



Q and A for COVID-19



April 2, 2020

The following document is a series of questions and general answers to help assist our members dealing with navigating COVID-19 and work practices over the next few weeks and months. It is important to note that information and recommendations are constantly changing, and the following information are generalized and based on current known practices. For specific information or any unanswered questions, please contact your Shop Stewards, Unit Chair or Executive members of Local 523

COVID-19 Information

The following information is taken from the Canadian Disease Control website and CUPE BC website.

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

<https://www.cupe.bc.ca/>

1. What is COVID-19?

According to Health Canada, coronaviruses (COV) are a large family of viruses that can cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The disease caused by the new coronavirus has been named COVID-19

2. How does it spread?

Human coronaviruses cause infections of the nose, throat and lungs. They are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- The air by coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands

3. How do I protect myself from becoming infected by the virus?

To help reduce the likelihood of becoming infected by any viral infection you should:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home as much as possible and limit contact with only immediate members of your household.
- Continue to self-monitor yourself and anyone in your household

Self – Isolation Questions

4. What do I do if I think I have been in contact with a confirmed infected person, recently traveled or are experiencing cold-like symptoms?

If you suspect you may have or have been exposed to COVID-19 follow these steps

- Complete a self-assessment through one of the following applications
 1. Call 811
 2. Online testing <https://covid19.thrive.health/>
 3. Download BC COVID19 Support App and use the Self-Assessment tool.
- Follow the recommendations of the self-assessment which may include self-isolation
- Notify your employer that you have done the self-assessment and have been told to self-isolate for the period of time recommended
- Follow all self-isolation guidelines
- If symptoms persist or worsen seek immediate medical attention

5. Am I required to have a Doctor's note to self-isolate or take sick leave?

No. Recent changes to legislation have required employers to excuse workers for sickness without requiring a doctor's note however, we recommend that you take the assessment or call 811 and follow the recommendations given, prior to notifying the employer that you are self-isolating.

6. If I am self-isolating but not symptomatic do, I have to be available to work?

Yes, if you are not experiencing sickness you may be asked to do alternate work by your employer on your scheduled days of work.

7. Are there currently any situations of mandatory quarantine?

Yes, as of March 25, 2020 self-isolation for people arriving in Canada, by land, sea, or air is mandatory under the Quarantine Act for 14 days whether or not they have symptoms of COVID-19.

8. What does self-isolating look like and am I required to follow the recommendations?

Yes, we are required to follow the recommendations for self-isolation which include:

- Stay home for the recommended period of time
- Do not go to work, or other public areas (e.g. malls, fitness centres, place of worship)
- Do not have visitors in your home, except for individuals providing care and or delivering food/supplies, and in that case maintain a distance of 2 metres.
- Do not use public transportation
- Do not share personal items with others
- Do not visit other family or friends
- Go to <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation> for a helpful list of Do's and Don'ts

Inability to Work Conditions

9. What if I am immune-compromised or pregnant OR I live with or are responsible for someone who is immune-compromised?

A-You will need to notify your direct supervisor of your situation and discuss alternative work schedules or how duties can be remotely serviced.

10. What if I am a parent that cannot find childcare for my dependents birth to 12?

A-You will need to contact your direct supervisor and make arrangements for alternative work schedules, discuss options for working from home or plan for some form of a leave, if needed.

11. What if I am a parent of an older child who requires additional specialized supports or caring for someone who is not immune compromised but also requires supervision which due to the pandemic no longer receives that service?

You will need to contact your direct supervisor and make arrangements for alternative work schedules, discuss options for working from home or plan for some form of a leave, if needed.

12. What if I want to take a Leave of Absence?

You will need to request a leave in writing under Article 23 Leave of Absence.

Wages and Benefits

13. Are our wages secure for all 10-month Support Staff starting back on March 30?

For all employees working in regular positions or holding current temporary positions, wages are secure for their assigned hours until April 30, at which time, the government will re-evaluate their current plan of action to determine funding and services to the end of June.

14 What if I am a casual or on call worker?

You will be issued your Record of Employment so you can apply for and collect EI unless you are a casual custodian who will remain on call during this time.

