



# Health & Safety Report – May 2021

February 2021 – May 2021			
Number of Reported Injuries/Illnesses		Top Injury/Illness Trends	
Lost Time	14	Biological Hazards/Illness – COVID-19	6
Health Care	5	Biological Hazards/Illness	2

## COVID-19 Testing

When notified by the In-Flight Service Contact Tracing team of a positive case of COVID-19 on your flight, you will be provided with options based on your level of exposure. You are permitted to get tested regardless of the option provided. Ontario Public Health recommends getting tested **after 5 days** exposure to a COVID-19 positive person.<sup>1</sup> Should your test results be positive, contact the Occupational Health Clinic to launch the Contact Tracing procedure (T: 905-676-2400). The company will trace contacts as far back as 2 days prior to the onset of symptoms or a positive test result, which ever is the earliest. As per the company’s COVID-19 policy and public health recommendations, you should not report to work if you are awaiting COVID-19 test results. As always, continue to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and to wear all available personal protective equipment (i.e., gloves, gown, goggles and/or face shield, and surgical mask or N95 respirator). Note that flights identified with a positive case of COVID-19 are only those for which passengers got tested.

## COVID-19 Immunization

CUPE and the Health and Safety Committee continue to advocate for access to vaccines for all cabin crew. As essential workers, we are in close contact with a variety of people and possibly exposed to SARS-CoV-2. Also, COVID-19 continues to be the most prominent work-related injury and illness in cabin crew since March 2020. The company released its COVID-19 vaccination policy in April 2021. The policy recommends that all employees be inoculated against COVID-19. CUPE raised issues with the policy, especially its punitive language. Note that no aspect of the policy is specified as mandatory. Also, employees’ human rights to refuse a vaccine continue to be protected on the grounds of disability or religion. Nevertheless, CUPE and the Health and Safety Committee recommend that all employees obtain the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they are able. Through this advocacy and with the help of the Toronto Airport Safety Council, Toronto Pearson Airport employees will soon be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine. Starting May 10, those who are unable to work from home will be able to schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment through the government of Ontario. The company will also be offering vaccination clinics in the near future. Details will be provided through the union newsletter. If you are turned away at a vaccination clinic, please reach out to your Health and Safety Committee for assistance (E: [sante.health@local4092.ca](mailto:sante.health@local4092.ca), T: 905-676-4352). If possible, schedule your vaccination appointment on a day off and leave yourself some time to recover from possible side-effects. If you obtain an appointment but are scheduled to work, you can use your personal care days (3 paid and 2 unpaid days per year). To obtain the appropriate leave, reach out to the In-Flight Service Wellness team (E: [IFS.Wellness@aircanada.ca](mailto:IFS.Wellness@aircanada.ca), T: 905-676-4698).

<sup>1</sup> Government of Ontario. (2021, May 10). COVID-19 test and testing location information. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-test-and-testing-location-information>

## COVID-19 Misinformation

We recently heard an increased amount of skepticism from cabin crew about the reality of COVID-19 and the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines. This skepticism is dismissive of the real lived-experiences of our colleagues who became very sick through community spread or work-related exposure to SARS-CoV-2. While some fortunate individuals had mild COVID-19 symptoms, those who had more severe symptoms all shared the same message with the Health and Safety Committee: “I do not wish this upon my worst enemy.” COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting Blacks, First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and people of colour, as well as people of lower socio-economic status.<sup>2</sup> Most of all, its impact on our health care system, beyond the treatment of the illness itself, is serious – cancer screenings are delayed and the negative mental health impact on our brothers and sisters in the medical community is significant.<sup>3</sup> CUPE remains committed to international solidarity and global justice, especially in regards to COVID-19. Visit the World Health Organization’s myth-busters page for evidence-based explanations about COVID-19 (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>).

## Workers Compensation Committee

Whenever you are injured or become ill **at** the workplace or **because** of work, you should make a claim with your provincial Workers Compensation Board (i.e., Workers Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) in Ontario or *Commission des normes de l’équité de la santé et de la sécurité du travail* (CNESST) in Quebec). Work-related injuries and illnesses include, but are not limited to hearing loss, COVID-19, or trauma from a potentially traumatic experience. You do not have to report your injury or illness to WSIB if you fulfill **all three** (3) of the following criteria: 1) only obtained first aid; 2) did not book off; and 3) did not do modified duties. As of May 1, 2021, should you have any questions about Workers Compensation or wish to appeal a WSIB decision, please contact the CUPE Local 4092 office (E: [office@local4092.ca](mailto:office@local4092.ca), T: 905-676-4293). For members residing in Quebec, please contact the CUPE Local 4091 office for assistance with CNESST (E: [info@local4091.ca](mailto:info@local4091.ca), T: 514-422-2235).

In Solidarity,



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## Health & Safety Committee

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<sup>2</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada. (2021, February 21). *CPHO Sunday Edition: The Impact of COVID-19 on Racialized Communities*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2021/02/cpho-sunday-edition-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-racialized-communities.html>

<sup>3</sup> Chen-See, S. (2020, July 23). Disruption of cancer care in Canada during COVID-19. *The Lancet*, 21(8), E374. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045\(20\)30397-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045(20)30397-1)

Statistics Canada. (2021, February 2). *Mental health among health care workers in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Government of Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210202/dq210202a-eng.htm>