



# CONNECTIONS

## From your Secretary-Treasurer



### Update on COVID-19 for all Teamster members

By ROME ALOISE

We have put together this special edition of the *Local 853 Connections* to make sure you are getting information from your union that, given the current circumstances, is as helpful and timely as it can be.

We are experiencing unprecedented and historic times. None of us have seen anything like this and hopefully, we won't have to experience it again. The threat of COVID-19 is something that many of us didn't really take seriously at first. As the virus spreads, and our political leaders started to acknowledge its seriousness, our world, as we know it, has experienced incredible changes.

Many of our members are working long hours making sure essential items are in place for the general public and for medical facilities. Our sisters and brothers are, in some cases, putting themselves in harm's way to make sure they are providing the service that they were hired to do, and stepping up in these uncertain times. Many have worked so many hours that when they are off of work, and trying to get the necessities for themselves and their families, everything is gone. They are truly heroes.

In fact, Governor Newsom acknowledged the Teamsters Union and our members for doing extraordinary work. We have been successful in getting many of the companies that are still open and deemed "essential" to give some type of hazard pay or bonuses while our members are faced with these extraordinary demands.

On the other end, we also have many members who have been laid off, as their companies have been forced to shut down either by the government edict, or because their industries have been

adversely affected by the "stay in place" orders from the state or local government. This, of course, is devastating for our members and their families.

We have been working with each company to figure out ways to keep

*"I want to thank the Teamsters....These are the truck drivers, the folks doing logistics in the warehouse.... Getting home late—not even time to get their own groceries."*  
**Gov. Gavin Newsom**

checks coming into our members' households. We have been able to push numerous employers to continue compensation for a limited amount of time; others have agreed to allow the use of sick leave, vacation, or other PTOs to supplement unemployment benefits. Of course, some are, as of yet, unwilling to do anything.

It is amazing that some of our employers have acted so responsibly and others seem to be oblivious to what is happening and how it affects their workers. We intend to keep pounding away at the employers who are not cooperating and work with those who are.

Ironically, this has been an incredibly busy time for your union.

Our offices are not taking walk-ins at this point, however we do have a skeleton crew of our office staff coming in on a rotating basis to make sure we are

processing calls and dues, so that the life insurance attached to dues is in place, and handling all other business. Business agents will be checking their voicemail and answering calls, and will also be visiting the essential companies where our members are working.

Here are some answers to frequently-asked questions:

- Even with the horrendous drops and dives of the stock market, the Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Trust Fund is in good shape and at no risk.
- If your health benefits are provided by either Teamsters Benefit Trust or Teamsters Managed Trust, we are working with these trust funds to make sure all benefits are in place and that, in the event this situation lasts for a long time, benefits may be continued.
- If you are in the SIP 401(k) plan, your investments have probably plummeted due to this uncertain stock market. I cannot give you investment advice, but I can tell you what I have done: I don't look at mine. Selling off when the market is down is bad, as it makes it difficult to reclaim what has been lost. I am just going to let it ride and hope that once things straighten out, the market will come back as it has before.

Please be safe, take care of your families, and know that by sticking together, assisting each other, and following the rules, we will all get through this. This is what Teamsters do!

# The Coronavirus/COVID-19 Outbreak—Staying Safe

The virus fiercely traveling around the world is called a novel coronavirus. Scientists believe the virus may have transferred from bats to humans; it is “novel” because humans have never before been exposed to it and have no immunity to it. And because it is so new, no vaccines or treatments are yet available.

COVID-19 is the disease caused by this

particular coronavirus. Symptoms include fever and/or symptoms of lower respiratory illness such as coughing or difficulty breathing.

It is estimated that more than half of all Californians will contract the coronavirus.

Some may be asymptomatic, which means they won’t know they have it and yet can easily infect others. Most will have mild to moderate symptoms; moderate is when

you have pneumonia but don’t need to be hospitalized. A small percentage, particularly the elderly (people over 60) and those with underlying diseases, are more likely to have severe or fatal symptoms. In California, that number could reach upwards of 100,000 people, and would overwhelm the health care system.

