



Presidents Message – March 30, 2020

Our world has been turned upside down by the Coronavirus Pandemic. On March 18, 2020 Premier Moe announced that the province of Saskatchewan was in a State of Emergency.

I am sure that many of us are still in shock, absorbing the rapid change to our way of life from two weeks ago to today. The fear is real. Many of us are now self-isolating at home, as per the strong recommendations by our public health officials. Some of us are fortunate enough to be with our loved ones at this time. Others may be alone.

While the COPE 397 Union Office is closed for the time being, all of the staff are working from home. We are all available and can be reached through email or telephone. Our first concern was to make sure that each and every Member's health and safety was addressed and met. We have no idea what the future will look like, but COPE Local 397 will continue to work towards protecting the health and safety of all our Members.

Yesterday we learned about a confirmed case of COVID-19 with a Member of our Local at the Harbour Landing branch office in Regina. We wish our Member a full and speedy recovery. We hope that those that were in contact with our Member self-isolate and are okay.

We at COPE Local 397 are very fortunate with the vast majority of our Members able to work from home during this pandemic. We know the struggles of working from home, the disruption to routine, family life style changes, fear of the unknown. Your Employer has provided guidelines to follow when working from home, make sure to follow them. Remember that you are still doing the Employers work, and confidentiality and caution apply more than ever.

For our Members that have been deemed essential and are still in the work force, we are working with the Employers to ensure all safety precautions are taken. We are ensuring that there is minimal to no interaction with the public, maintaining safe social distancing and sanitizing products including gloves available. For those at SGI who feel that their safety is still a concern please see your CBA you do have rights!

6.2 Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

6.2.1 No Employee shall be discharged, penalized or disciplined for refusing to work on a job or in any workplace or to operate any equipment where they believe that it would be unsafe or unhealthy to themselves, or a co-worker.

6.2.2 An Employee may refuse to perform any particular act or series of acts where the Employee has reasonable grounds to believe that the act or series of acts is unusually dangerous to the Employee's health or safety or the health or safety of any other Employee until:

(a) sufficient steps have been taken to satisfy the Employee otherwise; or

(b) the Occupational Health Committee has investigated the matter and advised the Employee otherwise.

If not satisfactorily resolved, this issue may be referred to the Occupational Health and Safety Branch.

6.2.3 Where a refusal has occurred, no other Employee shall be requested or assigned to perform the work without being advised of the previous refusal(s) and the reason(s) for the refusal(s).

The office staff would like to thank you all for your patience as we try to return the many calls, emails, and texts with your concerns and questions. Thank you to our office staff for their quick responsive action in setting us all up to work from home. Your elected officers will continue to meet via video conferencing to ensure that the work of the local continues.

We thank you for the work you are doing. Continue to be safe. Please call or email if you have any questions or concerns.

Be safe! Please continue to wash your hands frequently, please practice safe physical distancing, only leave the house for essentials, if you do have to go out, help others - pick up for a friend, neighbor or family member and door drop.

In Solidarity,

Kim Wilson