

February 24, 2021

COVID-19: One Year Later

It is now a year since we have been fighting against the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Postal workers, and CUPW members in our private sector bargaining units, have displayed enormous courage and dedication, continuing to provide important services to the entire population. We can be proud of our actions.

CUPW Stepped UP

We can also be proud of our union. At every level, local, regional and national union officers and representatives have been working tirelessly to ensure that proper measures have been taken to protect the health and safety of CUPW members. And we owe a great deal of gratitude to the hundreds of union members of health and safety committees for their work of conducting workplace inspections and holding management accountable for ensuing compliance with the new safety rules.

Three Important Lessons

In the past year of dealing with the pandemic we have learned many lessons.

Here are some of them.

1. **We Rely on Each Other:** Every day at work we need to take precautions against COVID-19. We need to wear our masks correctly and practice physical distancing. We do this to protect ourselves and to protect our co-workers. And we rely on our co-workers to do the same in order to

protect themselves and us too. Everyone depends on each other. It is that simple.

2. **Unions Are Important:** The protections in our collective agreements, and the health and safety provisions in the Canada and provincial labour codes were only achieved by struggles undertaken by the labour movement. Our joint health and safety committees, the right to participate in inspections, our right to refuse unsafe work, quarantine leave, sick benefits, special leaves and other provision have proven invaluable for all of us during the COVID-19 crisis.
3. **As COVID-19 Changes We Also Must Change:** The new variants of COVID-19 are more dangerous and require the introduction of even greater protective measures. In Toronto, following the massive outbreak in the Gateway facility and the tragic death of one of our members, Peel Public Health ordered the wearing of three-ply masks, pre-screening prior to entry of facilities, greater signage and improved physical distancing measures. CUPW has demanded that these measures be introduced nationally. As we can see by the developing situation in Newfoundland – no area is safe from COVID-19.



Your Union is There for You

CUPW's first priority has always been the health and safety of the membership and we have proven that we will fight for it. If you believe your workplace is not safe, either because the safety measures are inadequate, or rules are not being followed contact your shop steward or union representative. If you test positive, and need information about your rights or leave provisions, contact your local representatives. If you believe you have contracted COVID-19 through workplace transmission and file a workers compensation claim, CUPW will help represent you if your claim is refused or challenged by management.

We are now entering into a new phase of the pandemic and CUPW has been working hard to have CUPW members prioritized for vaccines. But even if we are successful it will be weeks, maybe months before we are vaccinated. We all must keep working to stay safe. Our health, and that of our families and our co-workers depend on it.

In solidarity,



Jan Simpson
National President

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