WORKER HEALTH & SAFETY DURING COVID-19

In many countries food & beverage production and agriculture are being classified as “essential,” meaning workers have to continue to go to work. Employers must protect the health and safety of these essential workers*. They should have protocols in place and these protocols must be implemented. Your union should ensure that the following measures are in place.

- Increase the physical distance between workers to 2 metres or 6.5 feet by redesigning work spaces, reducing staffing levels on production lines, and/or slowing down line speeds.
- Stagger meal & rest breaks and make additional rooms/areas available for meals and breaks to increase physical distancing among workers.
- Arrange transport options for workers so they are not forced to take crowded buses or vans to and from work. Carpooling is not a viable solution - physical distancing must be maintained.
- Reduce the number of people in any given meeting, including union orientations, to maintain 2 metres or 6.5 feet between workers.
- In order to help limit the spread of the virus, all those who can work from home should do so during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Protections should apply to all workers on-site including non-permanent workers
Hand washing and sanitizer stations must be readily available and increased breaks to wash hands should be part of the work routine. Workers on the job must have access at all times to potable water.

Regular, thorough disinfection of the workplace, including restrooms and lunch rooms is essential. Temperature checks of any individuals entering the facility/site should also be implemented.

There must be regular communication in the languages all workers can understand of the workplace protocols including posting on notice boards. Protocols also should be communicated to all customers and suppliers.

Workers should not go to work if they feel sick. This is more important in a pandemic than during normal circumstances. Paid sick leave is therefore essential.

Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) must be provided at all times when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

One can carry the virus, not have any physical symptoms and still spread it to others.

COVID-19 does not discriminate. People of all ages, all nationalities, all ethnicities can contract COVID-19.