

Unifor statement on aerosol transmission of COVID-19

November 11, 2020

In an important update in the fight against COVID-19, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is now acknowledging that the coronavirus can be spread through [aerosol transmission](#). This is a vital update to PHAC's transmission guidelines that brings it into line with the precautions that Unifor has been urging since the beginning of the pandemic. Since the start, we have pushed the precautionary principle that workplaces should be as cautious as possible until the science establishes that such precautions are not needed.

Until this move, the guidelines focused on droplets, which are larger and fall to the ground quickly. Aerosol droplets are much smaller and can hang in the air for some time, making the spread of COVID-19 more likely.

Unifor has been reviewing and updating its COVID-19 Factsheets in the coming days to reflect this new directive. In the meantime, please take every needed precautions in your workplaces and your travels outside of your home.

In response to the new guidelines, Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, said that face masks should ideally have three layers - two of tightly woven fabric such as cotton or linen, and a third of a "filter-type fabric" such as polypropylene. She also said that fit is the most important thing, including a snug fit with a wire across the nose where possible.

This response validates what Unifor has been saying all along about the possibility of aerosol transmission, and should be followed wherever possible – especially when in close quarters and when physical distancing is not possible. With a second wave of the pandemic taking hold across Canada, it is important that we all remain vigilant and not fall prey to COVID-fatigue.

We urge you to Continue to monitor Unifor's [Health and Safety tab](#) on the union's COVID-19 resources page for updated Factsheets and other materials.

Unifor continues to meet with other unions, particularly those in the healthcare field, to push for the strongest pandemic response possible, and is at the table with governments, public health teams and occupational health and safety organizations across the country. Unifor is using all avenues available to advocate for a robust response to the pandemic.

If you have any questions, we are here to help. You are not alone. Feel free to contact the Unifor Health and Safety at healthandsafety@unifor.org

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