



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Construction Council of Ontario

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Hon. Premier Doug Ford
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Hon. Monte McNaughton
Ministry of Labour, Training & Skills Development
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400 University Ave.
Toronto ON M7A 1T7
Minister.MLTSD@ontario.ca

Dear Premier and Minister:

Re: Construction workplaces as essential workplaces

We write further to the list of essential workplaces (the "list") released yesterday evening that have been made exempt from the Province's mandatory closure order. The list prominently includes construction work and services throughout Ontario.

IBEW CCO represents over 18,000 men and women working in various electrical sectors. Although we accept that some sectors of the construction industry may properly be considered essential at this time, it is apparent that the Province must ensure that, in the context of the current COVID-19 emergency, construction contractors and owner/clients take all appropriate steps to ensure that construction workplaces are safe for construction workers. Regrettably, we have become aware of multiple situations in the last 2 weeks where this has not been the case. This cannot be allowed to continue.

The price for declaring construction work an essential service must include a commitment by employers and by enforcement officials in the Ministry of Labour to safeguard construction workplaces. In particular, the following measures must be taken and maintained:

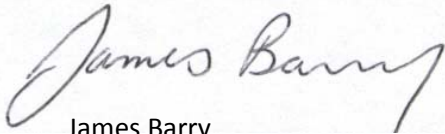
- Construction workers must be provided with proper Personal Protective Equipment ("PPE"), as appropriate, including gloves and hand sanitizers and other PPE mandated by Toronto Public Health, Public Health Ontario or Health Canada for construction workers.

- Proper washroom facilities must be maintained. There must be adequate supplies of soap, water, toilet paper and paper towels at all times. Washroom facilities must be properly cleaned and disinfected throughout the workday.
- Work should be organized so that, to the maximum extent possible, social and physical distancing can be maintained. Meetings of employees on site, including health and safety meetings, should ensure appropriate social distancing. Similarly, work breaks and lunch periods should be scheduled to avoid close contact.
- A sufficient number of tools should be available on site to minimize the sharing of tools by workers.
- Workplaces should be cleaned and disinfected as appropriate.

Construction workers continue to enjoy an important right under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, to refuse to work where, for example, the conditions of the workplace are considered unsafe. Long-established protocols and procedures are in place as to how this right is to be exercised and how employers and, in particular, the Ministry of Labour must respond.

We hope, of course, that our members will not find themselves in situations where their "right to refuse" must be invoked. However, our members have made it clear that they will not endanger themselves or others – especially in the current emergency – and we are counting on construction employers and the Ministry to take the concerns of our members seriously.

Yours truly,



James Barry
Executive Secretary Treasurer
IBEW Construction Council of Ontario

