



Communications
Workers of America
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COVID-19 COMMUNICATION FROM CWA LOCAL 2108

March 13, 2020

As we navigate our way through this world-wide pandemic, I wanted to share what CWA has been doing to try to ensure our members' safety.

- Effective March 13th, when installation or repair visits are scheduled, customers will be questioned to determine if anyone in their household has been diagnosed or quarantined due to potential exposure to COVID-19. While I think this action is past-due, hopefully this new process will protect our technicians from exposure in a known dangerous environment.
- When we learned that there was currently no hand sanitizer in any Fastena I machines in Prince Georges' and Montgomery County Garages, CWA asked Verizon to expedite the shipment of more. VZ did that, and we have learned that hand sanitizer has been received at the vendor's warehouse and should be received in all of our garages by Monday or Tuesday. I'm not a germaphobe, but until this pandemic is over I would use hand sanitizer as I left every customer premise. I hope you will do that, too, to decrease the chances of the virus being carried into your work vehicle or into your next customer's home or business.
- While we have gotten mixed messages about how effective they will be, Director Chad Thompson also ordered masks for those technicians who express the desire to wear them. If you would feel more comfortable wearing a mask, speak up and let your supervisor know you want them.
- If you have extra hand sanitizer stashed somewhere, please do the right thing and share it with your coworkers until the new delivery is received.
- If you need help with child or adult and elder care due to schools and/or daycare centers closing, remember our negotiated Back-Up Care Advantage. It provides you with up to 160 hours of care for \$2/hr for center-based child care and \$4/hr for in-home child and/or adult/elder care. Go to: <https://backup.brighthorizons.com/Login.aspx> for more information, or call 877-BH-CARES. Our User name is VerizonCWA and the Password is care4you.
- CWA and VZ negotiated that members and retirees who have the MCN or MEP medical plans, and retirees covered under the UHC Medicare Advantage Plan will be covered at 100% for physician-ordered COVID-19 testing, when it's done in an approved lab that meets CDC guidelines.
- If you know you have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus, are concerned that you may have been exposed, or are experiencing Corona Virus-like symptoms, advise your supervisor and your union steward right away. The World Health Organization says common signs to watch for include fever, coughing, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

- **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 from their vehicle. Explain the situation and that you don't feel safe, and request other work. Call your union steward right away, also. It's not considered insubordination to refuse unsafe work if a reasonable person would be concerned that their life was in danger. Remember: 1. Leave the unsafe situation 2. Tell your boss right away 3. Ask for alternate work and 4. Advise your steward right away.**
- **HOT OFF THE PRESS! At 3pm today, CWA and VZ signed a "COVID-19 Work at Home" Agreement which will allow eligible non-customer facing associates to volunteer to work at home on a voluntary basis between now and the end of April. VZ will determine the number of associates eligible to work at home by title, location and work group, and volunteers will be required to have internet access and a quiet place to work at home to participate in this agreement. Please see your supervisor and steward if you are interested in working from home and haven't been approached about it by the company yet.**

In the meantime, clean your hands often, try not to touch your face, don't shake hands or share food and avoid large groups of people as much as you can. Hopefully by all of us being vigilant and working together we can get through this unscathed! On behalf of the Local 2108 Executive Board, we wish you well. Let us know if we can be of help.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marilyn", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

**Marilyn Irwin
President**