

August 12, 2020

Emailed

Darrell Jones
President
Save-On-Foods Limited Partnership (Corporate)

Dear Darrell,

Re: Wearing of Masks

Frontline workers in grocery stores—your employees and our members—are directly impacted by the recent increase of COVID-19 cases in British Columbia and are very concerned about their health and safety, as are we.

Across North America we have seen many retail employers start to make mask wearing mandatory for staff; however, the directive needs to go further and more steps must be taken to help protect workers in stores, as well as the public. This is why we are calling on you to implement a policy to make mask-wearing mandatory for customers and all people entering your stores, effective immediately.

Many municipalities across Canada have made mask wearing mandatory in public indoor spaces, including retail locations. Making mask-wearing mandatory for shoppers in your stores is a responsible decision that helps protect everyone. This is why our union has also entered in discussions with government about the importance of making mask wearing in public spaces a government directive.

Wearing a mask is a simple measure to minimize the risk and spread of COVID-19; however this safety measure must be implemented in addition to other protocols, including: installing plexiglass barriers where maintaining a distance of 2 meters is not possible, monitoring crowding in stores, providing sanitation stations, adding markers to direct physical distancing and limiting the number of people shopping together.

We are deeply concerned about the inconsistency we have seen in the application of protocols listed above in some stores. Recent data shows new COVID-19 cases in Canada have largely been linked to exposures in public places, with more than half of recent infections involving food sales, largely in grocery stores. It is clear that the pandemic is not over. Grocery employers need to continue to step up their efforts to keep workers and the public protected as we continue to be in this public health crisis.

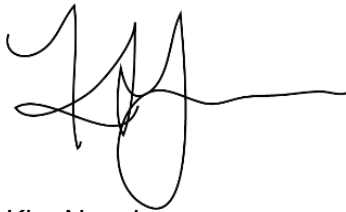
In addition to implementing the health and safety protocols listed above, we invite you to continue discussions with us to establish:

- Paid sick days for any worker who does not currently qualify – *no worker should have to choose between being paid, or coming to work sick and potentially spreading the virus*

- *Pandemic Pay – front line workers in your stores continue to provide the public with the supplies, medication, and support they need through COVID-19. We also see that grocery sales continue to remain steady, and significantly increased over what they were in 2019.*
- *Zero Tolerance of Abuse on Workers – an absolutely ZERO tolerance policy of abuse of ANY kind against any employee.*

I strongly urge you to implement these measures to keep your employees and all British Columbians safe and contribute to slowing down the second wave of COVID-19 in the province.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kim Novak', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kim Novak
President, UFCW 1518