

Cooperating
Railway
Labor
Organizations

Health and
Welfare Committee

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SMART Transportation Division



United We Stand



March 11, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Brendan Branon, Chairman
National Railway Labor Conference
251-18th Street, South, Suite 750
Arlington, VA 2220

Dear Mr. Branon:

With the ongoing news stories about the COVID-19, concerns have been raised over procedures and steps the railroad industry is taking to protect its workforce against the ongoing coronavirus, or COVID-19, pandemic. Given that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed cases in at least 39 States, for which some have called for State of Emergencies, we urge all railroads to take immediate steps to protect our membership and the coworkers and public with which they have contact.

While other industries are already taking action, for example, airlines are cancelling flights to areas of high infestation and by multi-national employers who are restricting employee travel to such areas and the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), the leading voice of the global cruise industry, announced the adoption of additional enhanced screening measures in response to COVID-19 – little is known about what protective measures the railroad industry is taking.

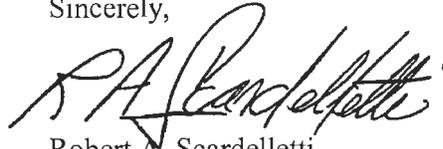
Given the below CDC recommended guidelines, it is requested that all attendance policies be suspended; there be no discipline for any employee who stays home due to illness, and given that not all employees have sick leave, all employees who stay home should receive paid leave. Further, appropriate sanitation to cleanse surfaces and common areas where employees work should be performed and supplies of hand sanitizers and wipes that contain at least 60-95% alcohol and wipes be made readily available.

The recommendations of the CDC are employees should:

- **Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:**
 - Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
 - Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.
 - Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
 - Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.
- **Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees:**
 - Place posters that encourage [staying home when sick](#), [cough and sneeze etiquette](#), and [hand hygiene](#) at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
 - Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.
 - Instruct employees to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol, or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
 - Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained. Place hand rubs in multiple locations or in conference rooms to encourage hand hygiene.
 - Visit the [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#) and [clean hands webpage](#) for more information.
- **Perform routine environmental cleaning:**
 - Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
 - No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended at this time.
 - Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.

I trust you share my concerns over the severity of this situation, and I look forward to learning what specific steps the railroad industry intends to take to address this threat to the health and safety of our members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.A. Scardelletti". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and "A".

Robert A. Scardelletti
Chairman

cc: CRLO Chiefs

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

<https://cruising.org/news-and-research/press-room/2020/march/clia-covid-19-toolkit>