

April 6, 2020

CUPE / Canadian Union
of Public Employees

Local 1623

COVID-19 Update

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OCHU is calling you, please pick-up!

As the pandemic continues you will be receiving important phone calls from the **Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU)** that will connect you to telephone town-halls for hospital workers across Ontario. You will hear the latest updates on COVID-19 issues and what we can be doing to make sure our colleagues, our families and our communities are protected and supported.

If you miss the call you will receive a voicemail with information on how to join the telephone town-hall. The next town-hall scheduled for Tuesday, April 7, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

Dial-in Number: 877-229-8493

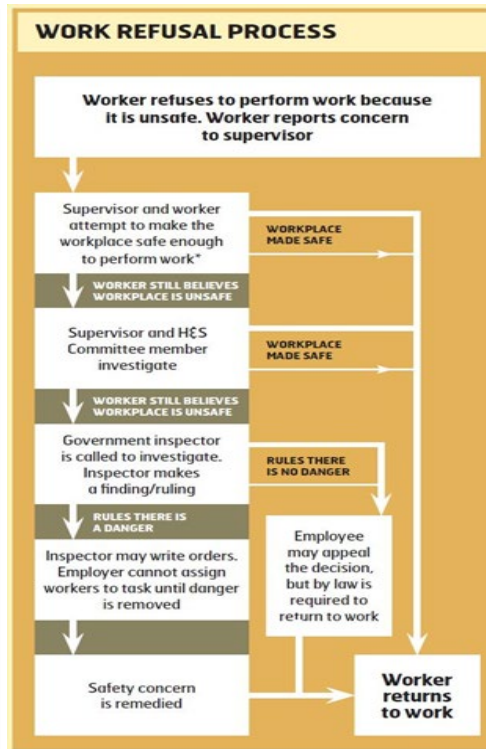
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For up-to-date information visit:

- www.Local1623.ca
- www.OCHU.on.ca
- www.CUPE.ca/covid-19

Contact Your Union Representative!

Dave Shefontiuk – 705-929-8457
Lise Morrissette – WSIB / Return to Work: 705-855-9956
Marc Mailloux Sr. – 705-566-3332
Marc Mailloux Jr. – 705-662-2797
Karen Brosseau – 705-855-8279
David Tremblay – 249-878-7088
David Stamplecoski – 705-918-1898
Cathan Pasanen – 705-665-1802
Marion Van Horn – 705-919-8054
Mark Valkama – 705-270-1140
Sheryl O'Brien – 705-919-4227
Lindsay Sauve – 705-920-4017
Janet Fitzgerald – SJCCC: 705-694-9111



Your Health and Safety Rights:

Workers have the right to refuse work that would put them in danger. If you do not feel safe you will not get in trouble if you refuse to do the work until you feel it has been made safe, or a government inspector has declared that it is safe enough to work.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA)* limits a health care worker's right to refuse unsafe work in two situations:

1. If the danger is an expected part of your job, and you have been provided adequate training and means to protect yourself, then you are expected to do the work, and a government inspector will say it is safe enough to work.
2. You cannot refuse a task if your refusal would directly endanger the life or health and safety of another person.

Situations where a work refusal would be considered appropriate include:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that isn't provided, not in good condition, not sanitary or does not fit.
- A worker is asked to wear PPE for which the worker has not received training.
- A worker is asked to perform a task for which the worker has not received training and the task is likely to endanger the health and safety of the worker or another worker.
- A worker has a condition that puts them at greater risk if they contract COVID-19. For example a pregnant cleaner who is told to clean the room of a probable COVID-19 patient, and offered a surgical mask and face shield. Pregnant employees, staff receiving chemotherapy, staff with compromised Immune systems, staff with rheumatoid illnesses or on steroids/anti-inflammatories should be moved out of direct contact with any potential or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Although a worker who has a reason to believe that the work will endanger themselves has the right to refuse unsafe work at any time, it is recommended that:

1. workers communicate any occupational health and safety concern with their supervisor or Employer; and
2. consult with a worker member of the JHSC.

The worker members of your Joint Health and Safety Committee are:

Lise Morrissette – WSIB / Return to Work: 705-855-9956

David Tremblay – 249-878-7088

David Stamplecoski – 705-918-1898

WSIB and COVID-19

If you believe you were exposed to COVID-19 at work:

➤ Step 1:

File a WSIB *exposure incident form* (Form 3958a). This will not start a WSIB claim, but it is important. It will make any future WSIB claims related to COVID-19 easier for you and your co-workers.

