

COVID-19 Pandemic Brings Many Workplace Changes

CWA & Verizon Work to Keep Employees Safe

CORONAVIRUS



As the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to affect communities across the globe, CWA leaders have been engaging with employers to ensure that they are providing CWA members with comprehensive safety and prevention measures. Workplace procedures that were in effect last week may change

tomorrow to keep up with the evolution of this pandemic.

Over the past few weeks, CWA and Verizon have worked diligently together to find suitable alternatives to avert potential exposures and have implemented trial agreements that reduce contact and promote social distancing.

CWA is also frequently updating the resources on its COVID-19 information page at www.cwa.org/covid-19. There you will find information on what to do if you believe that your working conditions are unsafe and links to reliable sources of information about the virus. CWA will soon be posting best practices recommendations for different types of work and information about the policies that specific employers have implemented.

Because most telecom workers are considered essential employees and not subject to mandatory shelter in place requirements, the following negotiated agreements between CWA and Verizon have been implemented to help protect our members during this International crisis:

COVID-19 Leave of Absence Policy:

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, Verizon will offer the following excused leaves to employees;

1. For those medically diagnosed with COVID-19, Verizon will offer a leave of absence up to 26 weeks with pay at the basic hourly rate from the first day of absence until the employee is medically cleared to return to work.

2. For those who have been directed by a doctor to remain out of the workplace during the COVID-19 outbreak due to an underlying health condition (your own or that of a household member) and are unable to work from home, Verizon will offer a leave of absence up to 8 weeks with pay at the basic hourly rate and up to 18 weeks of pay at 60% of



the basic hourly rate (terminating sooner if/when you are able to return to the workplace or work from home).

3. For those who establish that they are unable to work because they are caring for a child whose school or daycare has been closed due to COVID-19 and for whom another childcare option (e.g. Bright Horizons, childcare provider reimbursed through Bright Horizons, or family member) is not available and who are unable to work from home, Verizon will offer up to 8 weeks of pay at the basic hourly rate and up to 18 weeks of pay at 60% of the basic hourly rate.

4. For those that establish they are unable to work because they are caring for a person medically diagnosed with COVID-19 who is unable to provide self-care and for whom another caregiver is not available, Verizon will offer a leave of absence with up to 8 weeks of pay at the basic hourly rate and up to 18 weeks of pay at 60% after.

These leaves will not be used to prorate either the Corporate Profit Sharing (CPS) or the Lump Sum Payment and will not affect Net Credited Service dates.

COVID-19 Work at Home Agreement:



Eligible non-customer facing associates shall be entitled to work at home on a voluntary basis. Verizon 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 in the home to participate. If there are more volunteers in a particular title, location and work

group than management determines are eligible to work at home, volunteers will be selected by seniority.

COVID-19 Backup Care Agreement :



As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, from March 16th through March 31st Verizon will eliminate the annual limit on the number of hours an employee can utilize on Bright Horizon back-up care benefits and will pay for all hours an employee utilizes on such benefits instead of having that funding come out of the ACFC Committee funds. Additionally, from March 16th

through March 31st any hours an employee utilizes on Bright Horizon back-up care benefits will not be counted toward their annual limit if such a limit is reinstated.

(Continued on page 3)

: "Coronavirus"... "Social Distancing"... "Self-Quarantine"... Two short months ago I had never heard these terms used, and now they are a part of our every day conversation. While I have certainly heard of people home schooling their children, I didn't know anyone who did it. Now, after two weeks of all Maryland students being home schooled, a four week extension was just announced, and I seriously wonder if schools will reopen during this school year. March Madness, the Olympics and all other sports have been cancelled or postponed. Auto assembly lines are going to manufacture respirators, and distilleries are beginning to make hand sanitizer. The bars were empty and their doors shuttered on St. Patrick's Day, for heaven's sake!!!! I NEVER thought I would live to see that! Everything is strange and different and pretty scary; it feels like the world has changed overnight. The only time in my life I remember feeling like this was in the days following 9-11.



We've devoted most of this issue of the 2108News to recapping the many agreements that CWA and Verizon have agreed to, through the date we went to print. These agreements were reached in an attempt to keep our members safe while you continue to service our customers. While there have been bumps in the road (and surely there will be more in the future), I'm amazed that in the course of about two weeks the majority of our members are working from home or home garaging. I think that is an amazing accomplishment, based on the size of this corporation and the fact that none of our members had ever worked from home before. Many other workers in this country (including two of my brothers) were just told they couldn't come back to work. Their jobs couldn't be done from home, and their employers didn't provide any of the Leave Of Absence agreements that VZ employees have available (see page 1).

