



## American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

July 26, 2021

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Dear Union Family,

We hope this message finds you well and healthy as postal workers continue to face the challenges and stress of frontline essential workers during this tragic and deadly pandemic.

The Postal Service unilaterally changed the COVID face covering policy on July 16, 2021. The APWU leadership, including the National Executive Board, was not in agreement with this policy change. The APWU believes that a face mask requirement is still necessary as it is too early to relax the policy and the vaccination rate among residents of the United States is not at levels needed to stop mask wearing. Unfortunately, our concerns are proving to be true.

The *Delta Variant* of COVID-19 is extremely contagious and dangerous, especially amongst the unvaccinated. The *Delta Variant* causes 83% of all COVID-19 cases.<sup>1</sup> Today, it is being reported that the rolling 14-day average of new cases has increased by 170% since just last week.<sup>2</sup> Of the current cases, multiple media outlets are reporting staggering statistics. Deaths due to COVID-19 have surged by 48% over the past week as well.<sup>3</sup> Of all COVID-19 related deaths, unvaccinated people account for 99.5% of them and the unvaccinated also make up 97% of all COVID-19 related hospitalizations.<sup>4</sup> Quarantines in the USPS have increased by 29.5% in the last month.

The scientific data shows us that four things substantially reduce the spread of COVID-19 and prevent one from contracting this disease: wearing a face covering, social distancing, regular hand washing, and getting one of the COVID-19 vaccinations.

Based on this, the APWU is encouraging all Postal Employees to continue practicing the things that can protect one from contracting and spreading this disease. Wash your hands regularly, continue to social distance whenever

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<sup>1</sup> [Delta variant now accounts for 83 percent of new Covid cases \(nbcnews.com\)](https://www.nbcnews.com/health/COVID-19/delta-variant-now-accounts-for-83-percent-of-new-covid-cases-nbcnews.com); [Delta variant: Is it serious? Is it more contagious? - Deseret News](https://www.deseretnews.com/story/4300000/delta-variant-is-it-serious-is-it-more-contagious)

<sup>2</sup> [Covid in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case Count - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/26/us/covid-map-count/)

<sup>3</sup> [As delta variant spreads, CDC is pressured to revise mask guidance \(bangordailynews.com\)](https://www.bangordailynews.com/2021/07/26/as-delta-variant-spreads-cdc-is-pressured-to-revise-mask-guidance/)

<sup>4</sup> [As delta variant spreads, CDC is pressured to revise mask guidance \(bangordailynews.com\); COVID-19 cases spike nationwide as Delta variant spreads \(nypost.com\)](https://www.nypost.com/2021/07/26/as-delta-variant-spreads-cdc-is-pressured-to-revise-mask-guidance-covid-19-cases-spike-nationwide-as-delta-variant-spreads/)


possible, and *wear a face covering. The APWU will continue to encourage face covering wearing in all facilities where Postal Employees work.* This is not the time to relax and become complacent.

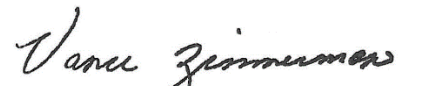
While the APWU has insured that the USPS does not institute a mandatory vaccine policy, we do encourage all eligible people to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. The science and statistics show that people who are vaccinated have a much lower risk of contracting the disease, spreading the disease, being hospitalized or dying from COVID-19. While vaccinated people can still contract COVID-19 in limited circumstances (known as “breakthrough” cases), the number of these cases are significantly less, the course of the disease is much milder, and the death rate amongst the vaccinated is extremely low.

The COVID-19 pandemic is far from over. While all of us are suffering from some level of “COVID Fatigue” now is not the time to relax the precautions one can take to prevent contracting and spreading COVID-19.

The APWU’s first priority is your health and safety. The APWU will always demand that the Postal Service provide a safe and healthy work environment and encourage employees to do what is necessary to help keep themselves safe and healthy.

In Solidarity,

  
Mark Dimondstein  
President

  
Vance Zimmerman  
Director, Industrial Relations

Current Postal Service COVID-19 Trend:

