

IBEW LOCAL 1007



NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

APRIL 28, 2020

Greetings:

The National Day of Mourning, held annually on April 28th, was officially recognized by the federal government in 1991, eight years after the day of remembrance was launched by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and has since spread to at least 80 countries around the world. This day is a tribute to those men and women who have died as a result of a workplace illness or accident.

The IBEW was originally formed by workers who wanted to improve safety in their workplace. Our union was formed on the need for safety at a time when 1 in 2 electrical workers were being killed on the job every day; even our own founding President Henry Miller died from a workplace incident. Today, safety continues to be a main focus of our Local Unions mandate; safety is paramount to the IBEW!

With respect to this year's National Day of Mourning, the theme on April 28th is **“Stop the Pandemic at Work”**. Right now, millions of workers who have been deemed essential are risking their wellbeing every day and are working tirelessly to keep our country running during this unprecedented time. Many of our IBEW members fall into this category and continue to provide critical services which include healthcare, utilities, telecommunications, railroads, government and construction, just to name a few. We must ensure that front-line workers have the protective equipment they need, and the training to use it safely. We must also ensure that those who have not been deemed essential stay home and adhere to physical distancing regulations. By doing this we reduce the transmission of this virus and help keep essential workers safe.

No worker should die from their job; workers deserve to arrive home safely at the end of their workday but too many workers are dying from work. Workplace accidents and illnesses are preventable and should never be seen as “just part of the job”. Workers need to be reminded that they have the right to know about the hazards in their workplace and receive the training they need to be able to do their jobs safely. They have the right to participate in decisions that could affect their health and safety and most importantly they have the right to refuse work that could endanger their health and safety or that of others.

April 28th is the day we remember those whose lives were lost and those whose lives were forever changed because of something that happened in their workplace. It is also the day when we resolve to make every workplace a safe and healthy place to earn a living.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the way we live and work and therefore will change the way we hold vigils and ceremonies this year. On Tuesday, April 28th, 2020, we ask that you mark the day by lighting a candle in your home and posting a photo to social media with hashtag #WorkersDayofMourning and #StopthePandemicAtWork. Frontline workers are also encouraged to share a photo in your uniform or protective apparel using the same hashtags. While we can't meet in person, we can hold virtual memorials and share a moment of silence over video or teleconference. We must continue to bring visibility to the importance of commemorating the National Day of Mourning. We must insist that all levels of government do more to enforce existing health and safety laws and vigorously prosecute violations when a worker is killed or seriously injured.

We owe it to the families who have lost their loved ones to preventable workplace accidents and illnesses to do better for today's workers. Everyone deserves to return home to their loved ones at the end of the day.

In solidarity,

Tom Reid
International Vice President

