



**your voice at work**

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United Food and Commercial Workers Canada Union, Local No. 401

April 13, 2020

VIA EMAIL: [s.bebeau@sccoop.ca](mailto:s.bebeau@sccoop.ca)

**Sherilynn BeBeau**  
**Human Resources Manager**  
South Country Co-op  
969 16 Street SW  
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 4X5

Dear Ms. BeBeau:

**RE: Temperature Checks**

We write to you today to seek clarity and raise our serious concerns about temperature checks of our members being implemented in your company.

We ask that you please respond to the following questions immediately and that you take our concerns seriously. While this letter focuses on temperature checks, we urge you to continue to adopt our continuing requests through our advocacy. The obligation to keep employees safe never ends.

**Principles Regarding Temperature Checks**

We hope you can appreciate that we are concerned about privacy and the rights of employees, our members, with the implementation of temperature checks. We have not found definitive evidence that a high temperature is a sign of COVID-19. Our research has shown that there are conflicting medical positions on using 38 degrees as the benchmark. We know that an actual fever is one of the symptoms of COVID-19. However, it also a symptom of your body's immune system fighting an irregularity - like a possible cold, or even a stomach bug.

Other personal and private health related conditions can also cause high fevers that have nothing to do with a virus or a contagious disease. We worry about this and the possibility of discrimination based on unproven medical conditions. We strongly urge you that you pay for all hours and benefits missed to anyone who is sent home due to a high temperature check. Temperature checks are not how you diagnose COVID-19.

We all must balance privacy concerns in conjunction with the need to make sure our members are safe. The taking of one's temperature may not in itself be a privacy violation; however, we do believe there could be violations with what an employer does with that reading and who they share that information with.

We ask you to respond to the following questions:

1. So far, is the only determining factor of suitability to work, an employee's temperature?
2. What is the company doing with the information once they take the employees temperature and who are you sharing that information with? Is anyone storing, recording or tracking that medical information for any reason?
3. Who is administering these checks and what medical training do they have to do so? We request that you forward any medical certification that these people may have.
4. What device are you proposing to use for these checks and how are the temperatures being taken? (e.g. orally, ear, mouth, forehead, infrared, etc)
5. What steps are in place for cleansing of the device in between checks?
6. Some employers are using the temperature of 38 Celsius as a benchmark. Can you explain what your benchmark is and why you have chosen that?

### Social Distancing

Maintaining social distancing when taking temperatures is a serious concern for us. How will the company stop these temperature checks from completely undermining social distancing and creating a vector for the transmission of Covid-19? For example, if a security guard or the person doing the checks comes into contact with a Covid-19 positive employee, then performing these temperature checks could just pass the virus to every other employee that contacts the security guard or person.

With the uncertainty of employment, familial situations, emotional stressors and financial fears rising each day we are extremely considered about this temperature check protocol causing members to lose seniority or pay.

1. We ask that you agree that any employee sent home due to these temperature checks will be fully compensated for all time missed and we will require an immediate answer on this.
2. We have concerns that the temperature checks may result in employees being late for the start of their shifts or that they will be required to attend the workplace early to complete the process. Will employees be paid for these scenarios?
3. If an employee fails a temperature check, how long will you send an employee home for?
4. What if the employee's "temperature" lowers at home after they are turned away? Can they return to work the same day and have full reimbursement for hours missed?

We are sure you will be graceful and kind in your understanding that employees are going to be nervous about these temperature checks for a variety of reasons. We do recognize the need to keep everyone safe during the COVID-19 crisis, however, people still have human rights and collective agreement rights and we want to be sure that those are being respected.

We look forward to your immediate response.

Sincerely,



Thomas Hesse  
President



Richelle Stewart  
Secretary-Treasurer