

Covid-19 Guidelines for Locals

General Guidelines:

Stewards or health and safety team members should be a part of ANY Employer committee which discusses or plans for workplace procedures related to Covid-19. If you can't get on the management committee, then ask for regular briefings with the decision makers of that committee and an opportunity to ask questions and give suggestions.

Employers should be ensuring that extra cleaning is being done in workplaces to keep the spread of the virus to a minimum. This includes cleaning key-boards, touch pads for locks, kitchen and bathroom areas, copy machine keys or touch-screens etc.. Dishes in common break room areas should be washed in a dishwasher daily or taken home and replaced with disposable cups/plates etc...

Members should be washing their hands often, and time should be allotted to do so, if it is not already.

These are all topics to discuss in a labor-management committee.

In a college or university workplace, if the workplace goes to online teaching, and/or tells students not to return after the spring break, we suggest locals ask that clericals be allowed to work remotely or stay home, with pay, to minimize the risk of spreading infection.

Employees Sent Home, or Taking Sick Days Due to Signs Of Illness:

It is in the interest of everybody, employer, and workers that people who are showing signs of illness (fever, cough, sinus congestion etc..) remain home from work.

What to Bargain:

1. Employees who are sent home under suspicion of Covid-19, should be paid for the days they miss. One of our locals bargained for unlimited sick days for a four week period so members would not feel pressured to come to work if they did not have many sick days. Doctor's notes will likely be asked for by the Employer to substantiate absence.
2. Days missed specifically related to Covid-19 should NOT be counted under any attendance disciplinary policy.
3. Employees should not have to use their sick-days to cover time missed under the specific circumstance of suspected Covid-19.

4. For the protection of all employees, a return to work note from the physician may be required.
5. Try to get the employer to pay for any copays or deductibles under a high-deductible Insurance plan. Members may not go to the doctor or ER if they feel ill because of the expense under high-deductible plans. One of our locals has already bargained this with their employer.

If an Employee is Asked or Required to Remain at Home Because of a Relative/ Spouse/or Child's Exposure:

If a member's family or friend is sent home from work or school due to possible exposure to someone carrying Covid-19, then the members should also remain home in voluntary self-quarantine for as long as the CDC recommends.

What to Bargain:

1. If the employee is able to work remotely, she should be allowed to do so.
2. The employee should be paid at their regular straight-time rate (plus shift differential if appropriate) for these days missed whether she can work remotely or not.
3. Employees should not have to use their accrued sick or vacation days to cover this absence. Likewise, they should continue to accumulate benefit time at the normal rate during this time.
4. Days missed specifically related to Covid-19 should not be counted in any timeline for discipline under the attendance policy.
5. Try to get the employer to pay for any copays or deductibles under a high-deductible Insurance plan. Members may not go to the doctor or ER if they feel ill because of the expense under high-deductible plans because during that time they feel ill, they are contagious and spreading the illness. Cost should not be a barrier to containing this virus in your community!

In the event a member at your workplace is diagnosed with Covid-19.

1. Everyone should be sent home. Those who can work remotely should be given the opportunity to do so.
2. Employees should be paid no matter if they can work from home or not.

3. Employees should not have to use accrued sick or vacation time if they are sent home because of an exposure in the workplace.
4. Absences due to being sent home under these circumstances should not be counted in any disciplinary timeline under the attendance policy.
5. The workplace should be cleaned in accordance with CDC guidelines. The employer should provide you with proof of this being done.
6. Employees who are required to perform cleaning services must be provided personal protective equipment that is compliant with the guidelines set forth by the CDC and OSHA. This includes training on how to properly wear and fit the equipment.

If you have any questions about language to bargain with your employer, please contact Dana Macpherson, at DMacpherson@opeiu.org