



UNITED ASSOCIATION
of Journeymen & Apprentices of the
PLUMBING & PIPEFITTING
Industry of the United States and Canada
Local Union 170 – Affiliated with AFL-CIO-CFL

1658 FOSTERS WAY, DELTA, BC, V3M 6S6
Tel: 604.526.0441 | Fax: 604.526.6261
Toll Free: 1.888.223.7711
info@ualocal170.com
ualocal170.com

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Good morning Members:

I want to make it perfectly clear that we as your officers understand that everyone is under an extreme amount of stress during these unprecedented times. We also understand that some of the information we are getting to you is redundant and coming from multiple sources. It is also very frustrating that each jurisdiction is dealing with this issue at a different pace and with different conditions. We can only deal with our jurisdiction and with what is happening here and how it affects us, our members and their families.

We are being made aware that conditions on some jobsites are not meeting safety standards. It is, and again I stress this important point, each member's right to refuse unsafe work. We have statutory protections in place to safeguard workers from working in conditions that are not up to standard. As important as it is to refuse unsafe work and document the reasons for these choices, we also need you to evidence these situations on sites by taking photos and writing notes on the situations you are facing. We are lobbying government and WorkSafe about the specific conditions our members are facing. We really need this information as work starts to wind down, and even more importantly, when work begins to ramp back up; ensuring that our members' safety remains paramount in the minds of everyone involved. Please send this information to info@bcbuildingtrades.org and cc: Local 170 at info@ualocal170.com as well.

I urge you to continue to follow the recommendations of health officials and monitor your worksite to ensure that all the precautions necessary are being taken to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19. [Provincial Government Guidelines for Construction Sites.](#)

I ask that if you, or anyone that you are in contact with, shows symptoms of COVID-19, please do not go to work. If you can work safely in an environment where the established safety protocols are followed, please maintain a safe workplace. As we move forward, your services and experience will be needed and it will be us, the UA and Building Trades members that puts the economy and society back on the map; leading the way in finding a safe way to conduct our work.

We had a conference call with United Association General President Brother Mark McManus and all of the Business Managers from across North America yesterday and have been briefed on the position and state of the UA at this time. The UA has a general executive board meeting planned shortly and they have informed us that there will be more information coming out of that meeting. Our conference calls with Building Trades managers are happening every day, seven days a week and will continue. We also have a call scheduled with Canadian UA Business Managers later today. The managers of all three UA locals in BC are working together in the background with our staff to ensure we continue provide the most up to date information to our members.

At this time no one should be filling out any additional paperwork on the jobsite. If you are asked to fill out any additional documents regarding the COVID-19 issue, please contact our office immediately.

We are in contact with a lawyer who specializes in OHS and Disability claims and he has provided us with updates on what is going on at the WCB with respect to COVID19 claims. WCB compensation is available when there is a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19; however, the requirements are set high. More information can be found at the following link: <https://www.worksafefbc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/claims>

The Provincial government has announced several new measures to help those who are facing hardship due to COVID-19. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PREM0013-000545>. Some of the highlights from yesterday's announcement:

- \$1,000 Emergency Benefit for Workers who have been laid off, those who are sick or quarantined and those who've had to stay home to care for their children or sick family members – this is available for BC residents who receive Employment Insurance or those who are receiving the federal Emergency Care Benefit or Emergency Support Benefit.
- A six-month freeze on student loan payments
- Postponed tax increases that were scheduled for April 1.
- An increase in the B.C. Climate Action Tax Credit for July 2020

Measures to help renters will be announced on Wednesday. Please continue to visit our website which is updated daily with new information and contact our office if you have any questions. We are here to provide any assistance we can.

Fraternally,



A.D. Al Phillips, RSE
Business Manager & Financial Secretary