Acquiring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for our technicians who enter customer homes and businesses has been especially challenging for Verizon, but I believe they are working diligently to get as much PPE as they can, as quickly as possible. I'm proud of (and worried about) our dedicated technicians who are walking into customer premises everyday and providing or repairing service, all the while wondering if they've been exposed to COVID-19 and might take it home to their kids or elderly parents. Orders are now being pre-screened to ask if anyone in the household has tested positive for COVID-19 or is quarantined due to possible exposure. I want to remind all techs that you have the right to refuse work as unsafe that a "reasonable person" would consider to put them in danger. If a customer is sick or advises they have been diagnosed or are quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure, excuse yourself and call your supervisor right away. Explain the situation and ask for other work to do. Advise your steward, also, providing as much detail as possible.

Some federal and state legislation has recently been passed which help support American families during this difficult time, and more is being considered. For example, HR 6201 was passed, and is an important first step in providing relief to American families and protection for workers. It contains provisions for paid sick leave, free coronavirus testing for all, food assistance and unemployment insurance, but it left key holes that need to be filled. The AFL-CIO is demanding that legislation must include:

- Workplace safety protections
- Paid sick days

- Improved Unemployment Insurance
- Health Care
- Help for workers to pay their bills, which prohibits companies from using government assistance to lay us off, cut our benefits or enrich themselves
- Free testing and more hospital beds
- A real say in any Bailouts

The historic \$2 trillion stimulus deal the White House and Senate struck on March 25th includes many improvements for workers that weren't included initially. These improvements include large investments in hospitals and state and local governments, to give them the resources they desperately need during this emergency. For our workers, it includes a massive increase in Unemployment Insurance benefits. A significant expansion of fast relief for small businesses is also included in the deal. I'm happy that the deal includes accountability and oversight to prevent secret bailouts, with added oversight requirements. Many thanks to our members and retirees who took time to call their Senators to demand that any coronavirus relief bill include requirements that companies use the funds to keep employees on payroll, and include protections for workers' contracts that are in bankruptcy. The improvements I listed here are a direct result of those calls!

I've seen this on commercials recently (and it sounds a little corny) but I feel the need to say this now. **You are not alone.** Please reach out to your steward or to the local office if you have questions about the new agreements that have been



reached, or don't know how they apply to your situation. Even though we are "social distancing", we are just a phone call away.

They say it's important to practice "self-care" during times like this--- taking care of your physical and emotional health. As a stress reliever, I'd like to share the one thing that has made me laugh every single day during this emergency--the memes about parents home schooling:

- Three hours into home schooling: One suspended for skipping class and other one has already been expelled.
- How do I get a kid transferred out of my class?
- Two students suspended for fighting, one in detention for talking back and teacher fired for drinking on the job.
- If you see me talking to myself this week, mind your business. I'm having a parent-teacher conference.

I love it! Stay safe, and stay sane by turning off the news from time to time and remembering to laugh about something every day. Even if it's Johnny Brown's donut video.

In Solidarity,

Marilyn



COVID-19 Home Garaging Agreement:



Certain Verizon associates designated by management by title, location and work group shall home garage their company provided vehicle. Each associate who home garages will start their tour when they dispatch from their home and will end their tour when they close the last job of the day from their home. (To date, all CDL vehicles have been excluded from this agreement).

COVID-19 Reserve Time Agreement:



Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Verizon has agreed to extend the contractual deadline to use 2019 Reserve Time from March 31, 2020 to May 31, 2020 in all Mid-Atlantic CWA collective bargaining agreements.

COVID-19 Grievance Extension Agreement:

Effective March 16, 2020 Verizon has agreed to suspend the contractual time limits for presenting, scheduling, and hearing grievances for all locals in the Potomac Region. Local 2108 would still like for our members to contact their steward or the local if you would like to file a grievance.

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

If you are a Medicare eligible retiree, you may want to check out this alternative to an office visit!! Just remember, you must have a web-cam enabled device and you may contact the customer service number on the back of your Member ID card for more information.

This service should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs.

Talk to a doctor any time

Virtual Doctor Visits for UnitedHealthcare® Group Retirees

With Virtual Doctor Visits, you're able to live video chat with a doctor from your computer, tablet or smartphone — any time, day or night. You can ask questions, get a diagnosis, or even get medication prescribed and have it sent to your pharmacy. All you need is a strong internet connection. **Members will first need to register and then schedule an appointment.**

Doctor on Demand and American Well (AmWell) are part of the UnitedHealthcare provider network bringing you this innovative service.²

Here are answers to some common questions:

How much does it cost?

A virtual doctor visit with Doctor on Demand or AmWell has a \$0 copay.

Who will I be talking to?

