

International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers



LOCAL UNION No. 280

(Sheet Metal, Roofing, Production)



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November 1, 2021

Dear Members,

From the early days of the pandemic, the members of SMART Local Union No. 280 have continued to work hard and keep this country running. You have made sure that construction endured and that has been a contributing factor in keeping this province and this country ahead of many others when it comes to economic recovery.

At the end of 2020, the world was given a new tool in the fight against COVID-19 when the first vaccines were approved. While the vaccines have been controversial and divisive, they have proven to be effective against fighting the virus.

From our own provincial real-world numbers, it can be seen that vaccines prevent serious illness. According to the BCCDC, in the period of September 4 - October 1, 2021 there were 1074 hospitalizations, but only 16% of those were people that were fully vaccinated even though they made up more than 71% of the population at the time. That means that the remaining 29% of the population that were not fully vaccinated made up 84% of hospitalizations. It is because of proof such as this that we recommend that all of those who are eligible should get the vaccine.

Many jobsites have started implementing mandatory vaccine policies. Every lawyer's opinion letter that we have seen so far from across Canada says that the project owners are entirely within their rights to implement such a policy to protect the rest of the workforce. It is very similar to the mandatory drug and alcohol testing policies that have been implemented for years on many jobsites.

We will continue to stay current with public health orders and scrutinize employer policies to ensure they comply with Employment Standards and Human Rights Legislation. We do believe that exemptions for legitimate medical and religious beliefs should be accommodated, but that is only required to the point of undue hardship. While we will continue to fight for legitimate claims, the argument of "having to get a vaccine infringes on my rights" is not one of them.

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If you do not want to be vaccinated, that is your choice, but some of your interactions with other members of the public might be restricted in different ways, to prevent the spread of illness. That may limit the restaurants you can visit, the events you can attend, the travel you can do and the jobsites that you are able to work at.

We hope that you consider getting the vaccine if you haven't received it yet. Regardless of your situation, we wish all of our members and their families good health and safety as we continue to navigate these trying times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RM/MS', written over a horizontal line.

Richard Mangelsdorf
Business Manager
Financial Secretary Treasurer