

COVID-19: What to believe?

For many of our members this is a stressful time, and we are all being inundated with daily updates about the virus, some of which seems contradictory. To clarify some of the misconceptions, we are asking members to be aware of the following;

- Given that this is a novel virus, there are things that are not yet fully known. Research is ongoing and, as such, new information is continuously becoming available and being shared with the public.
- If you hear new information coming out, consider it an update
- It is very likely that new information will be released on a daily basis. Abide by new recommendations coming out from Health Canada and local public health agencies
- Trust information coming from public health agencies, Health Canada and other official government health agencies, provincial and federal
- Since there are guidelines for the general public and for workers working on the frontlines, there are likely overlaps, with additional measures for frontline workers, such as healthcare workers and airport workers

The IAM is advocating for and asking employers to abide by the **Precautionary Principle**, which, in unknown circumstances, provides the highest level of protection for workers and the public.

The precautionary principle requires employers to develop policies that err on the side of caution. The precautionary principle is the foundation for policy when it has to deal with weakly-understood causes of potential catastrophic or irreversible events, and where protective decisions require certain and costly policy interventions that may not solve the problem that they are designed to correct. As such, this principle provides a rationale and legal basis for actions taken, even when scientific information is incomplete or unavailable.

Employer policies are part of social policies that help protect IAM members, but the public as well.

Please stay informed. Know your sources of information. If uncertain, ask questions.

Ivana Saula

IAM Canadian Director of Research