

August 18, 2020

## **British Columbia Maritime Employers Association is Urging Heightened Vigilance Amid Recent COVID-19 Cases on the Lower Mainland Waterfront**

The BC Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA) is urging continued vigilance on the waterfront in light of the recent confirmation of three positive cases of COVID-19 amongst the ILWU workforce in the Lower Mainland. The health and safety of waterfront workers continues to be our number one priority, while at the same time, ensuring that vital cargo continues to move through BC Ports, to and from critical regions across Canada.

Workplace and employee tracing protocols were immediately activated and each affected terminal has undertaken a thorough investigation of possible contact with other workers. Potentially impacted work and common areas have been deep cleaned and sanitized.

Local health authorities are following up directly with the affected employees and undertaking a thorough contact tracing investigation. The BCMEA is holding the affected employees out of service until the individuals are cleared by medical officials.

Whether at work or outside of work, BCMEA is reminding all workers on B.C.'s waterfront to continue to wash their hands frequently and thoroughly, to stay home if they are sick and follow all COVID-19 specific procedures at work and in the community. These include physical distancing wherever possible. Where physical distancing is not possible, workers are reminded to wear a non-medical mask to protect themselves and others.

With the knowledge of these recent cases, we must continue to work together to protect each other from the pandemic, recognizing that complacency in the face of COVID-19 is our biggest enemy. We must all remain vigilant to protect the health and safety of our colleagues and families both at work and home.

The BCMEA continues to actively consult and collaborate with key stakeholders including the potentially affected terminals, members, ILWU Canada and the potentially affected ILWU Locals, our government partners, local health authorities and waterfront stakeholders, all to ensure that health and safety response protocols are being met in a comprehensive manner.

BCMEA and its members have joined forces over the past six months to implement robust [COVID-19 health and safety protocols](#) at BC's ports. These measures include the introduction of remote dispatch where possible to reduce gatherings, enhanced cleaning and sanitization, distribution of reusable cloth masks and measures to promote physical distancing.

Our shared priority is to ensure that the health and safety of our workforce is protected, while supporting Canada's fight against COVID-19. We will continue to provide updates as appropriate.

Mike Leonard, President and CEO, BC Maritime Employers Association

