



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – April 22, 2020

Yesterday was a difficult day for COPE Local 397. We are sorry to have to report that to you that at SGI twenty-one people were laid off due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. We want you to know that COPE Local 397 is very upset by this and that we are working with those members affected. We hope that we do not face many more lay offs as a result of the pandemic. We look forward to the end of the pandemic and when we can all go back to work.

Across Canada more than 5.3 million have applied for E.I. Benefits and that number rises daily due to job loss/COVID-19 across Canada. The Union has been very concerned about job security at SGI. There had been some talks of temporary layoffs for those unable to work from home for various reasons. This discussion has only been over the last couple of days but details were light. Discussion was around 3 groups of members that may be affected.

1. Employees with no work to be completed from home
2. Employees that cannot work due to compromised immune systems or specific child care situations that will not allow them to work.
3. Or Employees that have been recently hired that we have no ability to onboard at the moment.

We were told late Monday that Tuesday afternoon 24 members were going to be laid off and it was of highest confidence. We were asked to keep this in confidence and we agreed out of respect to those that were going to be laid off. We did not want to have anyone hear about being laid off through the rumour mill. The number was reduced to 21 late Monday evening and at 8.00 a.m. (not after lunch, as we were told) the meetings started to take place.

In accordance with Appendix D – Letter of Understanding (LOU) No. 17 (RE: Business Continuity) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement - in the event of a disaster resulting in the application of the Corporation's Business Continuity Plan, the Corporation will maintain salaries for all Employees for a minimum of 30 days and, in the event of layoff, the Union and Employer agree that the 30 days pay will constitute appropriate notice of layoff.

Please note:

Article 18 – Layoffs – During the recovery period the Corporation may incrementally resume full business operations. The Corporation agrees to do everything possible to return Employees to work as quickly as possible. However, in the event that the disaster recovery period moves beyond thirty (30) days, the Corporation may consider alternative measures which may include layoff. In the event of a layoff, the Union and the Employer agree that the thirty (30) days' pay which Employees have received will constitute appropriate notice of layoff. In the event that the Corporation moves to an actual layoff, this decision will be communicated to those people subject to layoff. Recall will be in accordance with the priority order of recovery of business applications identified in the business continuity plan.

Article 19 – Seniority – Employees will continue to accrue seniority for the duration of the recovery period, including any period of layoff.

Article 22 – Vacation – Vacation will continue to accrue during the recovery period. There will be no approved scheduling of vacation in any area affected by the disaster, until normal business operations have resumed. It may be necessary for the Corporation to cancel vacation for Employees that are assigned to business-critical areas and are required for business recovery.

Article 24 – Benefit Plans – All benefits will remain in effect for all Employees; however, Employees should expect delays in processing.

This is no comfort to those that were laid off but we were very fortunate that that there were only twenty-one. Will lay offs end here? Unfortunately, we do not think so. Will there be many more? We do not believe so. We will keep you all up to date so please continue to watch our website and Facebook.

Stay safe!

In Solidarity,

Kim Wilson