



On The Move

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www.twulocal234.net

Local 234 Hit by Coronavirus Cases Continues

With the number of coronavirus cases increasing at a staggering rate in Southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, it should come as no surprise that some members of Local 234 have tested positive for the virus. As of Sunday evening 10 members, from different locations, have tested positive. We have no idea how the virus was transmitted in these cases, or exactly where the transmission took place---the virus could have been contracted on or off the job.

In accordance with Department of Health protocols, other members who came into contact with those who tested positive are being sent home for a quarantine period of 14 days, with no loss of pay.

As we see around the country, as more tests are administered, the number of people that test positive steadily increases. If you don't feel well and are experiencing symptoms related to the virus, such as a dry cough, fever, or shortness of breath, hit the sick book and seek medical attention immediately. If you are unable to work as result of the virus, you will be eligible for newly extended FMLA leave, with pay, after 10 days, and not be assessed any points, or face any disciplinary action.

While the vast majority of those with the virus recover, members with underlining health problems that might compromise their immune systems, such as kidney problems, heart conditions, diabetes, are vulnerable to life threatening complications. As a result, we are urging SEPTA to place these individuals on paid leave immediately.

In this crisis, the operation of the SEPTA system is vital to the entire region, since many health care providers, grocery workers, pharmacists and first responders rely on the system to get to work. Talk of shutting the system down is therefore both irresponsible and illegal. While some members have come down with the virus, there's no reason to push the panic button, but it is important that steps be taken by SEPTA to protect and compensate our members, who are subject to a greater risk of contraction while they perform the essential function of getting the riding public to work. Here's what the Union is doing:

First, as stated above, we are demanding hazard pay, which SEPTA is rejecting, and insisting that members with underlying health problems be immediately placed on paid leave.

Next, since we don't know who has the coronavirus and who doesn't, the Local is demanding that SEPTA test members for high fevers when they report to work, using *non-contact*, multi-functional thermometers. After all, you can have the coronavirus, but show no visible symptoms. Temperature testing can address the problem and protect members from possible exposure by those who have the coronavirus, but otherwise appear to be in good health. Even better, we should all be tested for the virus.

Third, for the tenth time, we are demanding that SEPTA take protective measures, by providing hand sanitizers, gloves, masks, and sanitized equipment and facilities. SEPTA is failing our members and the riding public in this regard, by refusing to pay overtime to the custodians to insure that the stations and vehicles are sanitized on a daily basis. SEPTA is also refusing to enforce the “social distancing” policy recommended by every health expert to contain the spread of the virus. This could be accomplished by limiting the number of passengers who board our vehicles, so they can sit six feet apart. A crowded vehicle creates a risk of exposure to our operators and the riding public.

Finally, the Authority needs to reduce the number of days maintenance workers are required to report for work, with no loss in pay. Already bus drivers are scheduled four days on, and three days off. A similar schedule should be adopted for our rail, bus and facilities workforce, since safe work practices are of paramount importance during this coronavirus pandemic. Unfortunately, SEPTA is coming up short on every front, leaving it to us to take our health and survival into our own hands.

If you have question concerns or suggestions, please address your staff person or call the Union Hall and leave a message at 215-972-4140. Please stay safe and in touch.

Reported Cases and Deaths

The figures below are based on data from international, state and county health officials as of Sunday at 8:00 p.m. The numbers show that the virus is a universal problem, beyond the control of any country, state, city or transit authority. All we can do is try to *minimize the damage* caused by the disease.

	<u>CASES</u>	<u>DEATHS</u>
World-Wide	721,330	33,956
United States	141,812	2,475
New York	59,648	965
New Jersey	13,386	161
California	6,204	131
Michigan	5,486	132
Massachusetts	4,955	48
Florida	4,950	60
Illinois	4,596	65
Washington	4,392	195
Louisiana	3,540	151
Pennsylvania	3,419	41