

To/A: All Staff Servicing Retail Sector

From/De: Chris MacDonald, Assistant to the National President

Date: March 16, 2020

Subject/Objet: Retail Sector and COVID-19

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Greetings,

As efforts continue to slow the transmission of COVID-19 throughout Canada, and mitigate the impact on workers, we must pay special mind to the workplaces on the frontlines of this crisis – including those in retail, notably those in supermarkets and pharmacies.

As staff representing workers in these sectors, it is imperative that we not only ensure proper procedures are in place to protect the health of our members, but that – if ill – our members have full protection of their wages (since many will not be eligible for EI benefits).

Please be sure to keep me posted on any measures put in place in our stores, or issues that arise that require attention. In the meantime, please take note of certain key measures we expect all retailers to undertake during this crisis period.

- Ensure workers have full access to proper protective gear (e.g. proper safety gloves, masks) especially for those in closest contact with customers (stock clerks, cashiers, etc.)
- Ensure proper training so that staff have the best available knowledge for personal safety, and helping to limit the possibility of infection. Supermarket and pharmacy workers must understand they are at the frontlines in this crisis, no different from health care or transport workers, and are playing a major public service role in this outbreak.
- Communicate clear protocols to workers for:
  - Personal hygiene (i.e. regular hand-washing, cleaning store equipment)
  - Store hygiene (i.e. wiping down shopping carts after each use, baskets, railings, washrooms, check-out stations, etc.);
  - Social distancing with co-workers, customers (e.g. creating clear perimeters for stock clerks when they are stocking shelves to avoid physical contact with customers);
  - Safety measures with customers (e.g. mandates not to engage with customers who are physical, violent and abusive and protocols to report incidents)

immediately to managers). Useful resources are available through the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety website:

<https://www.ccohs.ca/outbreaks/>

- Waive any requirement for doctor's notes for employees who report sick;
- Ensure employees who call in sick, quarantined or in self-isolation, receive full income assistance. This can include:
  - For part-time workers, full pay for scheduled shifts that are missed; or
  - For longer periods of illness (including a 14-day quarantine), fully pay based on average weekly shifts over the 4-weeks prior;
- In the event of a full-store lockdown, workers must also receive lost pay for the duration of the lockdown;
- Impose product purchase restrictions (e.g. 2-3 perishable items per visit) to avoid hoarding, which can lead to violence between customers and between customers and workers;
- Establish controls on self-serve stations (pre-bagged bread, bulk foods, pre-packaged olives, etc.) or dedicate staff to manage these areas in the store. Remove all food-sampling stations from the store;
- Ensure full sanitization of the store at regular intervals throughout the day;
- Establish proper protocols and procedures for removing and washing store uniforms (including sweaters, smocks, aprons, etc.). Workers must not bring home with them any contaminated uniforms or materials from the store.

Thanks for your attention to this.

In solidarity,



Chris MacDonald  
Assistant to the National President

CM:lmc/cope-343  
cc: Angelo DiCaro