




Amalgamated Transit Union

10000 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20903-1706
(301) 431-7100 Fax (301) 431-7117

Office of the International President

MEMORANDUM

TO: ATU Local Union Presidents and Financial-Secretaries

FROM: John A. Costa, International President 

DATE: August 3, 2021

RE: COVID-19 Delta Variant and Vaccines

COVID-19 infections and deaths are growing at a troubling rate as the Delta variant spreads. **In response, some employers have started to require employees to be vaccinated in order to continue working.** We have concerns that in the next few months, many of our employers may develop vaccination policies that are needlessly heavy-handed and self-defeating or use higher vaccination rates as an excuse to roll back other safety and health precautions which are still necessary to protect our members and the public. We need to take action now to ensure that vaccination policies on our properties are effective and fair. For that reason, **my office recommends that ATU local unions meet with their agencies and employers as soon as possible to bargain over vaccination policies.**

The COVID-19 vaccines currently in use in the United States and Canada have proven to be safe and effective in preventing the spread of the disease, severe illness and fatalities, even among those who are infected with the Delta variant. And mass vaccination is our best protection against the tragic loss of life caused by this pandemic, and the only feasible method to return our communities and the transit industry to normalcy. However, many of our employers have failed to adequately encourage vaccination through policies that make vaccines free and convenient.

In order to ensure maximum participation, vaccination policies should offer members free vaccines while in a paid status at times and places that are convenient, follow-up when second doses are required, qualified personnel to administer vaccines, education on contraindications, leave for those employees who suffer the initial, short-term side effects which can sometimes accompany vaccinations, and the continuation of other vital safety or health precautions.

In order to assist local unions to bargain over and discuss these issues, I am enclosing a draft Memorandum of Understanding on COVID-19 Vaccinations which I first sent to local unions on January 5, 2021.

If you have an inquiry about a COVID-19 issue or would like assistance from the International Union, please contact my office at *officeofthepresident@atu.org*.

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Enclosure

c: Javier Perez Jr., International Executive Vice President, ATU
Kenneth R. Kirk, International Secretary-Treasurer, ATU
International Vice Presidents, ATU
John DiNino, President, ATU Canada
International Representatives, ATU
(above via email)