



Local 9705 Covid-19 Statement

April 8, 2020

To all Members of Local 9705,

We are coming into the second month of the emergency measures put into place due to the Covid-19 outbreak. So, I wanted to reach out again and give you all an update.

Firstly, I want to say my heart goes out to all of our members who are suffering financial and emotional hardship at this time. To all of those who have had to take layoffs in particular at Red Mountain and the Sandman hotel, which have been facing incredible hardship with nearly everyone being laid off or forced to take leaves. My thoughts go out to any of you who have gotten sick or have loved ones that have gotten sick, we all wish you well. As well as to all of you who have had your lives turned upside down due to this crisis. The stories coming across my desk are truly heartbreaking, the whole Union is working hard to try to help out in any ways that we can.

It is very important for all of us to keep in mind the very real impacts that this disease has been having on all of us. We also need to focus on the reason for all the extreme actions that have been asked of companies and individuals across the country, we are doing all of this to keep each other safe and to save lives.

We can see around the world, places where people did not act quickly or decisively enough to slow the progress of the disease, or worse, have ignored the warnings and recommendations of health care professionals. Nobody wants to see a loved one sick or possibly dying from this disease, so we all need to do what we can to slow the spread of disease and allow us to go back to normal sooner than later.

Where our members are still working, I am proud to say that we have come together to support each other and to come up with creative solutions to the difficulties that have been seen in our workplaces. Some of these are: working from home or in isolated offices, closed doors and phone appointments, plexiglass to protect our tellers, changing shifts, taking on roles that we don't normally do, supporting co-workers who are being overloaded, staggering start/stop and breaks, vastly increasing hygiene requirements and cleaning of work areas, sacrificing comfort and convenience to ensure proper social distancing, and generally changing how we go about our days to ensure our own safety and everyone around us. It is clear to see that you have all been working together to find ways to do your jobs safely over the last month and I'm sure that now that we have a framework in place, we will continue to find ways to improve as we go on.

The Union has made agreements with some of our employers to allow the temporary relaxation of some normal practices and in some cases to work outside the specific rules of our Collective Agreements. This has been done in order to address the immediate risks to people and the changes imposed by

government regulations, and medical advice. These changes have been made to keep people safe and with the understanding that they are temporary measures only. My expectation is that once we are through this crisis we will return to normal. It would be shameful for anyone, Company or employee to take advantage of any health crisis to gain some advantage, and I don't believe anyone is acting in bad faith at this time.

In order to continue to keep our workplaces safe we need to carry on working together with our employers to do what is necessary regardless of the hardship for either side. This requires trust and open lines of communication at all levels, this means that the employers act in good faith, but it also requires that all of us employees do as well. Please identify risks, ways to improve and difficulties that you see in your workplaces directly to your supervisors. They should act to make your workplaces safe, act on you ideas if possible and reduce these difficulties as much as possible. Please follow all of the rules and recommendations that have been put in place, they are there to protect you, your loved ones and our communities.

All of us are facing new stress and anxiety that we didn't have to deal with before this crisis began and we all need to work together and do our part to help each other to get through it. This is a Temporary situation and we are beginning to see improvements resulting from our actions across BC, but we aren't yet at the point where we can stop doing what we have started, we need to keep up the hard work to get through the next few weeks. But, if we all do our part and we all support each other I'm sure we will come out of this stronger and better as a whole and the hardship will be shorter and less intense than if we don't. We are always stronger together!

Thank you, take care of each other.

Ron McKenzie

President, USW 9705