

Fellow Members,

What an intense week! It is amazing how fast information and news changed as this COVID19 crisis develops.

As many of you are aware, we have been posting a Frequently Asked Questions page to try and help keep you in the loop. Surprisingly, we have been getting some push back on the Answers. We need you to understand that the questions are real questions asked by real Members, and the answer posted are not responses from the Union, nor Union endorsed positions, but the actual answers we have received to those questions.

If you are following the FAQs closely, you may have noticed that some of the answers have changed or been updated. We revised these pages as soon as new information becomes available. So if you have questions which we have not posted, please let us know so we can track down the answers. Again, an answer posted here, does not necessarily mean we agree with it, but that is the latest information we have received.

Please know the Executive is in regular contact with management – at all five of our workplaces. We are asking your questions, we are seeking the latest information, and we have been challenging any discrepancies, inequities, or inconsistencies we see. Not all these updates can be published to our website fast enough, but these are communicated to the Executive Committee immediately, and often decisions are made throughout the day for the betterment of the Membership.

Safety has been our main concern. Obviously we want all members to be safely at home, however, as per direction from upper governments, some of our municipal services are deemed essential, which is why some of us are working, and others are not.

The term “Essential Services”, really means first responders, health care providers, and the military, and there is legislation to enforce this.

However, we have been hearing that many of our jobs and coworkers are “essential” meaning important to help support critical infrastructure. There feels like an inconsistency with what essential is. There is a list on the City of London webpage showing what services are open.<sup>i</sup> Where some jobs do not appear essential, we continue to challenge decision-makers why those workers are needed during a pandemic.

Other safety concerns have to do with workers’ accommodations and ergonomic needs in unfamiliar workstations. The union has been informing the City of these and they are striving to meet those needs properly.

Another safety concern is the needs of people working from home. Most homes aren’t set up with ergo workstations or typical measures. We have shared these concerns and the Health & Safety committee members are working with the City to see how to best respond to this until work locations can be restored.

Also, we are concerned about the emotional toll due to COVID-19 itself and other factors:

- fears for family and friends’ safety/health
- uncertainty and frustrations with frequently changing information
- financial fears (are will still getting paid, how, etc.)

- high anxiety about child care since there are no providers available, and how would we pay for it anyways
- burnout – is the expectation that low seniority people will continue to be the workforce or will shifts or work crews be rotated, etc.?
- and many, many more

Many of you know we have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which provides a variety of options to assist. Additional services can be accessed on [www.workhealthlife.com](http://www.workhealthlife.com) or by phone at 1-800-387-4765. While this may not be of interest to you now, be aware that it is available.

Please monitor yourselves and your loved ones. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (flu like symptoms), please contacting the Middlesex-London Health Unit at 519-663-5317 and visit the website <https://www.healthunit.com/novel-coronavirusor>, or (Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000). If you are advised to self-isolate you must report this to your manager. Please do not go to work if you are advised by the Health Unit to self-isolate.

Updates and changes are being done day by day so communication will be released on the CUPE website. The strategy for communicating directly with members is a work in progress and we are requesting members provide their non-work contact details. Please contact the CUPE 101 Executive Assistant Michelle Sterling at [michelle01@rogers.com](mailto:michelle01@rogers.com) with your personal email address, your mailing address, your text or cell phone number, and your role/workplace.

Should you have any additional questions, it may be more practical to reach out to your Steward, Unit Chair, or an Executive Member.<sup>ii</sup>

To recap, your Executive has been working continuously since this began. We have had regular contact with the Employers, we are making sure they are aware how you feel, and as an Executive we are trying to find a way to express your concerns. We are providing you updates as we receive them. If there are things that we need to be doing, or you have suggestions or information that we can or should be using, please reach out to us. If you are able to help in any way please let us know and we would welcome your help.

This has been a very difficult and challenging week and it took a lot of improvising and adapting to help us get through it. I think everyone realizes that we are ending the week knowing that by Monday things could look very different. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Adam Brightling  
On Behalf of the Executive  
CUPE Local 101

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.london.ca/newsroom/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://101.cupe.ca/about-us/your-executive/>