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## COVID-19 UPDATE, MARCH 20, 2020

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What a difference a week makes..... One week ago there were 1300 confirmed Coronavirus cases in the USA; today that number has increased more than ten-fold to 14,000. Changes have taken place at Verizon at a speed that I honestly did not believe was possible, and I wanted to share some of those changes with you today. The following agreements have been reached between VZ and CWA this week in an attempt to service our customers while keeping our members as safe as is possible:

- Leave of Absence policies for four different scenarios: 1) Those medically diagnosed with COVID-19 2) Those directed by a doctor to remain out of the workplace due to an underlying health condition of their own or that of a household member, who can't work from home 3) For those who can't work because they are caring for a child whose school or daycare has closed due to COVID-19 and for whom other childcare options are not available (see Bright Horizons bullet below) and who are unable to work from home 4) Those who are unable to work because they are caring for a person diagnosed with COVID-19 who is unable to provide self-care and for whom another caregiver is not available
- Work At Home - Allows certain eligible associates to work at home on a voluntary basis. I haven't heard of any members at the Chesapeake Complex who want to work from home and have been denied by VZ, and I'm hearing that computers are working and work is being performed. Good news!
- Home Garaging - Allows certain eligible technicians to take their company vehicles home, allowing "social distancing" by decreasing contact with large groups of coworkers in the garages at the start and end of the work day. An improvement over our previous Home Garaging Trial, this agreement states that techs will start their work tour when they dispatch from their home and will end their work tour when they close the last job of the day from their home. Technicians are being asked to stock their company vehicles so they only need to stop at the garage twice per week to re-stock.
- Certain business-as-usual processes are being relaxed for techs.(i.e. waiving requirement to perform BPON to GPON ONT upgrades, BBU to Power Adaptor upgrades, moves of ONT from outside to inside, etc.) Certain additional work activities that VZ does not deem as critical are being screened out to avoid those dispatches.
- Back-Orders of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (hand sanitizer, gloves, masks) is trickling in, and is supposed to be distributed among all the garages. Let your supervisor know if you have run out of any PPE and need more.
- All Board and Lodging out of town assignments have been canceled.
- Some work groups have raised their vacation percentage so that up to 30% can be off at a time, increased from 12% and 18%

- An agreement was reached to extend the deadline to use 2019 Reserved Time, which contractually needed to be used by March 31, 2020 or it would be lost, until May 31, 2020. The company encourages associates to use their Reserve Time during the next few weeks, to the extent possible, but you now have until May 31 to use it.
- Backup Care - From March 16 through March 31 VZ will eliminate the annual limit on the number of hours an employee can utilize Bright Horizon back-up care benefits, and hours utilized on these back-up care benefits will not be counted towards their annual limit, if such a limit is reinstated. (See March 13 Communication for information on how to use this negotiated benefit.)

As a reminder, technicians who arrive at a customer premise and feel unsafe due to health problems the customer appears to be experiencing should excuse themselves, leave the premise immediately and call their supervisor right away. They should explain that they don't feel safe and ask for other work to do. Advise your steward after you speak with your boss. also. I've seen this process work well a couple times this week. The job was "jepped" until the customer is well, and the tech was given another job to do. Communication is key in a situation like this.

For our members who are working from home or home garaging during this pandemic, remember that you are still bound by your work group's rules, practices and the Business Code of Conduct, and conduct yourself accordingly. Your calls will still be monitored, and your company vehicles and cell phones still have GPS on them. Be where you are supposed to be, when you are supposed to be there, doing what you are supposed to be doing...safely. If something prevents you from doing that, communicate with your supervisor right away to explain your situation and seek guidance. I've seen and heard of many examples of VZ working with our members when our members needed it. That only works when you communicate that need, though. If your supervisor can't or won't help you, reach out to your union rep to see if we can get you the help you need.

CWA has added a page about this pandemic to their website. Go to [www.cwa-union.org](http://www.cwa-union.org) and click on Coronavirus/COVID-19 Information for CWA Members for up-to-date info for our members. As of today, our Local 2108 office is open, fully staffed and in daily contact with our Chief Stewards. If you have problems or issues that you are not able to resolve with your supervisor, please reach out to your Chief, Steward or the Local office. Remember that even as we cope with "social distancing" you are not alone. Let us know if you need help. Be aware of opportunities to help each other, too. Can you pick up a coworker who lives near you so you can travel to the garage together to pick up your personal vehicles after taking your company vehicles home? Some members only have one vehicle, and/or live alone, so traveling back to the garage can be difficult for them.

Together, we will get through this, but it's beginning to look like it will be a marathon, not a sprint. Take good care of you and yours, and let us know if we can be of help.



Marilyn Irwin, President