

# COMMUNIQUE

Canadian Union of Postal Workers  
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## Mourning and Anxiety for Workers in Peel Region

For Immediate Release

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Toronto - As the Toronto local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers commemorates co-workers lost to COVID-19, workers all across Peel want to know when someone will intervene in their pandemic nightmare.

Preparing to lay commemorative wreaths at two hard-hit workplaces – Gateway Mail Processing Plant in Mississauga and South Central MPP in Toronto – Qaiser Maroof, Toronto Local President, is hoping to see no more preventable deaths. “Today as postal workers we pay respect to our fallen members. We also take the opportunity to say that all workers deserve better, especially essential workers who are not able to work from home. We all deserve safer workplaces and priority access to vaccines. All workers across Ontario deserve paid sick days and the Ford government must act. Our members, our communities, all workers can not afford to wait – it costs lives.”

Postal workers will take a moment of silence in the workplace today, and encourage all workers to do the same, remembering those we've lost to the pandemic, and to other illnesses or injuries sustained in the line of earning a living.

Many CUPW members have sick leave and quarantine leave when necessary, but many – temporary and relief postal workers and some at employers other than Canada Post – do not. Regardless, CUPW members are not isolated from other workers. Particularly in Peel, postal workers live among loved ones and neighbours who work in crowded warehouses and other facilities, without union representation, and without paid leave – who face financial sacrifices just to avoid spreading the virus.

Gagandeep Kaur, of the Warehouse Workers Centre in Peel, says “Peel region, the backbone of supply chains for all of Canada - is on fire with COVID. Essential workers of Peel are trying to cope without paid sick days, under systemic inequality and precarious work terms. Workers in our communities have been unprotected and abandoned by the Ford government all through this pandemic.

If our labour is essential then our lives must be treated as essential too. Enough is enough, workers deserve better.”

Throughout Peel and throughout Ontario, every day of the pandemic without paid sick leave and uncertainty about vaccine access increases the death toll.

“Every single worker deserves a safe and healthy workplace. No one should fear death, injury, or illness on the job. That is why we continue to demand legislated paid sick days, paid time off for vaccinations, and vaccinations for front line workers. That is why we mourn for the dead and fight for the living,” said OFL President, Patty Coates.

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