



# FYI



**Date:** August 20, 2020  
**To:** All Component 10 Members  
**Re:** COVID-19 Update

### **COVID-19 Infections on the Upswing**

A provincial state of emergency was declared on March 18 and has been extended to September 1, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BC is currently in Phase 3 of their restart program. Restrictions have been lessened; however, there are still several important precautions in place, as ordered by Dr. Bonnie Henry, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO). In recent weeks, we have seen more people disregarding these precautions.

### **Alarming Statistics**

Recent updates show a dramatic surge in the number of positive COVID-19 cases in BC. On August 17, we recorded the highest one-day total of new cases (100) since the start of the pandemic. On August 18th, BC reported a record number of active cases at 775 with most cases concentrated in the Metro Vancouver area. The demographic responsible for the highest number of new infections is young adults between 20-29 years of age. The next highest infection rate is attributed to those between the ages of 30-39.

The increase in COVID-19 infections has affected numerous workplaces and resulted in over 2000 residents self-isolating. The rapid rise in infections is a concern for health officials, workers, employers, families and communities. Health officials fear a bigger second wave by September if infection rates continue to grow. It is only a matter of time before the virus infects the more vulnerable members of society who will suffer serious illness or death from COVID-19.

### **Safe Workplaces**

At the BCGEU, worker health and safety is our top priority. The best way you can protect yourself is to follow the precautions recommended by the health experts. Limit the number of



contacts in your bubble, maintain physical distancing of 2 meters (6 feet), practice good hand hygiene and wear a mask when physical distancing may not be possible.

Become more informed and knowledgeable about your health and safety rights by visiting the BCGEU OH&S webpage at <https://ohs.bcgeu.ca/>. Review the specific industry safety guidelines for your worksite by visiting the WorkSafeBC webpage at <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy>. Participate in the development of your worksite COVID-19 safety plan. Report to your supervisor if a COVID-19 safety plan has not been created for or shared with your worksite, or if safety protocols are not being followed.

The Minister of Health promises a stricter enforcement strategy that will involve municipalities, health authorities, WorkSafeBC and the police. This could result in orders, penalties and even business closures. You have the right to a safe worksite and to go home healthy at the end of your shift. As Doctor Bonnie Henry says, "this is not forever, but it is for now". We can defeat this virus but we all need to work together to accomplish this.

To learn more details about the Phase 3 restart, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/phase-3>

To see current COVID-19 data from the BC Centre for Disease Control, visit:

<https://governmentofbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/11bd9b0303c64373b5680df29e5b5914>

If you have any concerns, contact your steward, OH&S representative, or your staff representative.

Questions? Email COVID-19 specific questions at [health@bcgeu.ca](mailto:health@bcgeu.ca) or contact the BCGEU OH&S department at [ohs@bcgeu.ca](mailto:ohs@bcgeu.ca).

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