



---

## NCR NEWSLETTER

---

Volume 1, Number 2

March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020

---



*We want our members to be aware that CEIU-NCR is following the COVID-19 evolution very closely and will be sharing information with them.*

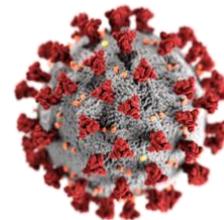
- Jacques Perrin, Editor

---

**“ SPECIAL EDITION ”**

**COVID-19**

**(novel coronavirus)**



### **“Note from the editor”**

I'm writing to you today to provide the latest updates surrounding COVID-19.

We are attending meetings on a daily basis with ESDC/Service Canada, IRB and IRCC. The NCR Council is working diligently with CEIU National Executives to address members' concerns and to ensure the personal safety of its members, by holding the departments accountable with regards to the application of the Health Canada directives, and provincial provisions now in effect. In these unprecedented times, we must remain steadfast and resolute to ensure that the entire community works together to combat this deadly virus.

---



## **“COVID-19: Your rights at work”**

[Read more](#)

---

## **“Government’s telework plan falls short”**

The government has announced that federal public service workers will be allowed to work from home where possible during the COVID-19 virus outbreak. However, departments and managers have been given individual discretion on how and when to grant permission to telework. This creates a patchwork approach that leaves our members and the public at risk.

[Read more](#)

---

## **“PSAC calls on post-secondary institutions to support their workers amid COVID-19 spread”**

Post-secondary institutions around the world have begun taking steps to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 among their students, faculty and staff. Here in Canada, we are starting to see schools cancelling classes and events, moving to online or remote methods of instruction. Some institutions have put restrictions on approved travel.

[Read more](#)

---

## **“PSAC strike votes and union events suspended”**

As the number of reported cases of the coronavirus rise in Canada, it is important that PSAC take precautions and act proactively to safeguard the health and safety of our members, as well as the Canadian public.

In keeping with recommendations from both local and national health authorities, the union has made the difficult decision to suspend activities that would require a large gathering of members.

[Read more](#)

---

## **“Three PSAC Regional Conventions Postponed”**

In keeping with recommendations from both local and national health authorities regarding COVID-19, the union has made the difficult decision to suspend activities that would require a large gathering of members.

[Read more](#)

---

## **“COVID-19 – Notice from Travel Agencies”**

They are ensuring that their clients are fully supported in their travel decisions. These resources and our supplier relationships, assist in helping you to make educated and informed decisions regarding your travel plans.

They are confident that the travel industry will rebound in due time, but in the interim, they recommend to travellers in seeking out the facts, checking their insurance policy coverage, checking with their doctor for any underlying medical conditions that may cause concern, washing your hands, and consulting with your travel advisors, to address any questions or concerns. They are constantly monitoring the situation and have your absolute best interest in mind.

---

## **“COVID-19 – Updates”**

### **PSAC COVID-19 Updates**

- [COVID-19: Your rights at work](#)
- [Three PSAC Regional Conventions Postponed](#)
- [COVID-19: PSAC strike votes and union events suspended](#)
- [PSAC calls on post-secondary institutions to support their workers amid COVID-19 spread](#)

### **COVID-19 News for the NCR**

- [City of Ottawa COVID-19 updates](#)
- [City of Gatineau COVID-19 updates](#)
- [Union worries about health of DND employees, questions why some workers aren't being allowed to stay home](#)
- [COVID-19: Information for PSPC employees](#)

- [Teleworking public servants hampered by swamped networks](#)
- [Analysis of Doug Ford's COVID-19 supports, March 16](#)
- [Quebec will provide \\$573 per week for workers in isolation who don't qualify for other income compensation measure](#)

### Community News

- With the spread of coronavirus, there is an increase in demand on our local food banks. If you'd like to help, please consider making a donation.
- [Ontario workers won't lose jobs if forced to stay home due to COVID 19, government says](#)
- [Bars and restaurants should close and gatherings of over 50 people should be cancelled, officials say](#)
- [Province halts new evictions, postpones scheduled orders due to COVID-1](#)

