

PWUA MEMBERS' UPDATE!

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Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa
Trades Hall, 126 Vivian Street, Wellington, 6011 pwu@tradeshall.org.nz

PWUA officials have been having regular conference calls with senior management about issues that have arisen following the arrival of COVID-19. The PWUA will be issuing Members' Updates by email to worksite delegates who can print them and put them on noticeboards.

Union members who wish to receive the PWUA Members' Updates by email directly can either arrange with their delegate to forward to them, or email the union office in Wellington (pwu@tradeshall.org.nz) or Auckland (andre@unite.org.nz)

“Vulnerable People”

The company has agreed with the PWUA that when filling out the box identifying “who” is the vulnerable person in the household, all that is needed is the staff member's relationship with the vulnerable person. (For example parent, child, partner, etc.)

The company is using the Ministry of Health's guidelines for who can be classified as a “vulnerable person” member of your household.

These classifications are listed on the company's Vulnerable Person application form including those aged over 70 years; under 70 years with an underlying health condition; chronic (long term) respiratory diseases; heart, kidney or liver diseases; weakened immune systems; and a member of the household who is pregnant.

Where the health condition of the household member is already known to the company, a medical certificate is not required.

The company accepts that there may be a delay in getting a medical certificate but the intention is that no unpaid leave will occur.

The company has already provided a form for staff members who themselves are vulnerable. The PWUA has asked the company to provide a form for staff members with child care responsibilities and who may also be seeking special paid leave.

Staggered starting times

A number of protections have been put in place in worksites including maintaining two metre spacings between staff members.

A more recent action to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus is to try to reduce the number of staff members at the worksite at any one time. In this case it is to make arrangements for some staff members to change their normal starting time.

Even though we are in extraordinary times, employment law has not been suspended. So all the provisions of the Collective Agreement continue to apply. Members can agree to change their starting times but payments they are due under the CA must continue to apply.

After discussions between the company and the union the company has drafted a process for working toward any necessary temporary changes. The union is awaiting the company's confirmation of the process, which the union believes is a good outcome of the discussions. The draft process includes:

- The company giving the delegates a “heads up” about what the problem is
- Usual pay based on the usual roster
- Trying to seek agreement including calling for volunteers.

Where agreement is not reached, union members are asked to contact their local union office for advice and assistance.

