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*****COVID-19 UPDATE*****

As you all know, Verizon made the decision for technicians to again work inside customers' homes and businesses as of Monday, June 1st. CWA discussed postponing this move with them but Verizon refused to do so, claiming they had a sufficient supply of PPE on hand to keep all technicians safe. The company advised that they had a plentiful supply of KN95 masks, gloves, booties, hand sanitizer and wipes on hand to properly safeguard all technicians, and that they had the ability to replenish the stock so that they didn't exhaust it in the future.

While researching KN95 masks, your Local 2108 officers found that they are considered basically equivalent to N95 masks as they both filter out 95% of particulates, so we believed Verizon was going to provide our members with a greater level of protection than the face coverings provided while techs only worked outside of homes and businesses. When the KN95 masks began being distributed to our members on Friday, we were shocked at what Verizon was providing. While the fabric part of the masks may be rated "95" because they filter out 95% of particulates, they have no metal nose strip and **provide absolutely no seal**. They also have four holes in the masks to string the elastic through to make the ear loops, again preventing a proper seal. The masks merely lay on our members' faces. **Minus a proper seal, the masks provided are no more than a face covering, like those provided to technicians while they were only working outside of customers' premises.**

Verizon's own CBT about proper mask wear speaks to how to properly fit the metal nose strip and create a proper seal, and how to test to ensure you have one.

As we have explained to you before, you have the right to refuse unsafe work. There is a proper way to do it, though. If you have a reasonable, good-faith fear that performing certain work could cause serious injury or illness, you should explain that to your supervisor, and give the company the opportunity to rectify the situation. In the case of these shoddy KN95 masks, for example, you could ask for a properly-fitted KN95 or N95 mask which creates a seal before you enter a customer's premise. If none is provided, you should ask for other work to perform which doesn't require you to enter a home or business.

If Verizon refuses to rectify the unsafe situation by providing you with a proper mask which creates a seal or by giving you other work to do which doesn't involve entering a customer's residence or business, please notify your steward, chief steward or the local right away.