

ORGANISE TO FIGHT CORONAVIRUS NOW!

Don't let the bosses put the lives of workers and our communities in danger!

By 18 March 2020 the coronavirus or COVID-19 had infected more than 200,000 people in the world in just 3 months. The virus has already killed at least 7,807 in countries like Germany, England, America, Italy, and China and in the Middle East. The coronavirus has reached South Africa, and is expected to spread throughout the country in the next few weeks. The effects of the virus in South Africa could be much worse because people live and travel close together, many communities do not have running water and there is less access to healthcare.

The government has stopped international travel and closed schools. But shops, gyms, warehouses and factories are still open. This means workers are still being forced to go to work! The bosses want to keep production going so that they can continue to make money! This virus is highly contagious and can be deadly for people older than 60 and people with pre-existing health conditions. **The bosses are putting people in our communities at risk.**

If your boss instructs a worker to go home or if he closes the workplace to avoid spreading the disease, workers must still be paid and must not lose any of their annual or sick leave. These workers will be on 'special leave' according to the Department of Labour's new guidelines on the Coronavirus.

We know most bosses want production to continue even if it means that people die. So, what can workers do?

Practical steps for workers to fight COVID-19

Workers should form a **COVID-19 Crisis Committee (CCC)** in each workplace or even in each department. Each member of the committee must represent smaller groups of workers in the workplace. These committees should meet with management at the beginning and end of each shift, starting today! These committees should consider the following options to help fight the spread of the disease:

1. If your company produces luxury goods that don't help combat the virus, demand that your company shut down and continue to pay its workers.
2. If your company can produce important products to combat Coronavirus, demand that your bosses stop producing unnecessary items and focus on producing only essential products.
3. If production continues at your workplace, demand that your employer follows strict health and safety standards and provide free testing for workers regularly.

Read the next page for more details about these three options!

1 Stop all unnecessary production, with guaranteed pay for workers!

- If your company produces only luxury goods then it cannot help fight the virus.
- By forcing you to work, your boss is putting you and people in your communities' lives in danger.
- Demand that your boss shut down the factory and guarantee in writing that workers will continue to be paid.

2 Force your boss to only produce items that can help fight Coronavirus!

If your company can produce important products to combat Coronavirus, demand that your bosses stop producing unnecessary items. Here are some ideas for companies in the following industries:

- **Chemical:** Produce only hand sanitiser, soap, detergent, medicine – Not perfume!
- **Food processing:** Produce only affordable nutritious food – Not sweets or cakes!
- **Public sector/EPWP:** Clean public places – especially taxi ranks, train stations, and other high-density areas – Not the suburbs!
- **Logistics:** Transport food and medical supplies to townships – Not luxury items!
- **Textile:** Produce face masks and other safety items such as PPE gear – Not Gucci!

3 Force your boss to obey health and safety standards!

Section 8.1 of The Occupational Health and Safety Act says "every employer shall provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment which is safe and without risk to the health of his employees". Coronavirus is a serious risk to your health – in fact, it can be deadly for the elderly and for people with pre-existing health issues. If your employer does not follow the guidelines below, tell them they are breaking the law!

- Provide paid leave to elderly workers (over 60) and workers with existing health problems.
- Provide free transport for workers to and from their homes, so that workers do not have to use public transport!
- Provide workers with new disposable masks every day.
- Provide hand sanitiser and surgical gloves.
- Set up hand-wash stations throughout the workplace.
- Provide workers with disposable wipes and cleaning detergent to clean workstations regularly.
- Sanitise the workplace regularly.
- Employ a healthcare professional in every workplace and conduct regular tests for COVID-19, especially if workers are showing symptoms of the disease.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Call CWAO: 082 812 1934 or 076 551 7112

Email: info@cwao.org.za



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