

MESSAGE FROM APWU NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

Union Family,

The Postal Service has significantly changed their COVID-19 policies. Let me be clear that the APWU is not in agreement with all these changes. Unfortunately, the CDC significantly weakened their guidance on COVID-19 which the USPS is citing as reason for these changes. So here are things to note:

1. The Postal Service is no longer asking people to quarantine—rather if an employee is exposed the Postal Service is telling them to wear a high-quality mask for 10 days and get tested on day 5 after exposure.
2. However, the Postal Service **still recommends isolation (don't go to work) when you are sick and suspect you have COVID-19** and to follow the CDC isolation guidelines if you have not been tested. (See slide 2 of brief presentation)
3. If you do test positive, employees stay home for at least 5 days and once you leave home wear a mask through day 10. (see slide 2 of brief presentation).
4. The “Decision Tree” no longer grants administrative leave under any circumstances. The Postal Service says employees are to use Annual, Sick, or LWOP for their absences.
5. Close contact tracing is no longer done by the Postal Nurses but returned to local health departments to conduct. I believe they did this so that it is an outside agency or medical provider who is telling the employee to stay off work instead of the Postal Service.
6. **Remember, employees who are contract COVID-19 can still qualify for OWCP and Continuation of Pay (COP). The eligibility to apply under the loosened standards lasts currently through January 27, 2023. However, the APWU Legislative Department is working hard to have Congress extend this date.** You can learn more here: [How to File an OWCP Claim When Diagnosed with COVID-19 | American Postal Workers Union \(apwu.org\)](https://www.apwu.org/owcp-claim) or contact the Human Relations Department with your OWCP questions.

I know the Postal Service will probably still attempt to discipline folks for missing work for COVID-19. Grievances will need to be filed, but I suggest placing the power point presentation in all grievances where it shows the Postal Service wants employees to stay home.

We believe all this to be short-sighted by the Postal Service as we are seeing both upticks in COVID cases and an early arrival of an intense Flu season. As we have always said and will continue to say, the APWU recommends that all employees continue to practice things that help slow the spread: Social Distance, wash your hands, wear a mask, and if medically able, get your COVID-19 vaccines and Flu vaccines as well. COVID is not over and the APWU is still losing members to this horrible disease.