



**Local 310 L**

Steve Vonk  
President

5/4/2020

Sisters and Brothers,

As you are well aware the 3 weeks since our return to work have been extremely stressful. In the weeks prior to the plant reopening the Union had many meetings with the Company to best prepare for the safe return of workers. We faced many obstacles during this process. Disinfectant, wipes, masks, even the spray bottles were nearly impossible to find. I wrote a letter to the Governors' office explaining our situation and asked for help locating supplies so we could safely reopen, but got no response. Both parties were confident that we had a decent plan in place but we all knew there would be issues that would need addressed. There are no training manuals available that deal with running factories in the middle of a world pandemic. One of the issues that has been addressed and agreed to with the Company is that when someone leaves the plant sick for any reason a deep cleaning of their work area will be performed. The Company is notifying us anytime night or day when someone leaves sick. Your Local 310 leadership has been following up with everyone off work to make sure they are ok and all necessary paperwork has been submitted. This has been a monumental task as there are approximately 130 members currently off work for various Covid related reasons. This week we are contacting everybody who is off to advise them that they are potentially eligible for unemployment insurance in addition to their paid Covid leave. If you are off work and haven't been called please call the Union Hall and update your contact information.

This Covid pandemic will be an issue that we will have to deal with in the plant for months to come. Our 1<sup>st</sup> positive case in the plant was on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. As of May 4<sup>th</sup> we are at 9 positive cases. We fully expect the numbers to grow. Our new measure of success is to keep the cases singular, meaning no spread within the factory walls. We asked the question last week about what number of cases would prompt a shutdown and the response was as long as we have orders for tires we will be open. We have been declared "essential". USW Local 310 has no authority to shut the plant down. We have been asked about mass testing in the plant. Mass testing of a facility is generally ordered by the Government. Mass testing only provides us with a snapshot in time. Nothing would stop someone from being infected 15 minutes after a negative diagnosis.

A couple of noteworthy items: We have ordered 100 black facemasks with our logo on them. We will sell them below cost at 7 dollars each. Limit of 3 per member. Also, the Union Hall remains open M-F 5:30am-4:00pm. The only change that we have implemented is the doors will be locked. When you arrive at the Union Hall call us at 288-9547 and we will assist you. Those who are sick or exposed will be helped outside. This temporary change was necessary to ensure the safety of those working and visiting the Union Hall and to make sure we don't carry the virus across the street on any of our many daily trips to the plant.

Please remember that if you are sick please don't come to work and contact the Union Hall. Together we will get through this. Stay safe and stay strong.

In Solidarity,  
Steve Vonk

President USW Local 310L

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United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union

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