15. I am a casual/on call worker who has not yet reached my 20 worked days as of this date. Will I lose my seniority under Article 10 Loss of Seniority (e) (v)?

No. A Letter of Understanding (LOU) for all three districts has been agreed upon to suspend the minimum twenty (20) days worked in a school year to maintain seniority for the 2019-20 school year.

16. What supports are available for me as casual on call employee during this time?

You are encouraged to visit CUPE National for information relating to Income supports for workers during the Coronavirus pandemic at <https://cupe.ca/canada-emergency-response-benefit-qa>

Duties and Safety if /when required to work at school sites

17. Are Schools required to provide services for students of Essential Service Workers (ESW's)?

Yes, the government recently passed a State of Emergency which requires School Districts to provide care for those workers who are preserving life, health and societal functioning to our

communities. Without childcare services for these essential workers, our emergency and health services could face difficulties and not function in the capacity they currently are, and we simply can't let that happen. Our employers have a legal obligation to provide us with a safe work environment and we will ensure that they have developed solid frameworks to provide this service if needed in each community under acceptable working conditions. A list of essential service workers can be found at

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/essential-services-covid-19>

18. What will support staff, specifically CEA's be doing if students are in School?

All three school districts have not given us direction of duties and responsibilities for any potential students in schools at this time. However, many different plans are being developed. They will be collecting information from parents during the week of March 30- April 3. Once determined at each site, school administrators will contact their support staff with a plan of action. Health and safety of workers must be the top priority. If you have concerns about your school sites operation, contact one of your Units Shop Stewards.

19. My position directly supports students (e.g. CEA, ISW, ABED, Bus Driver, ESW, etc.) What will my duties be during this time if there are no students to support?

There may be a variety of work that can be done by support staff remotely and on site. Administrators /Supervisors at each school site are currently coming up with duties or jobs for all support staff. Any re-deployment of duties must be agreed to with the Union and meet all qualifications of training and ability. Health and safety are the top priority for alternative work duties. If you are redeployed and have concerns over the duties, contact one of your Unit's Shop Stewards.

20. How will I as a worker, be safe working in schools, board offices, work yards and maintenance buildings?

All safety protocols set out by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) must be followed, as well as work safe regulations for all workers. Caps on number of persons in the building will be adhered to. Custodians are assigned to each building to continually clean high traffic areas. Each District must have an Exposure Control Plan and follow the guidelines within it.

21. Do I have a right to refuse unsafe work?

Under regulation 3.12 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, all employees have a right to refuse unsafe work if they have a reasonable cause to believe that they are in harm's way or the work poses an undue hazard to themselves or others.



22. What are the steps for Refusing Unsafe Work?

The steps are as follows:

1. Report the unsafe condition or procedure

- As a worker, you must immediately report the unsafe condition to a supervisor or employer.
 - Provide evidence of the unsafe work
2. The employer will investigate the unsafe work
 - The worker will do other work, while the investigation proceeds
 - The employer will fix the unsafe work and report back to the worker
 3. If the worker still views work as unsafe after the supervisor or employer has said it is safe to perform the work in question
 - The employer must investigate the problem with the worker and bring in the Union or JOHS Committee of that site.
 4. If the worker still views work as unsafe, notify Worksafe BC
 - If the matter is not resolved the worker and the supervisor or the employer must contact Worksafe BC. A prevention officer will then investigate and take steps to find a workable solution.

23. Where can I find information on Worksafe conditions specifically for COVID19 and Right to refuse?

WorkSafe BC Right to Refuse Unsafe work

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/rights-responsibilities/refusing-unsafe-work?origin=s&returnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worksafebc.com%2Fen%2Fsearch%23q=right%2520to%2520refuse%26sort=relevancy%26f%3Alanguage-facet=%5BEnglish%5D>

CUPE National

<http://cupe.ca/refusing-unsafe-work-step-step-guide>;

K-12 Presidents Council – Right to Refuse and COVID Bulletin

https://bcschools.cupe.ca/files/2020/03/HS_COVID-19_COVID-19-Right-to-Refuse-in-BC-FAQ-25Mar2020.pdf

All school bulletin boards should have an OH&S section with information regarding right to refuse information.

