



# INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL 230

February 8, 2021

Honourable John Horgan,  
Office of the Premier  
PO BOX 9041 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 9E1, Canada

## **RE: COVID-19 Immunization Plan Phase Adjustments**

Dear Premier Horgan,

The IBEW Local 230 supports the government's efforts in slowing and stopping the spread of COVID-19. The Union believes a plan is necessary and supports an Immunization Plan for the province. We agree that the most vulnerable populations should be given priority and vaccinated first as set out in Phases 1 and 2. However, we too share a similar disappointment as the BC Dental Association regarding workers in essential services.

While our most at-risk residents become vaccinated in the coming months and delivery shipments continue to be delayed, it is no surprise that the vaccine rollout will be pushed back into late 2021. We strongly feel that Phase 3 and 4 of the Immunization Plan currently overlooks consequences of not vaccinating essential workers first. The latter phases should prioritize people according to occupation, as much of the general population does not put the greater community at risk each day. This plan does not consider the risk essential workers present to their communities, which is not dependent on age. For example, restaurant staff, delivery workers, bus and taxi drivers, teachers, and of course construction workers all have the potential to infect hundreds of people.

Many people are fortunate enough to be working from home, but for some workers, it is inevitable that they will encounter others. Construction work is one of these occupations that will almost always require a crew. We have densely populated worksites that are very important to BC's economy such as public and private shipyards, LNG, and infrastructure projects in general.



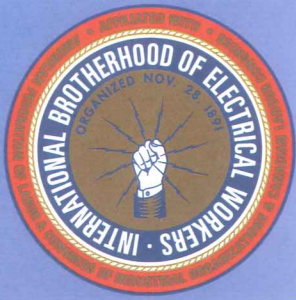
*Established in Victoria in 1902*

*Room 103-2823 Jacklin Road Victoria, BC. V9B 3Y1  
Victoria - Telephone 250-388-7374 \* Fax 250-388-6313*

*Email: [phil@ibew230.org](mailto:phil@ibew230.org)*

*[www.ibew230.org](http://www.ibew230.org)*





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The immunization plan must be categorized by risk of occupation once the most vulnerable peoples are vaccinated. This becomes increasingly important as we deal with vaccine shipment delays and more transmissible virus variants. We now have announced delays to Canada from Pfizer-BioNtech and Moderna. In addition, the UK and South African variants are spreading easier and faster. We urge you to reconsider and give priority to those who have the potential to become super spreaders in our communities and to push the “general population” into Phase 4, putting all essential workers in Phase 3.

Given that construction is considered an essential service and our workers have the potential to infect others widely, we should be put in a distinguished category along with other essential workers. This would include all occupations that require workers to leave the home and deal with the public or large crews. To illustrate, we believe that a 25-year-old electrician working in Kitimat poses a greater risk to multiple communities (as they would work a certain amount of time at camp and then return to their home community) than a 50-year-old salesperson working via zoom.

We appreciate the government’s efforts and commend the great work done thus far. This past year has pulled at the very social fabric of our province and country. Our members are humbled and immensely grateful for the leadership you and your team have shown during this crisis. Thank you for your time and if you have any questions or concerns regarding this correspondence, please do not hesitate to contact me in our Victoria business office.

Yours sincerely,

Philip M. Venoit  
Business Manager  
Financial Secretary

Cc: Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer  
The Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health  
Dr. Penny Ballem, Vancouver Coastal Health Chair  
Al Phillips, President of BC Building Trades



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Victoria - Telephone 250-388-7374 \* Fax 250-388-6313  
Email: [phil@ibew230.org](mailto:phil@ibew230.org)

[www.ibew230.org](http://www.ibew230.org)

