



November 25, 2020

Mandatory Face Covering at Canada Post

Last Sunday, November 22, at midnight, Canada Post announced a new policy to make face coverings mandatory for employees, contractors, visitors and customers in its facilities across the country.

This requirement applies but is not limited to, plant floors, depots, retail outlets, docks and yards, and administrative sites. It also applies to Canada Post employees while working in other facilities, such as multi-unit residential buildings, stores, offices and their common areas, such as entrances, lobbies and hallways.

As the number of COVID cases rise in most parts of the country, Canada Post says this new policy is to prevent a further spread of the virus and make our workplaces safer. Mandatory face coverings at Canada Post facilities will be in effect even if the local or provincial jurisdiction does not mandate it. CUPW will be monitoring the reasonableness and the application of Canada Post's policy.

The new mandatory face covering policy took effect on Monday November 23rd. Canada Post will begin to enforce this practice effective 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, November 26.

The practice applies to all parts of the facilities, including but not limited to work centers, post office lobbies, sortation cases, washrooms, hallways, entrances, stairwells and break rooms.

Here are exceptions when face coverings are not mandatory:

- persons who are alone in an enclosed vehicle;
- persons who are alone in an enclosed office or room with a closed door;
- persons eating and drinking in an area designated for this purpose and where 2 meters physical distancing is maintained;
- persons who briefly need to remove a face covering and where 2 meters physical distancing is maintained (for example, to take a drink of water);

- persons receiving alternate accommodations under the *Canadian Human Rights Act* based on an inability to wear a face covering; and
- persons under the age of 5.

Canada Post has also announced a stern compliance directive. Failure to comply with the new policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from Canada Post. Provisions of the applicable collective agreements will apply.

For members who are not able to wear a face covering, Canada Post will require a supporting document such as a medical certificate, or be asked to fill a religious accommodation questionnaire. Members will be given 5 working days to comply with this directive but this can be extended by local management.

CUPW's Role to Protect our Members

CUPW is in disagreement with Canada Post on the process that should be followed in case a member requests accommodation.

Canada Post management has elected to require our members to first use Personal Days, then other available leaves such as annual leave or compensatory time and ultimately, leave without pay for anyone who cannot be granted an accommodation allowing them to not wear a face covering.

This is unacceptable. CUPW disagrees with this aspect of Canada Post's policy.

If you feel you have been treated unfairly, please contact your local.

We all have a role to play in the protection of our members' health and safety during this global pandemic, but we strongly believe that our members should not be penalized for a legitimate accommodation request.

Our role as a union is to protect the health, safety **AND** the livelihood of all our members. Since the beginning of the pandemic, you have been on the front lines, doing your part to help flatten the curve and deliver the goods Canadians need. You deserve respect and dignity.

We will continue to do our part to fight the virus by encouraging safe practices in our workplaces because we care for our colleagues, our families and our communities **BUT** we will not accept being unjustly penalized.

We were already delivering higher than normal volumes because of the pandemic. Now peak season is upon us, compounding the stress we are feeling. It is imperative that we take care of each other and be safe.

We'll be stronger and healthier together!

In solidarity,



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National Grievance Officer

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