

CUPW: Protecting Postal Workers to Protect Us All

For immediate Release

March 30, 2020

OTTAWA - The Canadian Union of Postal Workers is closely monitoring the measures that are being implemented in Canada Post facilities to minimize the risk, albeit low, of COVID-19 spreading via the postal system. Our members can rest assured that our priority is their health and safety.

“People are relying on the postal system to keep the economy going and getting vital goods to their homes,” comments Jan Simpson, CUPW National President. “They need to know whether their mail is safe. It’s critical that we do all we can, and we will stay vigilant as the situation develops each day.”

CUPW asks that customers wash and disinfect mailboxes, handrails and door handles daily if possible. Please allow adequate space for social distancing with postal workers on delivery, respect the posted social distancing protocols in post offices, and please don’t go to the post office if feeling ill.

The Public Health Agency of Canada maintains that risk of infection via surfaces and objects is low. It is recommended to use simple disinfectants on surfaces, and wash hands well before touching one’s own eyes, nose or mouth after contact with objects from outside one’s home. The agency says there is no known risk of the virus entering Canada on parcels and packages.

Postal workers, though, touch more items and surfaces in a working day than most people, and extra precautions are justified.

Positive results confirming infection of two postal workers in St. John’s last week spurred a series of measures to contain the risk. CUPW believes Canada Post took the proper measures and wishes a prompt and full recovery to the workers who are ill and quarantined, as the rest return to work today.

CUPW has called on Canada Post to take a number of steps to make our workplaces and the post system itself safer. These measures include extra Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like gloves and masks; hand sanitizer and wipes for enhanced cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces; scheduling changes and other adjustments to work methods to enable social distancing at work. Through joint health and safety work between CUPW and Canada Post, and through collective pressure of concerned members, CUPW has seen some positive results, but more can still be done. PPEs are rolling out and postal workers are taking every appropriate precaution to protect their customers, themselves and their families.

“In this crisis, some things are coming into focus more clearly than ever in our lifetimes,” says Simpson. “In labour, we’ve always said ‘An injury to one is an injury to all,’ and now it seems like everyone, trade-unionist or not, gets it. Our safety and our health is interconnected. We all have a part to play, and we are all literally saving lives when we are careful and thoughtful in our behaviour.”

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For more information, or for interviews contact media@cupw-sttp.org