



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

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March 19, 2020

Sisters and Brothers,

Good afternoon to you and your families. I would just like to take this opportunity to say at this time I could not be more impressed with the members, their families the officers and staff of the union and everyone's efforts to contain the spread of the virus. Myself and your officers and staff have been working diligently to provide you with the most current information and supports as we can. The Building Trades Business Managers are in constant contact and are having twice a day conference calls to update each other on current issues.

We have set up a page on Local 170's website to keep all of the information and programs at your fingertips. Please visit <https://ualocal170.com/covid-19-info-resources-for-members/>.

There is a FAQ section link on the site from the BC Building trades where many of your questions can be answered as well. Please have a look and if there is something missing or a question that is not addressed let us know as others may have the same questions.

In the background that you do not necessarily see, we are in very close contact with government as well. We are providing expertise and advice to the government on many of the issues facing workers in our industry. Our government officials have been lobbying the feds as well and they have been assisting us in any way they can. I truly believe that these calls and lobbying efforts caused the closure of the US-Canada border to non-essential traffic after we raised our concerns explaining that the Washington state hotspot was so very close to BC. There are financial supports from the federal government that are explained and linked on our website. In addition to this we are working with our consultants and governing bodies to provide other assistance to our members. These are also articulated on our site.

During our recent conversation with Premier Horgan, he stated that the legislature would be recalled next week to make amendments to the Employment Standards Act to protect workers affected by COVID-19, as well as to discuss how to best support renters during this crisis.

As was communicated in our earlier COVID-19 update of March 15, 2020, workers have a right to refuse unsafe work. This bears repeating as many members are concerned with exposure to unsafe conditions in light of COVID-19.

WorkSafe BC Occupational Health and Safety regulations require workplaces to have either fixed or portable washroom facilities that include provisions for hand-washing, and that these must be kept in clean and sanitary condition. Similar provisions apply to where workers consume food (lunchrooms). You have the right in B.C. to refuse unsafe work if you believe these conditions are not being met and present an undue hazard.

If you are being asked to work unsafely:

1. Email the BC Building Trades at info@bcbuildingtrades.org and they will compile information to advocate on behalf of Local 170 members AND
2. Call WorkSafe BC to at 604-276-3100 (Lower Mainland) or 1-888-621-7233 (toll free).

Andrew Mercier, the Executive Director of the BC Building Trades spoke about this on CKNW Radio this morning – have a listen. Go to <https://globalnews.ca/pages/audio-vault-cknw/> and listen to the audio between 7:35am and 8:00 am on March 19, 2020.

The Ministry of Labour and WCB have been contacted to express our concerns around inadequate hand washing stations and unsanitary toilet facilities on many construction sites throughout the province and we are urging them to set guidelines around these important issues.

Going forward we will do whatever we can and will continue to provide the support information and links that we have available to us. If for any reason you are a member who is not receiving these updates by email, please update your email information on the member database which can be accessed through the website. As this week comes to a close please heed the warnings and instructions from our health officials and practice social distancing as requested as we can all do our part.

Over the weekend we will be in touch with you with updates and early next week I will be on an international call with the United Association, its Officers and Business Managers from across North America and will have more to report.

Fraternally,



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

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