



*For Local 8 Members at Crisis Connections*

March 9, 2023

## **Misinformation Around Breaks**

We've been made aware that Shawna Corley has been telling Crisis Department employees that meal breaks are now mandatory "per the union contract"—this is false. Your Union Bargaining Team repeatedly voiced their concerns around a disorganized and unqualified transition to mandated meal breaks without a plan for ensuring continuous phone room coverage and manageable workloads. Furthermore, when asked if CC was going to start requiring all employees in the Crisis Department to start taking their meal breaks with the transition to standard 8-hour shifts, Neil Olson unequivocally stated no.

There is language in Section 14.11 of your Union Contract that addresses waived meal breaks: "By mutual agreement and dependent on operational needs, an employee who remains on duty and works through their meal period will be compensated for time worked."

The Union Contract did not prompt this change, it was CC management who unilaterally decided to revoke their mutual agreement for employees to waive their meal breaks—without warning, discussion, or seemingly a plan in place for implementing this change. We've heard from employees how bumpy CC's transition to mandatory meal breaks has been and the negative impacts experienced by staff. We have also heard employees have asked to waive their break and have provided evidence of the business need to do so but CC is denying the requests. We have asked CC to provide more clarity in their communications and create a schedule to ensure breaks are staggered and there is adequate staffing to cover the multiple lines.

Lastly, while it seems CC's only focus has been to require all employees to take their *unpaid* 30-minute meal break, **employees are also legally entitled to *paid* 15-minute rest breaks for every 4 consecutive hours of work. These *paid* 15-minute rest breaks cannot be waived.** Make sure you receive your *paid* 15-minute rest breaks! Not taking your rest breaks provides free labor to the employer and violates both the Union contract and state law.

A violation of employees' rights, as outlined in your Union Contract or in state law, can be remedied through the grievance process or by filing a workplace complaint, respectively. To learn more about filing a workplace complaint, visit: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/workers-rights/workplace-policies/rest-breaks-meal-periods-and-schedules>

***If you want to consult a Union Rep about your situation, email Valarie Peaphon at [Valarie@opeiu8.org](mailto:Valarie@opeiu8.org) or Tara Powell at [Tara@opeiu8.org](mailto:Tara@opeiu8.org).***



**OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION LOCAL 8**

1-800-600-2433 or 206-441-8880 ★ Fax: 206-441-0207 ★ [www.opeiu8.org](http://www.opeiu8.org)

Find us on social media:    @OPEIULocal8

liuna#242/afl-cio