



Inter-office Communication Note de service

To/A: All Staff Servicing the Mines, Metals and Minerals Industry Sector
From/De: Deb Tveit, Assistant to the National President
Date: March 30, 2020
Subject/Objet: Mines, Metals and Minerals Workplaces and COVID-19

Greetings,

As mitigation measures continue to be put into place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we need to be mindful that workers in the mines, metals and minerals industries face particular risks within their workplaces. Due to the nature of work in the sector – including frequent worker-to-worker contact, often in confined spaces – there is a heightened chance of exposure to the virus.

Unifor representatives must ensure that employers in the mines, metals and minerals sector are prioritizing the health and safety of our members by implementing their infectious disease preparedness and response plans that can help guide protective actions against COVID-19. Joint health and safety committees must continue to identify workplace hazards and make recommendations to the employer on health and safety issues and on programs and procedures to improve health and safety, as well as developing new protocols on minimizing worker-to-worker contact, routine disinfection of spaces/facilities in high traffic areas, personal protective equipment, HVAC system maintenance and assessing workplace exposure to COVID-19.

We must simultaneously ensure that any worker who falls ill or self-isolates due to potential COVID-19 exposure is protected from lost wages through full income assistance from the employer. Where workers are immuno-compromised or suffering from pre-existing conditions, arrangements should be made to allow them to work from home or to take paid sick leave.

For ongoing updates on Unifor's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as resources for Local Unions and members, visit unifor.org/covid19. New resources include Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on COVID-19, a COVID-19 Checklist for income replacement, FAQs on Employment Assistance, and information on the new Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).

For the most up to date health information, please consult your regional health agency or Public Health Canada. You will find a complete list of resources including updates on the government's responses on their website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

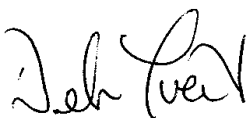
In the meantime, we expect employers in the mines, metals and minerals sector to undertake a number of **key measures** to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including the following:

- Following the most up-to-date guidance provided by public health officials and federal/provincial authorities.
- Working with joint health and safety committess to develop clear protocols on personal hygiene measures and how to practice social distancing with co-workers.
- Implementing work-at-home plans for those employees who are able to do so.
- Mandating that employees returning from vacation self-isolate for 14 days, with full pay.
- Waive any requirement for doctor's notes for employees who report sick.
- Ensuring employees who call in sick, quarantined or in self-isolation, receive full income assistance. This can include:
 - For workers experiencing a shortage of hours, full pay for scheduled shifts that are missed; or
 - For longer periods of illness (including a 14-day quarantine), full pay based on average weekly shifts over the 4-weeks prior.
- Working with our locals to apply for Work-Sharing agreements to avoid unnecessary lay-offs.

If you have any questions on specific issues not identified here, please contact your national representative or local.

Our members and their families are depending on us to provide them with support during these unprecedented times so it is absolutely critical that we remain vigilant and continue to advocate for their physical and financial well-being. Thank you for your care and attention.

In solidarity,



Deb Tveit
Assistant to the National President

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