



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL 230

August 21st, 2020

Office of the Minister of Health
Room 337 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Attention: The Honourable Adrian Dix, M.L.A.
Minister of Health

Dear Mr. Dix,

Mandatory Use of Masks for Food Delivery Drivers

As a Union, we are always concerned for peoples' wellbeing and seek to secure employment, a higher standard of living and assist members in sickness or distress. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has shaken these foundations for millions of Canadians. Looking at BC, we are proud of how the province has handled the pandemic and believe that strong leadership from the Premier, yourself, of course Dr. Henry, and the larger health community have all contributed to our success thus far. There are many things BC has done right, and we want to continue to slow the spread.

A topic of contention that we would like to weigh in on, is making the wearing of face masks compulsory for all food delivery drivers. While we understand that the virus does not primarily or easily spread through contaminated surfaces, we do know that the main cause of spread is through respiratory droplets during people-to-people contact. Often the drivers cannot ensure physical distancing when they go to designated pick-up areas and interact with restaurant staff.

To put this into perspective, I was sitting by the bar in a local restaurant while I waited for my dinner to arrive. It appeared to be the start of the dinner rush because within two minutes, four delivery drivers appeared and they continued to congregate around the same five square feet; inches behind me and inches between the young lady sitting at the table six feet away from me. None of these four delivery drivers were wearing a mask and they were not there to eat and were occupying the six-foot distancing area between our two tables. They must have waited at least 5-10 minutes before their orders were ready and to be on their way to their next delivery, which I assume is a restaurant with a similar pick-up setting.

As people opt to stay home, take-out and delivery services have skyrocketed. In fact, it is almost a must for any restaurant to keep business running and afloat during this pandemic.

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The issue presented with pick-up, take-out, and delivery services is that they are frequently located in a designated area to separate from dine-in customers. In turn, you have customers and delivery drivers congregating in a confined space without masks. This becomes especially dangerous for delivery drivers as they are more prone to chatting with restaurant staff at bars, mingling with other drivers, and just simply breathing near customers while they wait for orders. As delivery drivers frequent many locations and houses, it is essential we have them protect themselves and others. We strongly feel that all people entering food establishments without the intent to eat on the premise should be wearing a mask. This includes delivery drivers, people picking up orders, and people placing take-out orders.

In general, wearing masks in all indoor spaces is not unfathomable. We can look at our neighbours, Quebec and Ontario, who have implemented mandatory mask bylaws for indoor spaces. Airlines, salons, public transport, and major retailers such as Walmart and HomeSense have already or are making the move to mandate masks. We want to avoid a surge in cases that will prompt strict lockdown measures. To keep the economy going and to keep people employed and healthy, we need to be doing our part and that is wearing masks when warranted. Most importantly, we need our frontline workers such as delivery drivers to be protected.

Yours sincerely,

Philip M. Venoit
Business Manager
Financial Secretary

Cc: The Honourable John Horgan, Premier of BC
The Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
The Honourable Michell Mungall, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness
The Honourable Harry Bains, Minister of Labour
All Vancouver Island MLAs



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