



March 23, 2020

To all ESC Local 20 members:

All of us are facing unprecedented challenges during this time. We thank all of the essential workers in our ranks for everything you are doing. Your skill and expertise are critical to the welfare of our communities.

We write today to report on the Union's work to date in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. All ESC Local 20 staff are working remotely and the Union is continuing its work for our members. The Union Hall is closed, but all staff are available by e-mail and telephone to assist members. The Union's Executive Board and Unit Boards are meeting by Zoom to conduct the organization's business.
2. In accordance with the direction of the Executive Board, as a first principle our union is working to maintain the highest standards of safety for our members and our communities. For example, we have advocated for remote work whenever possible for compliance with the statewide shelter-in-place order. For workers who must be at work, we are advocating for flexible solutions that maintain appropriate social distancing, such as staggered shifts to decrease the population in an office space at any one time.
3. We are in close communication with our employers and working hard to clarify evolving situations and policies and to share information. For example, our staff representatives participate in regular briefing calls with our employers and our sister unions, and then cascade information to our members.
4. We are pressing for pay continuation in all instances, for the economic support and security of our membership. For example, PG&E initially instructed employees to tap their own sick or vacation time if the employee could not work due to childcare (school closures), an underlying health condition, or senior (over 65) status. In response to ESC Local 20's advocacy, PG&E now has determined that it will allow paid administrative leave in such situations as an interim step for at least one month. The Union is seeking similar actions from our other employers, including Kaiser.

5. We are negotiating appropriate redeployments in situations where regular work has lessened significantly. For example, with the cessation of routine eye examinations, Kaiser Optometrists may volunteer to staff a telephone hotline to share information about COVID-19 with Kaiser members.
6. We are working to advocate for legal and policy solutions to protect our members and their families. For example, we are partnering with others in the labor movement to press for an expanded package of paid leaves in California, based on the model of laws passed by New York.
7. We will continue to inform and educate our membership and be a source of information about resources available to workers. For example, here is a very important clearinghouse of information maintained by the California Labor Federation: <https://calaborfed.org/covid-19-outbreak-resources-and-information-for-workers/>.

During this highly uncertain time, the Union continues to represent our members. We are available to help in this crisis. We urge you to contact your steward or union representative with any questions or concerns. Contact information for our staff can be found here: <https://www.ifpte20.org/about/staff-and-union-representatives/>

Solidarity, collective action, and concern for working families and communities are the touchstones of unions and the labor movement. All of us at ESC Local 20 will continue to work together to move through this extraordinarily challenging time.

John Mader, President, ESC Local 20  
Joel Foster, Secretary-Treasurer, ESC Local 20  
Karen Sawislak, Executive Director, ESC Local 20

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