



## COVID-19 UPDATES: MCO DEMANDS BARGAINING; HAZARD PAY AND OTHER PROTECTIONS SECURED

Here are updates from this week:

- There have been 142 cases confirmed among MDOC staff and 338 among inmates. At least 11 staff members at the Center for Forensic Psychiatry have been diagnosed along with 17 patients, according to [this article](#).
- MCO is **demanding emergency bargaining** in accordance with Article 12 of our contract. Our areas of concern include protocols for sending staff home or denying them entry; COVID-19 testing; restrictions on hazard pay; comp time and annual leave caps; and more.
- The MCO Legal Department is keeping a record of members who are **sent home for a potential COVID-19 exposure** or for failing the health screening to enter their facility.  
If either of those situations happened to you, [please fill out this form](#). It is very important that you give detailed answers. MCO staff may reach out to you if we need additional information.
- MCO has partnered with an outside law firm to assist members who have or had a **confirmed case of COVID-19**. Please contact The Law Offices of Charters, Tyler, Zack & Shearer, P. C. at (248) 321-4474. Advise them that you are a state corrections officer and contracted the virus. They will screen your case to determine if you are entitled to benefits. Please fill out our [website form](#), then call the law office.
- MCO has filed an **et al. grievance related to the health screenings** that have been instituted prior to the beginning of shifts. MCO leaders believe these qualify as Pre-Shift meetings per Article

34, which states in part that Pre-Shift can consist of verifying that employees are physically fit for duty.

- MCO has secured **temporary hazard pay** for bargaining unit members in the amount of \$750 per pay period. MCO initiated inquiries on hazard compensation to the Office of State Employer and Governor's office right after the beginning of the declared state of emergency.

Use of leave credits in the pay period will result in proration of the premium payment. In order to earn the full \$750 amount, all scheduled days in the pay period must be worked. Overtime hours do not count toward the premium.

Premium payments will show up on the May 14 check. Staff can earn one payment per check until the hazard pay timeframe ends. That means whenever hazard pay stops, members will still get premium payments on the following two checks.

- In addition to fighting for hazard pay, demanding emergency bargaining, and other efforts at the state level, MCO and its corrections partners are working at the federal level to get protections for all corrections officers.

For example, we have secured important changes in a **federal act that allows the survivors of officers who die from COVID-19 to receive benefits**.

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Act provides assistance to law enforcement and their families if an officer is disabled or killed in the line of duty. It is part of the US Department of Justice - Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Originally, the act would have required survivors to prove an officer contracted the virus at work in order to

receive benefits. Now, thanks to our advocacy, it will be presumed that the virus was contracted in the line of duty, unless there's evidence that suggests otherwise.

[Read more details.](#)

- Please try to stay **six feet from other staff** at work. This will reduce the likelihood of you being put off work to quarantine.

- We've heard some members don't want to return home after their shift and risk possibly spreading the virus. MCO staff have been calling **hotels around the state to get discounts** for these members. A spreadsheet with options around the state is on [our website](#).

- **A Michigan company is producing masks** for COs to use. If members say they are preferable to MSI masks, MCO leaders will order enough for all officers. MCO President Byron Osborn and Vice President Ray Sholtz delivered the first shipment of masks to the hardest hit facilities. Masks were dropped off to chapter officials, and they will distribute. These masks should be hand washed and line dried. Masks will be delivered to more facilities next week.

- Updates concerning COVID-19 (including links to the Legal Department reporting form and hotel discounts) are available on the [MCO website](#) and in our members-only [Facebook group](#).

**Again, we thank all COs for their dedication in this time of crisis. We know many of you are working 16-hour (or longer) days because others are sick or quarantining. MCO leaders and staff appreciate you and are fighting for you. Stay safe.**