

April 21, 2020

Union ★
Update

OPEIU
Local



Dear OPEIU Local 8 Members:

We know this is a scary and stressful time. Like you, OPEIU is taking this pandemic very seriously. Your health and safety are very important to us. Please don't hesitate to reach out to your Union Representative with any workplace concerns you may have.

The Governor's *Proclamation 20-46 Protects High Risk Workers* gives certain workers the right to protect themselves from COVID-19 without jeopardizing their employment status or loss of income.

The [proclamation](#) provides workers over the age of 65 and those with underlying health conditions a series of rights and protections, including:

- The choice of an alternative work assignment, including telework, alternative or remote work locations if feasible, and social distancing measures;
- The ability to use any accrued leave or unemployment benefits if an alternative work assignment is not feasible and the employee is unable to safely work on-site;
- Employers must maintain health insurance benefits while high risk employees are temporarily off the job; and
- Employers are prohibited from permanently replacing high-risk employees.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) list the following population groups as high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19:

- [People 65 years and older](#)
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People of all ages with [underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled](#), including:
 - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - People who have serious heart conditions
 - People who are immunocompromised – many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
 - People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
 - People with diabetes
 - People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 - People with liver disease

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

If you are considered High Risk under the CDC guidelines, please protect yourself by reaching out to your Human Resources Department and let them know you are High Risk and need an accommodation. In order to qualify, you will need to have your medical provider certify that you are considered High Risk under the CDC guidelines. These accommodations may include temporarily redeployed to another position or telecommuting if feasible. **If your employer is unable to make the necessary accommodations, you can apply for unemployment insurance under the emergency rule.**

Currently this proclamation is in effect until 11:59 p.m., June 12, 2020, unless extended beyond that date.

To apply for unemployment insurance benefits go to www.esd.wa.gov.

For additional information and resources, visit the OPEIU Local 8's website that contains valuable information to help you through the COVID-19 crisis. Be sure to check out our COVID-19 Information page:

<https://www.opeiu8.org/Home/COVID-19Information.aspx>

Please take care and stay well.

In unity,

Suzanne Mode
OPEIU Local 8 Business Manager

Visit our website



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