---

## **“COVID-19 Update from the CEIU National Executive”**

To the members of CEIU,

This is the second update from the CEIU National Executive being sent to our members so far this week regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, National Union Leadership had meetings with executive management in all three departments where CEIU has members. Please find below a short summary of those discussions. We strongly recommend that local union executives and local health and safety committees demand regular meetings with the employer to discuss issues of mutual concerns and mitigating strategies, as well as receive updates. These summarized updates will provide an overview of the dialogue occurring nationally, and CEIU's position on certain situations affecting our members during this pandemic.

### **IRB**

CEIU and the IRB have agreed to hold two national Union/Management telecalls, and more if required. The IRB agreed to several of CEIU's demands, including but not limited to, the postponement of all non-essential hearings. At this time, amongst all other concerns, is the issues surrounding the inconsistent dissemination of information across registries.

We have requested that local health and safety meetings occur as soon as possible so that concerns generating from the membership can be addressed on site and in a timely fashion.

The IRB advised that they are evaluating the sustainability of keeping their offices open, given there's a large number of employees who are not equipped to work from home, and would need to use the authorized other paid leave applicable under the collective agreement.

### **IRCC**

IRCC has proactively closed several offices across the country in the effort to limit the spread of COVID-19. We recognize there are inconsistencies in the messaging across the country, in addition to the employer scrambling to find the right balance. As requested, we are pleased to announce that the IRCC has postponed in person services such as permanent residency requests and landing claims.

Management has been instructed by the Deputy Minister to err on the side of caution and compassion when evaluating demands for other paid-leave made by employees. We continue to table our frustrations regarding the lack of local and regional level consultations with the union and have demanded that the employer take necessary measures to consult with local and regional union leadership. That being said, the Deputy Minister has made herself avail at the request of the National President.

### **ESDC / Service Canada**

Our concerns with Service Canada, amongst others, is primarily in relation to in-person services delivered at Service Canada Centres. For instance, the employer asking our Client Service Officers (CSO) to screen clients for illnesses before they are allowed to enter the office. We advised Service Canada that CEIU strongly opposes to this measure as it exposes our members to a high level of risk of infection, and that the union is exploring the grounds for a right of refusal of dangerous work. We further requested that measures be immediately implemented to limit the number of clients allowed at any given time into the offices.

The employer has committed to getting back to us within 24 hours. CEIU is prepared to take whatever legal recourses is available to our union, as well as take our concerns to Minister Duclos, and to the media. ESDC as a whole is struggling with implementing large scale access to telework as their systems are limited.

It is CEIU's position that where possible, employees should be allowed to stay home under other paid leave while mitigating measures are developed.

We are also troubled with the lack of consistent public messaging requesting that Canadian Citizens refrain from entering in-person centres when feasible.

We have asked ESDC to consider limiting the number of offices to be open, and implement a rotational schedule for service centres. We have also requested frequent updates regarding the status of telework. We will continue engagement with ESDC on a daily basis as the situation evolves.

To our members working with clients, we would like to remind you of the following departmental measures:

- To keep a two-meter distance between people as per PHAC
- To use protecting equipment (ideally have a glass at the counter)
- Ensure frequent sanitization

If you feel that the measures being put in place by the employer are not appropriate, advise your employer and contact your union, and be aware of your right to refuse dangerous work. Local health and safety committees should immediately be:

- Increasing awareness about COVID-19 through communication with staff
- Evaluating the workplace for areas where people have frequent contact with each other and shared objects
- Increasing the distance between desks and workstations as well as employees and customers (ideally a minimum of two metres)
- Installing a physical barrier like a desk or plexiglass window to increase distance between staff and clients

As federal public sector workers who deliver important services to Canadians and future Canadians, we wish to remind you that you must also take necessary precaution and prioritize your own wellness during these challenging times.

