



Founded 1889

United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the
Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada

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March 30, 2020

TO: All Local Union Business Managers

Re: Plumbing Services During COVID-19

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Plumbing service contractors are facing extraordinary safety concerns with drain cleaning due to the COVID-19 virus that is gripping the world. According to the CDC, COVID-19 can live in human fecal matter for a long period of time. Although all service technicians should always practice safe PPE standards, common sense tells us that we need to take extensive precautions now, more than ever, to protect ourselves from airborne and waterborne pathogens. Best practice guidelines are available on both the UA and MCAA websites. Please reach out to Cheryl Ambrose (CAmbrose@uanet.org), our Health, Safety and Environmental Administrator, to communicate any additional best practices or ideas you have for protecting worker health.

During these trying times our local governments are being called upon to protect the health and safety of their constituents. It is during these times that we as labor leaders must do our part to engage with our government leaders by offering assistance with labor shortages that may arise due to outbreaks of the virus at local infrastructure facilities. Water and sewage treatment plants are critical to the safety of our country. Contacting our local leaders personally may assist them with the already mounting task of planning and providing qualified manpower.

Another potential problem is the fact that many businesses are requiring their employees to stay home. This in effect could cause stagnation of the water systems and potentially result in the growth of legionella within the plumbing and mechanical systems in these unoccupied buildings.

As you know construction workers in American have been categorized as essential workers. Every end-user and building owner will need us to help as they begin re-occupying these facilities. These systems may need to be disinfected, flushed, and tested - at a minimum - allowing the UA craftsman to utilize his or her ASSE 12000 Infection Control Risk Assessment certification. (*ASSE International has made the ASSE 12000 series FREE while the pandemic is ongoing and this resource is available online at UA.org*)

The last thing we need in this country is a repeat of the Flint water crisis. Now is the time for us to use our incident response skills and maintain the systems we work in everyday!!





To ensure we are being proactive, we've put together a list of agencies that **are in every local union's jurisdiction**. We strongly suggest that you contact them directly and reassure them that we are available, along with our contractors, to help and assist them when needed. No matter what your political affiliation may be, this is no time to be playing politics. A quick phone call could pay dividends down the road and earn PLA's, appointments on committees or favorable licensing decisions. But the bottom line is, that it is just the right thing to do! Remind them that the UA partners with our contractors and that our contractors have the equipment and support structure within their companies to mobilize at a moment's notice.

List of Agencies

1. Water Treatment Plant – local water purveyor;
2. Sewage Treatment Plant – don't just call the big ones, the small plants may need our help the most;
3. Mayor, Governor, local municipalities – volunteer to be on think-tank committees
4. Hospitals, nursing homes – ask for the facility maintenance director
5. Elementary, Middle and High Schools, colleges and university facility directors;
6. Stationary Engineers Local Union
7. Custodian unions
8. BOMA
9. Real Estate Managers
10. Stadiums and convention centers
11. Real estate managers – (CB Richard-Ellis, Cushman and Wakefield)

Our ability to reach out and respond with the qualified manpower and contractor force is what sets us apart and what will help continue to keep our communities and facilities running and get those that need it back up and running when the time comes.

Please reach out to Director of Plumbing Services Tom Bigley (TomB@uanet.org) or International Representative Kurt Steenhoek (KSteenhoek@uanet.org) in the Plumbing Services Department if you have any questions at all.

Fraternally,

Mark McManus
General President

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cc: Tom Bigley, Director of Plumbing Services
Kurt Steenhoek, International Representative, Plumbing Services
Cheryl Ambrose, Health, Safety and Environmental Administrator