

CUPE 4070's Statement on WestJet's Request for Immediate Assistance at YYC

We urge every Member of CUPE Local 4070 to refrain from volunteering for wheelchair assistance duty.

August 25, 2021

Dear Members,

Yesterday, Colleen Tynan - Vice-President, Airports at WestJet released an appeal to employees including CUPE Local 4070 Members to "sign up to help guests requiring wheelchair assistance in YYC..."

While the Union is aware of the operational struggles currently facing all three of the airlines that we represent; we do not believe that free labour through volunteerism, nor our Members completing work that should rightly be performed by another unionized labour group within our Company, is an appropriate solution.

Unifor was recently certified by the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) as the sole legal representation and bargaining agent of WestJet's ground agents at both YVR and YYC. Asking our Members who are similarly unionized to step in and do their work for free is something that any trade union will always stand up and say no to.

Options open to the Company include rehiring GSAs and ground personnel that were permanently laid off at the Company's discretion during the pandemic. This would create meaningful union jobs, and contribute towards creating employment in our sector. Instead - the Company is imploring you to provide free, volunteer and zero-cost labour. THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE.

Additionally, your Health & Safety Committee would like to remind every member that pushing wheelchairs is NOT a part of our Members' job scope. As a result no risk/job assessment or training related to these duties has been conducted, and there is great chance of injury from improper pushing or pulling.

We urge every Member of CUPE Local 4070 to refrain from volunteering as requested.

We must stand strong with our union brothers and sisters from WestJet recently unionized with Unifor at the Calgary International Airport.

#INSOLIDARITY

As always, if you require assistance from your Union, please contact us:
www.cupe4070.ca/contact.

In Solidarity,
Your CUPE 4070 Executive Team