



2 BlueWater Road, Unit 203
Bedford, N.S.
B4B 1G7
Telephone: 454-6369; Fax: 454-3489

President – **Scott Lillington**
National Representative – **Todd MacPherson**

CUPE LOCAL 108 UPDATE TO MEMBERS – RE: COVID-19 – March 18, 2020

Hello CUPE Local 108 members;

Everyone is aware that there have been at least four presumptive, and one confirmed, cases of COVID-19 in Nova Scotia, all travel related. The Federal and Provincial governments have released COVID-19 protocols on travel, self-isolation and general health, safety and wellbeing practices. HRM is following these protocols. I know that the uncertainty is causing anxiety and stress for many people. CUPE Local 108 executive have received many calls with concerns from members. We are trying to answer your questions and address your concerns, but we are also seeking out informed answers to your questions. Here is what we know;

Some HRM Business Units are now working from home. These employees will be paid if they work from home (their time can be tracked). If employees are too sick to work, they will be paid accordingly. MetroTransit has new protocol for ridership and many HRM buildings are being closed until further notice.

Most CUPE Local 108 members work for ROC/EMA/Parks/Fleet or Facilities. You will notice that some of these departments are changing the way they operate. HRM is closing pools, libraries and other workplaces where 108 members clean. This means that some cleaners are being re-located to various locations in order to assist with cleaning protocols in buildings that remain open. This is necessary for you to remain working and to get paid.

Some departments are making arrangements for vehicle to allow each employee to practice proper social distance protocols. This may mean one person in a vehicle. In order to provide this, it may take a day or two to secure enough vehicles for this. Remember that everyone should always practice social distance protocols. Social distance may not be possible with some crews due to the equipment that they use. If you are not provided social distance protocols and feel that you absolutely need it then contact the union.

Some people have questioned the cleanliness of their trucks. None of our members have a presumptive test for COVID-19 so trucks should not have the virus yet. If your truck needs to be cleaned ask your supervisor for the necessary supplies and wipe it down cleaning so that you feel comfortable with the level of cleanliness. If the cleanliness still concerns you talk to your supervisor about this. They may have alternative solutions. Please clean your trucks before and after each shift.

If you need/want to wash your hands and face regularly (highly recommended by health



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officials) and you are not near a depot stop into a public washroom and wash yourself. Please text/call your supervisor to let them know you are stopping in case a member of the public calls in a complaint. Please be respectful of public washrooms, others will be using them too.

NOTE: IF you feel that someone is asking you to do a job, but you feel it is unsafe you have the right to refuse. The Union believes that if you are requested to perform a job and you're not provided with the proper equipment and tools then it is unsafe.

I've been asked why we are not being sent home. The answer is that we cannot do our work from home due to the nature of our work. We provide services for the HRM that are necessary. If things get to a point where our services are not needed an assessment will be done and decisions will be made. Your executive is making sure that HRM keeps your best interests in mind. If you feel that this is too much for you and you need some time, ask your supervisor for some TOIL or vacation leave. If you are sick DO NOT COME TO WORK SICK. The employer has suspended the Attendance Support Policy indefinitely. If you are concerned about your health, please air on the side of caution when it comes to attending work.

HRM has produced a 'Frequently asked questions' sheet, ask your supervisor for a copy.

This situation is evolving, and we will attempt to keep all of you up to date with changes as they happen. Please join our CUPE -108 Facebook page or look on our webpage (www.108.cupe.ca) for updates. We are working as a team and we want everyone to feel safe.

If you, or a direct family member, are experiencing increased worry or anxiety, you can reach out to Homewood Health's Employee and Family Assistance Program. They are available 24/7, the access numbers are 902.466.3327 or 1.800.663.1142. Employees have the option of contacting HR Employee Services by email at MyHR@halifax.ca or phone 902.490.6145 for centralized access to employee services. They are available from 8:30am – 4:30pm each day and can assist with general questions related to COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Dwayne Tattrie
Acting President
CUPE Local 108
1-902-488-5457