

March 20, 2020

COVID-19 Update

CUPW intends to be part of the solution to the COVID-19 crisis and enable members to care for ourselves, our families, and our communities. We can all play a part in mitigating the spread of the virus and protecting our vulnerable populations.

On March 18, Canada Post Corporation issued some new directives on social distancing in and around the workplace. Also, they are directing workers who have returned to Canada from any international destination since March 14 or are showing symptoms of COVID-19 not to report to work. This directive also applies if someone in your household meets these criteria's and you have been in contact with them.

CUPW is concerned with the lack of compliance and consistency being applied in workplaces, and that customer behaviour and interactions are not being addressed properly.

Some of the issues that members are raising in the workplace include cleaning staff and supplies, use of taxis and insufficient cleaning of them in certain areas, quarantine enforcement, leave and pay provisions for Urban Temporary Employees and OCREs (lack thereof).

We've also heard concerns regarding social distancing in interactions with the public, special child care needs, anxiety created by the situation.

Emphasis has been placed on members over 70 years of age, hostile customers and public health recommendations, and what actions to take in the event that you were in contact with a co-worker who has tested positive for the virus. As such, we are reviewing CPC's measures and their effectiveness with the employer on a daily basis.

You Have a Right to Be Safe

If you feel you are working in unsafe conditions, you can exercise your right to refuse unsafe work.

Clause 33.13 of the UPO Collective Agreement:

- You have the right to refuse dangerous work if you have reasonable cause to believe that this work will endanger your health or endanger another worker's health.
- You must inform your CUPW Union Representative and your supervisor of your refusal.
- Canada Post must investigate the situation in the presence of a CUPW union representative.

Section 128 of the Canada Labour Code (Applies to both Urban and RSMCs):

- You have the right to refuse dangerous work if you have reasonable cause to believe that this work will endanger your health or endanger another worker's health.
- In the meantime, you may be assigned to reasonable alternative work or asked to remain in a safe place.
- An officer from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) will investigate in the presence of all parties.
- The minister responsible for ESDC will give you and the employer his or her decision in writing.
- If ordered to go back to work as a result of the ESDC Minister's decision, you must comply.

.../2



- You or CUPW have up to ten (10) days to appeal the decision.

Workers under provincial jurisdiction can find the appropriate information on cupw.ca

Canada Post has an Obligation to provide Safe Working Conditions and Facilities

Just as postal workers have a right to protect their Health and Safety the employer has strict obligations to provide healthy and safe working conditions. For urban workers the Employer's obligations are included in Article 33 of the urban collective agreement. These are strong provisions which were negotiated during the 1981 strike. They include the obligation of CPC to ensure that safe conditions prevail within the workplace, to take appropriate and effective measures, both preventive and corrective, to protect the health and safety of employees.

The employer is obligated to provide and maintain workplaces, equipment, work methods and tools that are safe and without risk to health; inform its employees and Union representatives of any situation relating to their work which may endanger their health or safety, as soon as it learns of an unsafe said situation and inform employees adequately regarding the risks relating to their work, and provide appropriate training and supervision so that the employees have the skills and knowledge necessary to safely perform the work assigned to them.

CPC is also required to provide the equipment, clothing and devices deemed necessary to prevent injury. Finally the employer is required to take, without delay, all the measures necessary to prevent or correct a situation liable to endanger the health and safety of employees, or liable to compromise the environment, as soon as the situation is brought to its attention.

Article 24 of the RSMC collective agreement provides for RSMCs to be covered by the terms of the Canada Labour Code. CUPW takes the position that the same protections accorded to urban workers must apply to all RSMCs.

Send Us Your Feedback

Your experience in the workplace is our primary concern. Your feedback is valuable and we're listening to members concerns from the work floor in our decision-making. The best way to send that feedback is through your local Health and Safety committee or the stewards network. The union will always fight for the health and safety of the membership. Adding your voice can help us help each other.

In solidarity,



Carl Girouard
National Grievance Officer

2015-2019/Bulletin #098

JS/bt cope225

