

## Coronavirus Information for New Jersey Members of CWA

**This is an advisory for CWA Members only. If you are on this page and you are not a CWA member, this advisory does not apply to you.**

1. CWA has contacted all the Employers that our members work for and we have asked for clarification from each employer as to what their protocols are, how they will be handling leaves and self-quarantines and other information. These requests are being handled through our Locals and our Locals are encouraging Employers to properly communicate with members so that they know what the protocols are. In cases where Employers are not setting up protocols and communicating with our members, we will directly reach out to them to advise those employers what we think the protocols should be. At this point, it appears that most of our employers are cooperating with our requests and are communicating with us.
2. The State of New Jersey has a Task Force that is meeting seven days a week and is guiding the State regarding this public health crisis. As part of that work, the Governor has issued an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency. For our State Workers, the State has issued comprehensive instructions as to how leave will be treated in the event of self-quarantine and/or school closures. That information can be found here: <https://nj.gov/csc/employees/covid.html>
3. The Judiciary has said that they will follow the same rules as the State of New Jersey regarding leaves. Some counties have said that as well, but others are issuing their own protocols, and our private sector employers should issue their own protocols as well.
4. The State of New Jersey is also providing public information daily for all New Jersey families which can be found here: <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>. In addition, you can call the State hotline number if you have a specific and personal question regarding the virus at 1-800-222-1222 (or 1-800-962-1253 if using out-of-state phone line.) The hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
5. We are immediately focused on those of our workplaces that have a high degree of public contact, and on our members who are engaged in Direct Care. We are having specific conversations with the State of New Jersey regarding these workplaces, and we are working with our Locals on our County Boards of Social Services and other workplaces that we are concerned will have increased public stress upon them at the same time there is the potential for increased risk. As we have more information, we are sharing it with our Locals and our Locals are sharing it with members. We are discussing what happens in the event of shutdowns, work from home, and how essential workers will be treated.
6. Many of the questions you are likely to have, your leadership also has, and we are working steadily with Public Health officials and with our Employers to answer such question as the crisis continues. In many cases, we just don't yet know the answer.
- 7. Next Wednesday, March 18 we will have a Townhall call with our State and Judiciary shop stewards and with representatives of the Department of Health, where we hope to have up to date information. On Thursday, March 19, we will have a Townhall call with our Local Gov't and private sector shop stewards to bring them up to date. Our shop stewards will then share information at the worksite.**

8. If you have a specific question that is a Leave or direct exposure question, please contact your Shop Steward and Local. If your question is more of a direct health related question, please consult healthcare professionals, and call the hotline. Your CWA representatives can help you with some matters, but we are not qualified to evaluate any direct healthcare matters.
9. If you are sick, please don't go to work. If you experience respiratory trouble and a fever, please make sure that you consult a healthcare professional. If you come in direct contact with someone with the coronavirus, please make sure that you report it so that you and others are kept safe.
10. Stay healthy. There are many advisories out there as to what are the best ways that you can stay healthy, but they include: frequent hand washing for at least 20 seconds; Use of hand sanitizer in between hand washings; Avoid touching your face. In addition, consider carefully participating in voluntary events that are crowded and include many people. Be especially careful if your immune system is otherwise compromised or if you are older, have diabetes or heart disease.
11. Gloves and Masks. There is no scientific evidence that would support our members generally wearing gloves and masks and there are reasons to NOT wear gloves and masks, including the fact that they give people a false sense of security. If you touch your face with a glove that has germs on it, it is no better than touching your face with your hands, hand washing is better, and – and this is important – workers in healthcare facilities really do need to have those supplies and there is a shortage of them and we don't want to use up supplies that are needed elsewhere, especially if they are ineffective. We understand that gloves and masks may give some workers a sense of comfort, but if it is a false sense, we need to go with science.

What's the bottomline? CWA is carefully monitoring the situation for our members. We are asking Employers to conduct themselves responsibly and we are particularly focused on making sure actions that protect our members and their families are being considered wherever possible. The fact that many of our members are public workers of course complicates this, because in many cases we are the front lines of this public crisis.

We are asking our members to take responsibility to act prudently when they can (washing hands, self-reporting and self-quarantines, speak with your Local and with appropriate health professionals) and to cooperate with all efforts that are being made to keep the virus from spreading. We will continue to get information out to our members as we understand it and it is helpful.

**SPECIAL NOTICE TO R-HEALTH MEMBERS: IN ORDER TO PROTECT ALL MEMBERS, R-HEALTH HAS SUSPENDED WALK IN SERVICES TO PREVENT ANY INADVERTENT EXPOSURE. IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS OR YOU NEED AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR PRIMARY CARE DOCTOR, YOU SHOULD CALL OR USE ONLINE TOOLS. YOU WILL GET AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE AND THEY WILL DIRECT YOU TO WHAT CARE THAT YOU NEED. IF YOU SEEK WALK IN SERVICES, THEY WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE AND IT WILL DELAY – NOT EXPEDITE – TREATMENT.**