



March 21, 2020

Dear fellow CWA Canada members,

As COVID-19 continues to spread, it's important that your union does all it can to protect members and ensure that employers are taking appropriate precautions and treating workers fairly.

For the last couple of weeks, we have been communicating with employers to get details of their safety protocols and seek assurances that staff will be paid if they are not able to work due to the crisis. We have also been working with our international union, the Communications Workers of America, on a co-ordinated response and tracking system.

Nearly all of our employers have responded to us and put safety protocols in place, including having staff work from home wherever possible. Most have also committed to paying full wages if workers are unable to perform their jobs due to COVID-19.

However, there have been some exceptions. Adequate health protocols, including social distancing, have still not been introduced in some workplaces, and some employers are refusing to pay workers in self-quarantine who are not able to perform their jobs from home (though in this case they are eligible for EI.)

Rest assured that we are pressing employers to ensure health protocols are put in place urgently and that they provide full pay, or top up EI, for any employee affected by the crisis.

We want to work co-operatively with our employers to minimize the financial impact and avoid layoffs or shutdowns, but it is also our legal and moral responsibility to ensure that our members are being protected.

If you feel your workplace is not observing proper health protocols, if you are not being compensated properly, or if you have any questions, please contact your Local president immediately.

In the meantime, practice social distancing, wash your hands regularly, avoid travel, and check the Health Canada website for updates on the spread and how to protect yourself: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

If you develop symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath), avoid contact with others, phone your doctor's office, and advise your employer and your Local president.

This is a challenging time but it is also a time when the best of humanity can shine through. Together we are the union, and together we'll take care of each other.

In solidarity,
Martin

Martin O'Hanlon
President, CWA Canada
The Media Union