



March 19, 2020

**To: All NECA Members and Signatory Contractors to IBEW Local 48  
All Local Union 48 IBEW Members Working Under Construction Agreements**

**Re: NECA/IBEW Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

Dear Contractors and IBEW Local 48 members:

NECA and IBEW Local 48 have had ongoing discussions within the construction industry to address concerns regarding the novel coronavirus COVID-19. We have been working diligently to address items as they relate to the labor agreements, apprenticeship program, drug testing, health and welfare program, flex benefits and FMLA issues.

We are taking this action because the most important aspect of our industry is to assist in the health and welfare of our contractors and employees while coping with the pandemic concerns and making prudent decisions to safeguard the health of our industry, members and community. Our joint and primary concern is that our IBEW workforce and contractors remain healthy and capable of weathering the impact of the pandemic.

A major strength of our NECA/IBEW partnership is our mutual commitment to the health and well-being of our respective members. During challenging times such as this pandemic, the leadership of both IBEW Local 48 and the Oregon Columbia Chapter, NECA, are committed to providing the best resources available. Together we encourage contractors and members of IBEW 48 to report to our respective organizations any concerns or unanticipated future problems that result from the pandemic and our community's response.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information and please provide this communication to your respective human resources department's field staff, project managers and employees.

**[NECA/IBEW National Disease Emergency Response Agreement \(NDERA\)](#)**

NECA National and IBEW International have approved the [NDERA relating to COVID-19](#), noting the ability of employers to furlough employees in relation to the spread of COVID-19. In addition, employers will not take adverse action against the employee nor contest their unemployment claims. Our local Labor Management committee has also confirmed that the furlough is consistent with section 2.03(b) 6., which reads, "Employers shall lay off employees who have not worked 40 hours in the past 28 calendar days, including weekends, and holidays, bon-a-fide vacation is exempt. **Those employees who are covered by law for reasons of the Family Medical Leave Act, injury, military duty, etc., shall not be subject to this provision.**" The Labor Management committee has agreed the current COVID-19 pandemic falls under this exemption. For more information on the NDERA, [click here to view the NDERA Q&A](#).

[Click here for the unemployment provisions related to COVID-19 for the state of Oregon](#) and [click here for unemployment provisions for the state of Washington](#). If employees are sent home due to action of an owner and or general contractor, it is important to recognize the agreement between NECA/IBEW. According to the Hiring Hall Rules, specifically III. B. 8. g:

“48 Hour Rule – If an Employer cannot provide work for 48 continuous hours (i.e. two consecutive work days) (holidays and weekends excluded) the employee may request, and the Employer will provide, a termination slip indicating a reduction in force. (All Agreements) “

If you cannot provide employment for 48 hours, that employee has the right to receive a reduction in force and not a quit.

Further, it is important to communicate to the local union if an employee leaves your employment that was under a quarantine order.

### **Apprenticeship and Training**

The JATC recently met and have put in place the following to address COVID-19:

- All JW classes are canceled through June 2020
- Apprenticeship classes are tentatively scheduled to begin June 22nd
- 10th term classes will continue if BOLI allows—31 Inside; 10 LE
- Graduation ceremony will be rescheduled for the fall
- Women in Trades may be rescheduled from May (TBD)
- Boot Camps will continue
- Disciplinary action will not be taken for missed classes due to the coronavirus COVID-19

In addition, [click here for the Training Center closure FAQ](#).

### **IBEW Local 48 Dispatch**

Dispatch for Local 48 will be electronic, fax or by telephone. The applicant for employment will not be going into the IBEW local union hall to pick up their dispatch papers, those will be sent electronically to the employer, and the candidate will be sent directly to the employer for consideration of employment. We ask that employers please communicate with the dispatch office as to whether the employee was hired—and provide Local 48 with all the pertinent information that you have collected about the applicant—or indicate if the employee has been rejected or never showed up.

### **Electrical Industry Drug-Free Workplace Program**

[Click here to view the information on the Drug-Free Workplace Program](#), which was previously communicated, noting that all random testing has been suspended at this time. We will continue testing for pre-employment when required, for cause and post-accident.

### **Harrison Health and Welfare Trust Update**

The Harrison Health and Welfare Trustees recently met and have made several changes to benefits related to COVID-19 testing, medical claims and time loss. In addition, changes have been made to the Flex Plan for supplemental unemployment and other pertinent issues as they relate to COVID-19. [Please utilize this link with more information and share with all of your employees](#). We also request that the

employer reimburses any employee—who does not presently have health care benefits—for the cost of any doctor visit that is a direct result of an employee being required to have a doctor’s note to return to work. Currently over 95% of all employees working in the industry are covered by the Harrison Health Trust or other employer provided benefits and this should not have an adverse impact on any employer.

**As of Wednesday, March 18, Providence Health & Services announced they have received all the supplies they need to begin testing for the disease caused by coronavirus.**

As the nature of this pandemic changes on a daily basis, we will be updating information on the [Chapter’s website here](#). In addition, [please utilize the CDC COVID-19 website here](#).

During stressful times like this, our partnership has a tremendous capacity to assist our respective memberships to minimize disruption, maximize communication and work together to secure the health and safety of all our members and their families. We have an obligation to continue to work on every project possible and ask that employees continue to work these jobs, unless the government issues a shelter in place order, which does not currently exist.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and mutual commitment to working together during these unsettled times.

Respectfully,



Tim Gauthier  
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Oregon-Columbia Chapter, NECA



Garth Bachman  
Business Manager  
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