



TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION NO. 155

*Representing Employees in Movie Production, Trade Shows & Related Industries, Office, Public Sector
& Miscellaneous Jurisdiction in the Province of British Columbia & the Yukon Territory, Canada*
AFFILIATED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS & TEAMSTERS CANADA



May 26, 2020

Message to Members May 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

No doubt you have heard numerous announcements regarding our return to work during the Province's Phase 3 (June to September). We are actively participating with Creative BC and the Film Commission as part of the BC Motion Picture Industry COVID-19 Best Practices Coalition developing Safety Plan Guidelines. The goal is to complete these guidelines over the next few weeks.

We will also be reviewing and updating our production list to reflect the true status of our members and the status of the productions. The Employers have contacted some of our members regarding prep, but little contact has been to the Union. I'm still anticipating that it is a little too soon and it is a very unpredictable situation.

The (AMPTP) Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers and (CMPA) Canadian Media Producers Association affiliates, who are approximately 85% of our business, have been at the table with Labour Organizations in the US trying to develop a Return to Work White Paper. They also engaged an Epidemiologist as part of their process. That finalized and approved document should be released soon. It will have an impact on our industry as it will most likely meet or exceed the guidelines developed here. It is the Employer's responsibility not only to their employees, but also to their stakeholders to develop procedures that help minimize the exposure to an active virus. The financial implications of a production shutting down are significant. The extra cost to production during a pandemic is unmeasured at this point, but a 20% increase in cost has been suggested. Any successful return to work can only happen with input and collaboration from the Labour Unions.

I would not normally link an article but this one might shed some light on the major issues at a higher level beyond independent guidelines you may have seen.

Their document is still currently in draft form. Fact and fiction have never been harder to distinguish. That goes for this article too: "[Industry Infighting, Union Turf Battles Slow Development of Back-to-Work Plan:](https://variety.com/2020/film/news/production-guidelines-white-paper-amptp-iatse-1234613975/)" (<https://variety.com/2020/film/news/production-guidelines-white-paper-amptp-iatse-1234613975/>)

A Studio Labour Representative recently made it clear to our group that even though the State of Georgia is open for business they will not be going there unless they are confident that their Employees (investments) are safe. My concern is the mission creep of returning to work at the expense of our Collective Agreement. That will be one of our many challenges.

Having a low infection rate in BC is what is making this jurisdiction so attractive and I imagine will be a deciding factor going forward. The elephant in the room is that every pandemic has at least a 2nd stage, and no one is talking about how, if, and when. Ignoring that possibility for all of us is not in our best interest. Planning for it mentally and financially is important. I know that may be disturbing to hear but it is my obligation to be more than a cheerleader.

Local 155 will be increasingly active in June with our continued participation with the BC Motion Picture Industry COVID-19 Coalition, the Union COVID-19 Task Force, BCCFU meetings, the future scheduling of our first Zoom General Meeting and hopefully some Divisional Meetings. Our Field Stewards are checking in with our members, as are the office staff.

If you are able please consider calling a fellow colleague to check in, not to counsel, just to see if they are ok. If they are in need, please let us know or inform them of the support available. Some members may have trouble picking up groceries or prescriptions. Let us know and we'll see what we can do.

I have concluded that we will be unable to assure one's safety until that same guarantee is present for when we go grocery shopping or to a restaurant. Our goal is to minimize the risk for those that are ready to return to work. For some returning to work will be a hard decision. Some may decide to wait it out for a while depending on their health and no doubt their finances. There certainly is a desire for many to return to work.

This situation is a moving target which makes these messages difficult. Predictions should be accurate. We all want certainty. We are a perseverant bunch that have developed a pretty good level of resilience to the uncertainty of this industry. For those that have only been with us for the last 5 years of growth, we understand that these times will be an extra shock to the system. For those that have been with us 10 years and longer although this is extreme, an extended period of unemployment was experienced in the past, but who could have predicted this? I will make every effort to return calls to anyone that would like to talk to me about what you are going through.

One of my hopes is that when this is all over there will be improved working conditions and Employers' that value and recognize the importance of fulltime employees. Some Employers showed that is possible with the compassion pay that they gave to their core employees.

In closing, these are very stressful times for all of us. I encourage you to take advantage of courses available through our Union Savings and Vubiz, FSEAP counselling that includes financial counselling, and Calltimeentalhealth.com resources. We will get through this. Life will return to normal one day and this will all be behind us.

I hope this finds you and your loved ones well. Stay safe and stay strong.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lorrie Ward', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lorrie Ward
Secretary-Treasurer
Teamsters Local Union No.155