



COVID-19 UPDATE



To: Local union presidents, secretary-treasurers, NEB, leadership and all staff

This fall, keep it small

We are watching the number of COVID-19 cases rise in provinces across the country, and we are concerned, just like many of you are.

As Canada and the world braces for a second wave, we will be referring to the following guidelines to inform our work, our response and our activism this fall. We encourage all locals to do the same.

Priority: Health and safety

- It is our collective responsibility to keep Unifor members, in their workplaces, as safe and healthy as possible.
- Support the good functioning of Joint Health and Safety Committees in each workplace.
- Voice concerns over inadequate workplace practices and protocols when it comes to protecting members from COVID-19 transmissions. Your employer has the ultimate responsibility of providing a healthy and safe work environment.
- Acknowledge that Black and Indigenous workers and all workers of colour face compounded risks and challenges to their health and well-being as a result of racism, inside and outside of the workplace.
- Be aware of any new COVID-19 cases affecting your workplace, and notify the national union if and when a member tests positive.
- Get support from Unifor's [Health and Safety department](#) to review back-to-work protocols, health and safety check-lists, and other guidelines to keep everyone safe at work.

This fall, keep it small

- This fall is not the time to plan and hold large meetings or gatherings.
- Unifor locals should avoid setting the stage for gatherings that could lead to potential COVID-19 transmissions.
- Conduct risk-assessments when planning events, and explore alternative options for in-person meetings.
- Consider replacing in-person gatherings with online, telephone or alternative gathering to ensure the union is still creating space for our members.
- If in-person meetings are necessary, keep numbers as minimal as possible and ensure proper physical distancing is possible for the entire duration of the event.
- Practice contact-tracing for any in-person event, meeting or gathering that you hold. This means that you must take note of the name and phone numbers of every person in attendance, in case a COVID-19 case is discovered later.
- Even in our personal lives, Unifor members should keep gatherings small and respect provincial public health guidelines.

Continue to build a different kind of union

- COVID-19 restrictions do not cancel out our role as a union- it changes the way we do our work.
- Plan ahead (way ahead) for upcoming rounds of bargaining. Evaluate modified plans for: bargaining committee meetings, meetings with employers, ratification meetings, votes.
- Consult Unifor's [guide to online meetings](#).
- Use outdoor spaces as long as the season allows it: outdoor tents, tables, or other infrastructure can be set up outside to hold informal events or voting processes.
- Consider booking multiple hotel meeting rooms to ensure additional space if holding meetings.
- Work with your national representative to develop the best options for upcoming meetings, votes, and other union businesses.
- Remember that online meetings, while handy, may present different challenges for different groups of people. Increasing the format options, such as offering a phone line and different meeting times, can help maximize participation.

Support each other through difficult times

- Many members are struggling in their working lives, but also in their personal lives. Encourage your local union to create individual or online spaces to listen to your members' concerns in these times.
- Read and share Unifor's [mental health resource guide](#).
- Consider offering occasional (or regular) mental health check-ins for the network of members active in your local union.
- Check in on friends, family members and people in your workplace or geographical area. Build a support network with a plan in case of new lock-down measures.

Remember pandemic basics

- Wash your hands.
- Wear a mask.
- Practice physical distancing.
- Conduct self-assessment before entering any Unifor office, store or facility, or public space.
- Avoid unnecessary and large gatherings.
- Limit behaviour that increases your risk of transmission, contagion or unnecessary contact .
- Consult and respect provincial public health guidelines.

Boost your activism

Our union activism is in full swing. Here is what you can do right now to support other Unifor members across Canada:

- 1,400 members at Loblaw-owned Dominion stores in Newfoundland and Labrador are on strike. Support them in their fight and sign on to the [Fair Pay Forever campaign](#)
- Take collective action for [racial justice](#) and affirm that Black Lives Matter in our union.
- Demand that Canada Build Back Better together. Read and apply [Unifor's program for a fair, inclusive and resilient economy](#).
- Join us in calling for the [end of for-profit long term care](#), fighting for [pandemic pay for all health care workers](#), and preventing tragedy for seniors across the country.
- Participate in [Unifor's online education program](#) - new workshops will be added throughout the fall.
- Visit Unifor's COVID-19 [resources page](#), for useful information about government support programs, policy changes and resources for local unions.

We are asking on Unifor members, locals and staff to remain vigilant this fall.

Your union is here to support you in your workplace as you navigate the coming months. Never hesitate to lean on us for help and support. Together, we will get through this.

In solidarity,



Jerry Dias
President



Lana Payne
Secretary-Treasurer



Renaud Gagné
Quebec Director