If you’ve lost your job due to tempo-

Program	Why	What	Benefits
STATE Disability Insurance	If you’re unable to work due to medical quarantine or illness related to COVID-19 (certified by a medical professional)	Short-term benefit payments to eligible workers who have a full or partial loss of wages due to a non-work-related illness, injury, or pregnancy.	Approx. 60-70% of wages (depend on income); ranges from \$50-\$111/week for up to 52 weeks.
STATE Paid Family Leave (PFL)	If you’re unable to work because you are caring for an ill or quarantined family member with COVID-19 (certified by a medical professional)	Up to six weeks of benefit payment to eligible workers who have a full or partial loss of wages because they need time off work to care for a seriously-ill family member.	Approx. 60-70% of wages (depend on income); ranges from \$50-\$111/week for up to 6 weeks.
STATE Unemployment Insurance	If you have lost your job or had your hours reduced for reasons related to COVID-19	Partial wage replacement benefit payments to workers who lose their job through no fault of their own.	Ranges from \$40-\$450/week for up to 26 weeks
STATE Paid Sick Leave	If you or a family member are sick or for preventative care when civil authorities recommend quarantine	The leave you have accumulated or your employer has provided to you under the Paid Sick Leave law.	Paid to you at your regular rate or an average based on the past 90 days.
STATE Workers’ Compensation	If you are unable to do your usual job because you were exposed to and contracted COVID-19 during the regular course of your work.	Temporary disability (TD) payments would begin when your doctor says you can’t do your usual work for more than three days or you are hospitalized overnight.	TD generally pays 2/3 of the gross wages you lose while recovering from a work-related illness or injury, up to a maximum weekly limit for up to 104 weeks.
FEDERAL Federal Emergency Paid Sick Leave Benefit	A) If you are personally subject to quarantine order, experiencing COVID-19 or not. B) If you are caring for a quarantined family member or have a child whose school/daycare is closed.	A & B) Applies to employees of employers with less than 500 employees.	A) Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of unpaid leave at the employee’s regular rate of pay—capped at \$511/week B) Two weeks leave paid at 2/3 regular rate of pay up to \$200/day.

rary or permanent closure, or if you think you're sick, see the chart below, put together by the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency and the Beeson Tayer & Bodine law firm.

You've no doubt heard the term "social distancing." Please follow the guidelines carefully, not only for yourself but for your loved ones. Here are some steps to take:



### For all workers:

- **Don't go to work if you are feeling sick.**
- Don't shake hands when greeting others.
- Avoid large gatherings or meetings.
- Try to stay six feet away from others on job sites and in gatherings, meetings, and training sessions.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissues if you cough or sneeze or do so into your elbow. And clean your hands after.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.

### Employers should also:

- Create at least 6 feet of space between workers by staging/staggering crews to prevent droplet spread.
- Plan for office staff to have the ability to work from home.
- Provide soap and running water on all jobsites for frequent hand-washing. If that is impossible, provide hand sanitizer.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces

on job sites and in offices—such as hand rails, door knobs, and portable toilets—frequently, per CDC guidelines: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html)

### In the long run:

Across the state, worker organizations are fighting for emergency legislation that will:

- require all employers to offer 14 days of paid sick leave, with anti-retaliation protections for workers who are taking paid leave or are quarantined.
- Immediate protections for workers, including right of recall, ensuring employers do not use the crisis to unfairly fire workers, and securing worker retention in case companies are sold.
- Access to services and assistance for everyone, regardless of immigration status, to receive testing, treatment and all public resources available to combat this crisis.
- Housing protections to ensure a moratorium on rental evictions for residents and small businesses, as well as a moratorium on all foreclosures.
- Unemployment Insurance protections, including UI for all workers.

	More Info
depending on \$1,300/	<a href="http://www.edd.ca.gov/disability/am_i_eligible_for_DI_benefits.htm">www.edd.ca.gov/disability/am_i_eligible_for_DI_benefits.htm</a>
depending on \$1,300/	<a href="http://www.edd.ca.gov/disability/am_i_eligible_for_PFL_benefits.htm">www.edd.ca.gov/disability/am_i_eligible_for_PFL_benefits.htm</a>
work for up to	<a href="http://www.edd.ca.gov/unemployment/eligibility.htm">www.edd.ca.gov/unemployment/eligibility.htm</a>
rate of pay past 90	<a href="http://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/paid_sick_leave.htm">www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/paid_sick_leave.htm</a>
gross earnings from January, up to 104	<a href="http://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FileAClaim.htm">www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FileAClaim.htm</a>
hours) of your regular pay/week. 2/3 of regular day.	Goes into effect on April 2. More info to come.

## Announcements

**Monthly union meetings:** Local 853's membership meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at 7750 Pardee Lane, Oakland, CA, 94621. Check with the office at 510-895-8853 about the status of the April meeting.

**Stay up to date:** Make sure that your beneficiary information is up-to-date for pension, life insurance, etc.

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**Members:** Send address changes and comments to the above address or e-mail us at [connections@teamsters853.org](mailto:connections@teamsters853.org)



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*Local 853 – organizing and building a stronger union*



**Teamsters are Essential Workers!**  
*Clockwise from top left: Berkeley Farms, Coca Cola, Sysco, Unfi, Sysco*