Tonight, your national leadership was in communication with the Deputy Minister, the ESDC Minister, as well as the leader of the NDP and other Members of Parliament, urging them to help us in applying pressure to the department. Tomorrow, our National Executive is holding an emergency meeting to discuss further strategy on behalf of our members.

CEIU would like to remind our members to please contact your local executives, regional union offices, and regional NVP's for further assistance. The National office will provide further updates as deemed necessary at this time.

Thank you,

The CEIU National Executive

---

## “Symptoms of COVID-19”

Those who are infected with COVID-19 may have little to no symptoms. You may not know you have symptoms of COVID-19 because they are similar to a cold or flu.

Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19. This is the longest known infectious period for this disease. We are currently investigating if the virus can be transmitted to others if someone is not showing symptoms. While experts believe that it is possible, it is considered to be rare.

### Symptoms have included:

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing
- pneumonia in both lungs

In severe cases, infection can lead to death.

### If you become ill

If you feel sick during travel to Canada or upon arrival, inform the flight attendant, cruise staff or a Canadian border services officer. They will decide whether you need further medical assessment by a quarantine officer.

If you are ill and must visit a health care professional, call ahead or tell them when you arrive that you have a respiratory illness. You may be asked to wear a mask while waiting for or receiving treatment to prevent the spread of the illness.

If you have travelled abroad and you develop fever, cough or difficulty breathing in the next 14 days:

- **isolate yourself within the home** as quickly as possible **and**
- call your health care provider or [public health authority](#)

Tell them your symptoms and travel history. Let them know whether you have had direct contact with animals or a sick person, especially if they have had symptoms.

### Being prepared

It is important to know [how you can prepare](#) in case you or a family member become ill.

## Diagnosing coronavirus

Coronavirus infections are diagnosed by a health care provider based on symptoms and are confirmed through laboratory tests.

## Treating coronavirus

At this time, there is no vaccine for COVID-19 or any natural health products that are authorized to treat or protect against COVID-19.

Most people with mild coronavirus illness will recover on their own. Your health care provider may recommend steps you can take to relieve symptoms.

Consult your health care provider as soon as possible if:

- you are concerned about your symptoms **or**
- you have a [travel history to a region](#) where severe coronaviruses are known to occur

The sooner you consult your health care provider, the better your chances are for recovery.

## Flu vaccine will not protect you

While coronaviruses are a respiratory illness, these infections are not the same as those that cause the flu. If you have received a flu vaccine, it will **not** protect against coronaviruses.

## About coronaviruses

[Coronaviruses](#) are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people and others cause illness in animals. Human coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with mild illnesses, similar to the common cold.

COVID-19 is a new disease that has not been previously identified in humans. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people, and more rarely, these can then spread from person to person through close contact.

There have been 2 other specific coronaviruses that have spread from animals to humans and which have caused severe illness in humans. These are the:

1. [severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus \(SARS CoV\)](#)
2. [Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus \(MERS CoV\)](#)

## **“COVID-19 - NCR Regional Women’s Committee”**

The NCR Regional Women’s Committee wants you to be safe and healthy in this time of uncertainty. We will be meeting regularly to ensure we are doing everything we can to support members through this difficult time.

If you need a resource that isn’t included below, please reach out and we will help you find what you need.

Wishing you all the best,

Megan Butterill, Chair of the NCR Women’s Committee, Vice President of Local 70705 (IRCC)

Renee Amyotte, Alternate Chair of the NCR Women’s Committee, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 70702 (ESDC/Service Canada)

Kristina Dobson, Acting Secretary of the NCR Women’s Committee, Treasurer of Local 70705 (IRCC)

### **Sometimes being at home is scary**

For a lot of people, home isn’t a safe place. The social isolation, financial strain, and constant exposure to potentially abusive individuals can be dangerous.

This is a clear example of why domestic and intimate partner violence need to be at the forefront of any relief measures.

