

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

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Don Slager, CEO
Republic Services, Inc.
18500 N Allied Way
Phoenix, AZ 85054

Mr. Slager:

The Covid-19 pandemic poses a serious and unique risk to the 7,300 Teamsters employed by Republic Services. Over the course of each workday, our members visit thousands of homes, businesses, schools and hospitals. There is a new study from researchers at National Institute of Health (NIH) and other institutions showing that *“When aerosolized into fine, floating particles, the virus remained viable for three hours. On a copper surface, it was four hours, the study found. The median length of viability for the virus on stainless steel was 13 hours, and 16 hours on polypropylene, a common type of plastic.”*ⁱ

We have included information from the IBT Safety and health Departmentⁱⁱ, that is based on the Centers for Diseases Control and Preventionⁱⁱⁱ (CDC), and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)^{iv}.

In order to provide our members with the best possible representation, we would like to know what steps your company has taken to protect your employees from this pandemic. Specifically, we would ask that you provide answers to the following questions:

- Now that the World Health Organization (WHO) has classified COVID-19 as a global pandemic, your company can no longer treat waste and recycles exposed to COVID-19 the same as waste exposed to influenza. How has your company adapted to this new reality?
- Do you have existing pandemic risk assessment and pandemic risk management plans in place? If not, do you have risk management plans of any kind to deal with this kind of situation? If so, please provide the Union with a copy.
- As required by OSHA, what controls, including engineering controls, administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE, are you implementing?
 - What type of safety training has your company offered employees?
 - What supplies have been made available in the workplace (soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, tissues, disposable face masks)?
 - What types of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) have been made available to employees (e.g. puncture proof gloves, disposable gloves)?

- Should the virus spread among employees *and their families*, how will your company deal with an increase in absences?
- Medical professionals increasingly recommend patients with flu-like symptoms to self-quarantine for fourteen days. How will your company treat absences related to such recommendations?

Many Americans will transition into telework to avoid exposure, including many of your corporate employees. Our members, however, won't have that option. Their boots will be needed on the ground each and every day. However, due to your company's existing attendance policies, infected employees may find themselves without sufficient PTO time or unable to afford to take unpaid medical leave. In order to keep their jobs and livelihood, the same infected employees would likely report to work. Should this likely scenario play out, the virus could quickly spread throughout your workforce. A drop-in waste collection service during an emerging pandemic would make a deadly situation infinitely worse.

For this reason, we ask that Republic Services:

- Change its attendance policy during this crisis to excuse all union employee absences for the foreseeable future, for those who may need to take time off to care for a sick family member exposed to COVID-19 or to care for children attending schools or daycares that have closed due to the virus.
- Provide up to 14 days of paid leave for employees exposed or quarantined due to COVID-19 or for those who must care for a sick family member who is exposed or quarantined due to COVID-19.
- Provide paid leave, without impact on employees' leave balances and benefits for employees who are unable to work due to public health or required quarantine
- If layoffs are being considered due to reduced business, consider accepting volunteers for layoffs first before mandatory layoff by seniority.
- Grant employees additional paid time off for a finite period of time during the COVID-19 epidemic to be taken due to quarantine, care for a sick family member, care for a child during school closing, offset time lost due to reduced hours or layoff scenarios.
- Setup a rapid response system to share communications with employees

We hope to work together to ensure our members can meet the needs of the communities they serve. As this public health crisis unfolds, the country will rely on the critical services they provide more than ever. We look forward to receiving your timely response.

Sincerely,

Chuck Stiles
 Director, Waste and Recycling Division
 International Brotherhood of Teamsters

ⁱ **Aerosol and surface stability of HCoV-19 (SARS-CoV-2) compared to SARS-CoV-1** The study is available at: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.03.09.20033217v1.full.pdf> (note It is a pre-publication paper that hasn't yet been peer-reviewed.)

NPR: Research: Coronavirus Can Live For A Long Time In Air, On Surfaces

<https://www.npr.org/2020/03/13/815307842/research-coronavirus-can-live-for-a-long-time-in-air-on-surfaces>

The Hill: Tests indicate coronavirus can survive in the air <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/487110-tests-indicate-coronavirus-can-survive-in-the-air>

ⁱⁱ **COVID-19 Outbreak Resources** <https://teamster.org/covid-19>

ⁱⁱⁱ **CDC Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/faq.html>

^{iv} **OSHA COVID-19: Solid Waste and Wastewater Management Workers and Employers**

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html>