



MARCH 20, 2020

## **COVID – 19 BULLETIN**

We are sending this Bulletin to provide updates and resources to members of CUPE Local 498. We know this is a difficult time, full of uncertainty and to varying degrees fear, but CUPE is a union of 900,000 strong and we are all here for each other for support to get through this time.

Your health and safety and the health and safety of your families are the utmost importance at this time. The World Health Organization has declared the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, a global pandemic. Please remember that while we are all dealing with the same situation, it may vary drastically for each other. Please remember there are people who are out there in the public continuing to work, in grocery stores, drug stores and our own members. Please treat these people with care.

For our members who are on the front lines and provide the services that are the backbone of a safe and healthy community, you are so important and valued and we thank you and please take the precautions you need to keep yourself safe in this time.

CUPE 498 has been working closely with the City to ensure that your rights and benefits are protected. The City is demonstrating a commitment to keep our members working, to offer modified work schedules and to allow members to work at home when their job allows this option. If you are not receiving the updates from the City, sent to employee emails, please reach out and provide an email and we will ensure those updates are being sent along as well.

Our Executive and Local are strong and meeting regularly as this situation is changing, not only daily, but almost hourly, with information updated and changing with each new release from National, Provincial and Local governments.

There are protections available to help members ranging from provision of the Collective Agreement to the BC Labour Code and the new provisions released by the Federal Government regarding EI.

But please know, you will need to do your part as well. You may be asked to be flexible in your work, to do assignments outside your class specifications. If these duties can be completed safely, the Union is in support of these temporary duties to help in these times.

The Local is working hard with the City to avoid any layoffs. However, it may become the case and if you are laid off, please complete the process for EI right away. EI benefits are being provided for people who would not ever have qualified before. But please be patient, the Government is telling us they had 500,000 applications last week.



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You may face long hold times, but you will be answered. Any questions and the process can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html>

If you're worried about finances, please contact your financial service provider and utility providers. All of Canada is rallying together and providing different ways to help during this crisis. There are options available to people dependent on situation.

Please check on each other, virtually or by phone, remember those who are in self-isolation who may need help. This is a time for our union and all members to help each other, to embody that sense of belonging and community. If you can donate blood, please look to do this. Please respect and abide by the rules of social distancing. Every action we take to limit physical contact will save lives and the sooner we all do this, the sooner we will get through this.

These are truly extraordinary times and if we work together, we will get to the other side whole and together and stronger than before. We want to acknowledge the work that you do as we navigate this new reality and please reach out if you need.

In Solidarity,

CUPE 498 Executive

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