➤ Step 2:

If a diagnosis is made (COVID positive) file a WSIB Report – Form 6: Injury/Disease form.

You can find the forms at:

www.wsib.ca/en/forms

You can call the WSIB at 1-800-387-0750

For help you can contact:

Lise Morrissette at 705-855-9956

Please provide copies of the forms you submit to Lise Morrissette.

NEW INCOME SUPPORT - THE CANADA EMERGENCY RESPONSE BENEFIT:

People who lose income because of COVID-19 may be eligible to receive \$2,000 per month through the new Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).

If you or someone you know has questions about the CERB you can find out more at [CUPE.ca/COVID-19](https://cupe.ca/COVID-19). Here is the full link:

<https://cupe.ca/canada-emergency-response-benefit-qa>

- You do not need an ROE to apply, but you should still request one.
- You can apply online through the Canada Revenue Agency after April 6, or through Service Canada before then.
- You do not need to qualify for EI, you just need to have made \$5,000 in employment income in the last 12 months.
- If you are already receiving EI sickness benefits for COVID-19 related reasons, when those run out you can apply for CERB.

Child Care for Health Care Workers:

The provincial government recently announced plans to exempt certain childcare centres from the order to close, in an effort to accommodate the needs of Health Care Workers.

For help accessing childcare:

1. Ask your manager or your Employer's benefits office if the Employer is still offering help finding childcare.
2. Or, contact the appropriate Child Care Service System Manager for your area. You can find it on the webpage of the Ontario Ministry of Education:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/websiteServiceManagers.html>

Please contact a Union Representative for assistance.

YOU AND ALL WORKERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO UNPAID LEAVE RELATED TO COVID-19:

You should tell your Employer that you cannot come to work for various COVID-19 related reasons, including:

- Based on health guidelines you should be in self-isolation or isolation, for instance:
 - You have COVID-19 related symptoms
 - You have been in close contact with someone who probably has COVID-19

For up-to-date guidelines visit the Government of Canada web page on COVID-19 prevention and risks:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html>

- You need to take care of someone you consider family because of COVID-19

You will need to provide the Employer reasonable documentation of why you need the leave, but they cannot require a doctor's note.

If your Employer does not agree you qualify for unpaid leave, contact a union representative.

If you are put on unpaid leave because of COVID-19:

There are options available for you including the new Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). New options may come available. If the Employer says you will not be paid, please contact a union representative.

Finally, no employee should be added to or progressed through any Attendance Management Programs (AMPs) as a result of leave relating to COVID-19. We will enforce Article 3.02 of the Central Agreement.

Ontario's Emergency Order and Staffing Flexibility during COVID-19

On March 21 the Ontario government issued an emergency order giving hospitals the power to reassign, change shifts, cancel leaves and vacations, have contractors brought in to supplement the workforce and have volunteers and non-bargaining unit people do bargaining unit work. On March 23 a similar order was issued for long term care.

The orders last for 14 days and can be renewed for a further 14 days and then would have to be passed into law to remain in effect. Other parts of the collective agreement remain in effect and can be grieved.

If the Employer tells you they can do something because of the state of emergency, and so the collective agreement no longer applies, please notify a union representative.

CUPE is advocating that this order not be extended. Michael Hurley, President of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions said this about the Ontario Government's decision: "Hospital workers have been there and will be there for the people of Ontario as the pandemic intensifies. We can be counted on. But if our members are willing to sacrifice themselves to provide high quality care, they deserve to be consulted about what changes are needed in the workplace to accommodate the emergency, and they have not been. The government order is unnecessary, disrespectful and coercive."

No layoffs:

The government has told the unions that during this period there are to be no layoffs of full-time or regular part-time staff. Please alert a union representative if FT and PT members are being sent home in your department.

CUPE's Position on Personal Protective Equipment

Highly respected medical organizations have warned that COVID could be airborne. A list of these is on the Coronavirus Update page at www.ochu.on.ca

CUPE recommends that anyone whose work brings them within 6 feet of a suspected or actual case of COVID should be equipped with airborne precautions, which would include the N95 mask, face shield or goggles, glove, gown.

You should ask for this equipment if you are going to work in close contact with a COVID patient/resident. If your request is refused you can ask that the union be called. The Ministry of Labour may be asked to attend also.

Because there is a shortage of this equipment, it is vital that the available equipment be kept for those nurses, cleaners, screeners and others whose work brings them into direct contact with actual or potential COVID patients.