



Founded 1889

**United Association** of Journeymen and Apprentices of the  
Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada

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**Mark McManus**  
General President

**Patrick H. Kellett**  
General Secretary-Treasurer

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Assistant General President

General Office File Reference: GP

March 13, 2020

TO: ALL LOCAL UNION BUSINESS MANAGERS

The situation as it relates to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is certainly evolving quickly. The UA General Office is working to implement measures to help protect the health of our officers, employees and staff here in Annapolis, MD. Due to the recent developments related to COVID-19 effective immediately through Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> I am cancelling all non-essential travel for UA Officers and staff. This includes all travel by air, rail and auto. Assignments from the UA for any meeting, function or event that takes place during the stated time period are effectively cancelled.

We are cancelling all UA-sponsored meetings and events including those scheduled at the UA General Office and on our 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Education Center through May 1st. We will make every effort to reschedule these meetings and additional information will be forthcoming. The General Office is limiting face-to-face meetings and when necessary adhering to the social distancing guidelines as outlined by the CDC. When possible, day-to-day business will be conducted by phone/skype or email. There are still too many unknowns about this virus and until we have better information – it is imperative that we exercise extreme caution.

We are actively monitoring the situation and will continue to provide you with updates as appropriate. In the meantime, I encourage you to reach out to my office, my Administrative Assistant Brad Karbowsky ([BradK@uanet.org](mailto:BradK@uanet.org)) or to our Health, Safety and Environmental Administrator, Cheryl Ambrose ([CAmbrose@uanet.org](mailto:CAmbrose@uanet.org)) if you have **any** questions or concerns.

Please share this information with your other local union officers, training coordinators and JATCs as you deem appropriate. Additional updates will be communicated as the situation changes. The General Officers want to thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we work together to keep you and those around you safe and healthy.

Fraternally yours,

Mark McManus  
General President

cc: All UA General Officers, International Representatives and Special Representatives



# UA LOCAL 46 TORONTO

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ROBERT BROOKER

PRESIDENT  
MIKE ROMANO

SECRETARY-TREASURER  
JOE Di MASO

March 13, 2020

Attention Members of Local 46,

COVID-19 currently poses a low risk to Canadians. However, out of an abundance of caution, in accordance with recommendations from Health Canada and in alignment with measures being implemented by the United Association International Office, Local 46 will be closing the Union Hall to members and the public effective Friday March 13, 2020. Only full-time staff and Officers will be permitted on the premises during business hours.

As a result, Journeyperson and Apprentice Dispatch will be conducted via e-mail and fax only. Members may sign out of work online through the Member Area of [ualocal46.org](http://ualocal46.org).

Payments for Dues may be made by phone via credit card or by automatic withdrawal. No debit or cash payments will be accepted by Local 46 until further notice.

All committee meetings scheduled to take place at Local 46 have been postponed. More information will follow regarding rescheduling where applicable.

Information regarding Night School and Trade School classes will be posted on the website.

We will continue to monitor the situation and will react accordingly. The Health & Safety of our members and staff are of the utmost importance. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in this matter.

Fraternally,

Robert Brooker  
Business Manager  
United Association Local 46

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## **MEMO REGARDING COVID-19**

### **1. What if my Employer suspends operations?**

Subject to applicable collective agreements, an Employer generally has the right to manage its business and determine when to initiate an operational shut down. If the employer does so, it should issue notices of layoff and records of employment. If an Employer does not do so, employees should request them and if the Employer continues to refuse employees should contact their Union Representative for assistance.

Once notices of layoff and records of employment are received, eligible employees should apply for Employment Insurance (EI) benefits. On March 11, 2020 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that there would be modifications to EI assistance for individuals who must self-isolate due to COVID-19. The federal government will waive the one-week waiting period for EI benefits for individuals who cannot work due to the outbreak. Usually, individuals would have to wait one week before benefit payments start which would mean that those under two week quarantine would only receive benefits for one of those weeks. This change allows employees to receive benefits for the whole 14 day quarantine period. In order to qualify, it is likely that employees will have to show that they were ordered by law or a medical professional to remain in quarantine. However, individuals told to self-isolate by their employers may also qualify for EI without a note from a medical professional indicating that they should remain off work.

The requirement that individuals must have worked 600 insurable hours during the year leading up to their claim date is still currently in place.

Employees who are laid off and sign out of employment with their Employer may be eligible to receive an additional supplementary unemployment insurance benefit.

### **2. What is my Employer does not allow me work?**

It may be that an Employer refuses to allow a specific employee to attend work because of reasons related to COVID-19. For instance, an Employer may suspect that the employee is sick and poses a risk to the workplace. Alternatively, an Employer may not allow an employee to return to work after returning from a vacation or trip to a location that is high risk for COVID-19.

If this occurs, employees must accept and comply with the Employer's direction. A failure to comply with an Employer's direction may constitute insubordination and provide grounds for the imposition of discipline. Any employee who believes that such a direction is unjust or unreasonable should contact their Union Representative for assistance. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to file a grievance(s) challenging the Employer's decision.

### **3. What if I am concerned that attending work may constitute a risk to my health?**

Generally, workers in Ontario have the right to refuse unsafe work if they believe that it may pose a danger to them or coworkers.

As the government is currently characterizing the risk to the general population as low, continuing with "business as usual" in most workplaces is unlikely to be considered "dangerous " or "unsafe" work at this time. However, cases must be assessed on an individual basis. A workplace may not pose a risk of danger if the employee is young and healthy. This may be different for an older worker with a pre-existing condition or a compromised immunity system.

Similarly, Employers have a positive obligation to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of employees. In certain workplaces where there is a higher risk of infection, greater precautions are expected. This includes monitoring who has access to the facility, regular disinfection, proper protective equipment and constant communication and education. At this point – and until there are further directives from the government or health boards – we recommend exercising caution and assessing each case with the above guidelines in mind.

If an issue arises, contact your Union Representative for assistance.