Worksafe BC has a support App available for free download. Links to the regulations can also be found through the BC COVID-19 app mentioned earlier.

Supports to help with Anxiety and Stress

Public Employers Benefit Plan for regular employees

For information regarding your PEBT plan and extended benefits go to the following link and following the prompts

<https://www.pebt.ca/account/login/mustauthlogin - /login>

Employee Family Assistance Plan (EFAP) for all employees

For information on free services for online and by telephone for a variety of topics including; counselling, fitness, healthy living and COVID anxiety strategies, log on to

Toll-Free 1-888-307-0590

School District	User ID	Password
SD53	SD53	healthy
SD67	SD67	wellness
Sd83	Shuswapd83	healthy

Contact Information

1. All contact information can be found at building sites on the CUPE Bulletin boards

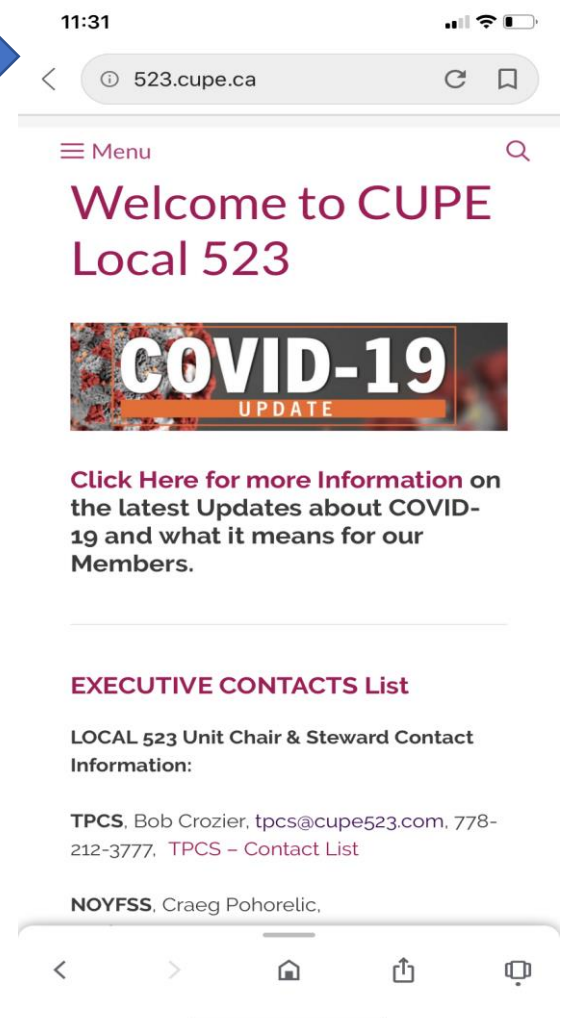
on our website which is completely updated

<http://www.523.cup.ca>

- Unit Information including Shop Stewards can be found just under the COVID 19 icon and under the About us Tab

We will continue to update information as we receive it. If you know of someone who has not been receiving emails have them contact Erica McDowell, our Recording Secretary at rec_sec@cupe523.com

I would like to extend a huge thank you to Local 523 members who have been very supportive of our communities and workplaces through such challenging times. From the maintenance staff and custodians who worked through Spring Break and have kept our buildings running and clean. To the IT crew who have perfected the online systems we will use and undoubtedly, help us learn them over the next few weeks. Lastly, I would like to thank the many members who have emailed the executive and stewards with great questions, encouraging words and support as we continue to work to keep everyone safe and fight to secure wages and benefits to the end of the school year.



I know each of you will work hard to keep our school sites clean and safe. For those working remotely, I know that you will provide students and teachers with amazing supports and creative solutions to a different way of learning. I know our communities value the work that we do and our commitment to step up when called upon.

These are uncertain times, but we are 1,100 strong and together we can overcome whatever comes our way. As I have stated in past emails, take care of yourself, your family and check in with neighbors and friends via phone calls, skype, facetime and emails. Watch credible media sources and take a few minutes to just breathe and connect with nature.

In Solidarity,

Tammie Koroluk
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