

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Bulletin

Greater Toronto Electrical Contractors Association and IBEW Local 353

The Greater Toronto Electrical Contractors Association and IBEW Local 353 are working together to address this current health matter, particularly as it pertains to the Toronto Electrical Industry.

What is COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

In January 2020, a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) was identified as the cause of an outbreak of pneumonia originating in Wuhan, China. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that originate in animals but are known to cause respiratory illness in humans, particularly during the fall and winter months. Other novel coronaviruses have included Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV).

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus>

Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms range from mild – like the flu and other common respiratory infections – to severe, and can include:

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing

Complications from the 2019 novel coronavirus can include serious conditions, like pneumonia or kidney failure, and in some cases, death.

What should you do if you suspect that you have come into contact with or exposed to COVID-19 or have travelled to an affected area?

Coronaviruses are spread mainly from person to person through close contact, for example, in a household, workplace or health care centre.

There is no vaccine available to protect against the 2019 novel coronavirus.

There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses. Take these everyday steps to reduce exposure to the virus and protect your health:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- **stay home if you are sick**

If you are travelling to an area known to have cases of coronavirus, be sure to avoid:

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- high-risk areas such as farms, live animal markets and areas where animals may be slaughtered
- contact with animals (alive or dead), including pigs, chickens, ducks and wild birds
- surfaces with animal droppings or secretions on them

If your employer suspects that you have symptoms as identified above or you have self-identified that you have been exposed or have travelled to the affected areas, then they may ask you to stay home. What financial protections are being provided?

IBEW and GTECA have decided to address any temporary cessation of employment resulting from COVID-19 by exercising the Temporary Lay-off Provisions as outlined in the Principal and Low-Rise Residential Agreements. This protection will be exclusive to individuals whose absence from work is COVID-19 related.

- Temporary Lay-off binds the employee to the employer of record and, in this instance, to the job that you were working on when the work stoppage/lay-off occurred. During this period of absence, the ER will issue a Record of Employment noting temporary lay-off as the reason for issuance. **Members of the Union will be permitted to apply for SUB – Supplemental Unemployment Benefits, payable during the period of lay-off. Following the prescribed period of absence, the members/employees will return to their jobs.**

These reactive measures **may be adjusted on a daily basis** as we closely monitor the ongoing developments related to COVID-19. The health and safety of our community is of the utmost importance; thus we will remain vigilant and ready to react to the changing environment.