to BPS, however there are no studies that suggest that BPS is any safer than BPA. In fact, two recent studies have shown that BPS exposure carries all the same adverse health risks as BPA.