



The Detroit Postal Worker

A NEWS BULLETIN FOR APWU MEMBERS

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO - Detroit District Area Local

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March 18, 2020

Your SAFETY during the COVID-19 Virus

The Detroit District Area Local has been in continuous contact with the USPS and our Headquarters Union Officials on the status of the COVID-19 virus facing our employees. The Postal Service has been instructed to conduct regular safety talks with all employees on the spread of the virus, and safety precautions they must take while on the job to stop the spread of this deadly disease. Local Management has kept the union up to date locally, stating that they are holding safety talks with employees. If this has not been happening in your office or unit, please contact the union at 313-532-9305 immediately.

The back of this flyer contains direct communication from postal headquarters, dated March 13, 2020 with guidelines for management to follow. This is to keep you informed of your rights as an employee in the postal service. Below are two correspondence/agreements from the USPS regarding travel and use of face masks.

American Postal Workers Union,

This is to confirm the Postal Service policy on the use of masks.

The Postal Service has discussed the use of surgical masks verses N-95 respirator masks by Postal employees. An N-95 respirator mask (N95 mask respirator) "is a safety device that covers the nose and mouth and helps protect the wearer from breathing in some hazardous substances. An N95 mask protects you from breathing in small particles in the air such as dust and mold." A surgical mask is, "not designed for use as particulate respirator and does not provide as much respiratory protection as an N95 respirator. Surgical masks provide barrier protection against droplets including large respiratory particles."

In light of this, the determination was made to provide employees with surgical masks when such equipment was requested, as opposed to providing the more heavy-duty N-95 masks that were designed for health care workers or maintenance workers performing work in high particulate environments. This determination comports with the information found in the Pandemic Influenza Plan (see Page 7, under Infection Control Plan for Potential Implementation):

- CDC does not recommend that individual people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. The Postal Service will provide surgical masks, upon request, to employees. See Management Instruction EL-810-2009-4.

The CDC and WHO guidance (which we are following) does not recommend wearing a mask unless an employee is ill with COVID-19 symptoms.

**RE: Contingency for Coronavirus Pandemic:
Required Travel for Training at the National Center for Employee
Development (NCED) in Oklahoma**

Due to the developing spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), and in accordance with the March 6, 2020 Postmaster General Memo, official travel for any Area or District employee must be approved in advance by the Area Vice President (AVP). This includes those bargaining unit employees that are scheduled for training at the NCED.

No employee will be forced to travel for training during this period, even if the AVP has approved such travel. Notice will be given at the national level when the temporary travel restrictions are lifted. The parties at the national level are in discussion regarding the impact of temporary restricted travel on pending qualifications in accordance with the craft articles of the National Agreement.

In Union Solidarity

Keith M. Combs, Sr.
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Striving to Maintain Democracy, Equality and Integrity for all People