CEIU and PSAC have worked hard to ensure our members are safe in the workplace. Our bargaining team has submitted a series of demands including domestic violence leave in our next collective agreement. In workplaces across the country, the CEIU national women’s committee has been providing training on domestic violence awareness and prevention. The NCR regional Women’s Committee will be increasing our activism and work in this area to ensure all members are safe!

If you would like to be involved in future work against domestic violence and its impacts in the workplace, please contact the chair of the regional women’s committee, Megan Butterill at [megan.eb@gmail.com](mailto:megan.eb@gmail.com).

If you know someone who may be in danger, check on them regularly to see how they are.

If you are worried about your own safety or the safety of someone else, there are resources to support you:

- Distress Centre Ottawa & Region - Crisis Line: (613) 238-3311
- Tele-Aide Outaouais - Sans frais: 1-800-567-9699
- Ligne d'intervention (Gatineau): (819) 775-3223
- Ligne d'intervention (Ottawa): (613) 741-6433
- SOS Violence Conjugale: 1-800-363-9010
- L'autre chez-soi - Aylmer (819) 685-1789
- Agir Outaouais - (819) 770-0351
- Centre d'aide la destinée - (819) 561-7474
- Maison d'aide et d'hébergement / Autres Chez soi - (819) 685-0006
- Maison unies-vers-femme (819) 568-4710
- Le centre Metchilde (819) 770-0351
- Interval House of Ottawa - <https://www.intervalhouseottawa.org/>
- Harmony House - <https://www.harmonyhousews.com/>
- Sexual Assault Support Centre Ottawa - <https://sascottawa.com/>
- Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre - <http://www.orcc.net/>
- Minwaashin Lodge - <https://www.minlodge.com/>
- Family Services Ottawa - <https://familyservicesottawa.org/>
- Tungasuvvingat Inuit - <https://www.tungasuvvingatinuit.ca/>

### **Mental Health in times of crisis**

The current crisis is causing a lot of stress and anxiety for everyone. No one is immune from fear. It's ok to feel overwhelmed by worry for ourselves and our families, but it is important to take care of yourself, both physically and psychologically.

### **Tips for Self-Care**

- Each day make time for some self-care
- Remind yourself that your feelings are valid
- Go for a walk
  - Even just around the block!
- Facetime/Facebook video chat with family and friends
  - Reconnecting with family and friends can make the isolation feel less intense

- Meditate
  - Apps like Calm and Headspace offer free trials!
- Exercise/yoga
  - YouTube has lots of good options and there are lots of apps offering free trials or free memberships
- Read
  - Grab a book you've been meaning to read, or try an ereading app
- Listen to music
  - Spotify has some great isolation playlists
- Have a bubble bath
- Watch a comedy
  - Look for new stand-up on YouTube or check out a special on Netflix
- Knit, crochet, craft, colour
  - Glue! Glitter! Paint! Make a mess! Some craft stores are offering steep discounts and great coupons to offset the cost of your amazing new hobbies!
- Learn something new by going on YouTube
  - Pottery videos can be very soothing and instructional
- Take a nap
- Journal
- Cook/bake
  - Try a new recipe to use up the weird ingredients you panic-bought!
- Crank up the tunes and dance like no one is watching
- Do one of the many “virtual” tours online
  - Many tourist attractions around the world are offering free virtual tours

- Do something silly or frivolous
- Cuddle with a pet
  - Or a pillow and a heating pad!
- Put together a vision board
  - The magazines you have been saving for years will finally come in handy!
- Do something for someone else
  - Check in on a friend or neighbour or make a donation to a Food Bank
- Take a break from the news
  - It will still be there later!
- Reach out and ask for support from friends and family when you need it!

---

### **“Editor’s ending note”**

In these trying times, it is imperative that we remain united in supporting each other.

These are difficult times - together we will get through this!

On behalf of CEIU, the National Executive, The Regional Executive Council and NCR Presidents Council, please remain safe - stay strong - we will overcome.

With respect and solidarity



**Jacques Perrin**  
National VP  
NCR CEIU PSAC