

March 16, 2020

Hello Sisters, Brothers and Friends,

As you are all aware, the global COVID-19 situation is becoming more severe every day and has begun affecting each of your workplaces and personal lives. The same is true for every member of Local 1944's leadership, all of our staff, and even me. It's during times like these that it's most necessary for people to support one another, and especially our most at-risk, which is what a Union is all about.

This memo is to communicate to each of you about the work your Local leadership is doing regarding the effect of COVID-19 on our workplaces, and to inform you of the adaptive and proactive measures that Local 1944 is enacting in response to this issue.

Workplace impact

The Local, and in particular myself as Acting President, is in constant contact with your employers' leadership, several times daily.

As your employers are rolling out policies and procedures to deal with this issue, they are contacting your Local to give us regular briefings and to answer any questions or concerns we have. Likewise, when the Local becomes aware of a potential workplace problem, or an instance where management's attention is required, we are rapidly communicating this to employer leadership and it is being dealt with. So far, credit where credit is due, it appears as if your employers are taking this health crisis as seriously as required and are moving quickly to adapt, in particular around enforcing strict hygienic workplaces and employing social distancing.

This is not the place to reiterate all of the measures being adopted by your employers, but be assured that the Local leadership and staff are making sure we're fully aware of what is happening on the shop floor at this time.

We implore each member to diligently follow the safety policies and processes enacted by your employers with regard to this health emergency.

Your safety

While a variety of measures are being put in place to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for you, your Union wants you to know that we are always available if you have any safety concerns regarding your work during this difficult time.

If you encounter a situation at work that you feel puts you in danger, please first contact a manager to let them know, but also feel free to contact a Local Union Representative for advice. To do so, please call your closest Local Union office: <https://usw1944.ca/contact-us>.

Measures the Local is taking internally

Not only are we closely monitoring our employers' responses to the COVID-19 issue, but we are also putting some risk-mitigating measures in place internally:

- To apply responsible social distancing to the Local's functioning, as of now all Union meetings of Local 1944 members are only to be conducted remotely, by Zoom web conferencing, teleconference etc. This includes Unit meetings and Committee meetings. The Local office will be working to ensure that the full functionality of remote meeting tools remain available for this purpose.
- Interactions between our staff and members should occur remotely rather than in-person, if at all possible. Please phone or email your Local Union Representative, or clerical staff person, if you need to speak with them rather than coming in to a Union office. We will do our utmost to respond to you in a timely manner as we receive an unprecedented amount of calls and emails.
- The Local is also applying a variety of other measures to keep our staff safe, including expanding their Work from Home options and regularly sanitizing our offices.

At this difficult time, we are collectively responsible for one another's safety, employers and members alike. I trust that all members will do their part to ensure our mutual health and wellbeing as we deal with this challenge together.

In solidarity,



Donna Hokiro
Acting President
USW Local 1944