You can find a list of participating virtual doctor visit providers by logging into your member website.

How quickly can I talk to someone and how long does a visit last?

Once a request for a visit has been submitted, the average wait time is about 5–10 minutes. A typical visit lasts 10 minutes.

Can I use it for any medical situation?

Virtual visits may be best for situations like a cold, flu, skin rash or eye issue. You will be advised by the virtual doctor if an in-person visit is appropriate. Virtual Visits are not appropriate for serious or emergency medical situations.²

There are 2 ways to get a Virtual Doctor Visit

On your computer:

1. Go to your member website. If you already have an online account, go to step 2. Not registered? Click on "register now" and follow the steps to create your online account.
2. Sign in with your user name and password.
3. Click on the Virtual Doctor Visits tile on the bottom of the home page to view your virtual provider group choices, access their websites and set up an appointment.



On your tablet or smartphone:

Download the Doctor on Demand app

Or, download the American Well app

Personals

We wish to extend sincere sympathy to the family and friends of:

Barbara Clements, a retired member who passed away on February 23, 2020.

David Andrews, an active member who passed away on March 6, 2020.

Welcome to Local 2108

New Members

Ken "Moose" Singleton

Joshua Burks
Ernest Shirley
Alexis Kemper, II
Andrew Koon

Rocio Leonzo

Sheila Brown



Transferred Members

Karen Lewis

Rose Vilma
Shaketta Hayes

Congratulations to Recent Retirees:



Gene McDermott
Cynthia Petersen



Verizon 2019 Discretionary Award For Non-Pension Eligible Employees is 2.25%

Per the 2012 Memorandum of Understanding, the annual discretionary award for Verizon non-pension eligible employees ranges from 0-3% of the participants eligible compensation based on company performance. Eligible participants are those non-pension eligible associates hired on or after October 12, 2012. The performance award level for 2019 is 2.25%. With the launch of Stock Together, this will be the last Discretionary Savings Plan contribution. The 2019 Discretionary Savings Plan contribution will be viewable in associates accounts on March 25, 2020.

Are Your Life Insurance Needs Up To Date?

In response to record-high interest in the insurance products American Income Life (AIL) provides, and in recognition that an in-home visit is not advisable during our global pandemic, AIL is implementing **virtual meetings** for our members who are interested in learning more about the insurance products they provide. These new virtual meetings will allow you to discuss the no-cost \$3,500 Accidental Death and Dismemberment benefit AIL provides to all active and retired members of CWA Local 2108, and to also get information on the supplemental insurance programs that they offer.



If you would like to schedule a virtual meeting with an AIL representative, call **1.800.495.1213**. AIL is a 100% union company, serving working families like yours, and their representatives are members of OPEIU Local 277.

April Membership and RMC Meetings Cancelled

Due to the State of Maryland declaring a "State of Emergency" because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the regularly scheduled membership meeting and the RMC meeting on April 8, 2020 have been cancelled in order to comply with mandated regulations surrounding gatherings of more than 10 people and social distancing.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our next regularly scheduled membership meeting on May 13, 2020 at 6pm.

The CWA Joseph A. Beirne Foundation Scholarship Program

The CWA Joe Beirne Foundation was established in October 1974 by the Communications Workers of America Executive Board to honor the name and memory of the founding President of CWA, who served for more than 30 years. In his capacity as the first CWA President, Joe Beirne took great pride in the roles he played in the fields of education and learning and other areas of social concern.

Sixteen partial college scholarships of \$4,000 each are being offered for the 2020-2021 school year. Winners, selected in a lottery drawing, also will receive second-year scholarships of the same amount contingent upon satisfactory academic accomplishment. Part-time students, less than 12 credits, will receive half of the scholarship monies.

Eligible for the awards are CWA members and their spouses, children and grandchildren, including those of retired or deceased members. Applicants must be high school graduates or at least high school students who will graduate during the year in which they apply. Undergraduate and graduate students returning to schooling may also apply.

Applications are accepted during the months of November through April. **Final deadline for the 2020-2021 school year is April 30, 2020.**

To apply online, go to:

<http://www.cwa-union.org/pages/beirne>

Local 2108 Calendar

APRIL 2020

- 1 Chief Stewards Meeting - 2-4pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 8 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am - Cancelled
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 8 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm - Cancelled
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 12 Easter Sunday



MAY 2020

- 10 Mother's Day
- 13 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 13 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 25 Memorial Day
Local Office Closed



WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated or have any effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request my union representative, officer or steward to be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to participate in this discussion.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Membership Meeting - Wednesday, April 8, 2020, 6:00pm - Cancelled
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, April 8, 2020, - 11:00am - Cancelled



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LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

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