



COVID-19 UPDATES

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Over the weekend, I watched lots of news. Some of it was heart wrenching. Everyone across the world is making tough decisions and making personal sacrifices for the greater good. It is hard to imagine what our healthcare providers are going through, putting their health and the health of their families at risk to make sure as many people as possible return to health. The stories coming out of New York and throughout the western world are troubling, to say the least. I'm sure most of you have been struck by the stories of others. Some of you may have friends or family who has the virus. It is an emotional and worrisome time for all of us.

But it is always during our most difficult times that people come together. I also talked last weekend with many of my colleagues across the country who are working hard to provide essential public transit services in one of the most challenging environments we have ever faced. As we shared our approaches to this crisis, I was once again reassured and encouraged that MTS has a solid plan to keep our people and system strong throughout the challenge and beyond. I believe that the level of cooperation between all employees at MTS cannot be matched by any other major system in the country. Because of that cooperation, we have an operating plan and a sick leave benefits package that will go a long way toward eliminating your worries about job security today and well into the future.

Here's what we're doing:

I've attached our official Emergency Leave Policy from our Human Resources department. Please read it over and ask questions. Beyond the bottom line of the policy is my word that MTS will use every resource possible to pay and/or reimburse PTO if an employee gets sick with COVID-19. While nothing is a guarantee, I believe there will be federal resources available. My bottom line is that I don't want anyone to worry about their paychecks.

We have also developed an operational plan that allows EVERYONE to keep their job. We're cutting bus service by 25%, but we are keeping every bus operator at work by creating new packages that guarantee 32 hours of work and 8 hours of contingency work. All operators will get paid at least 40 hours per week. This avoids between 90 and 100 layoffs. With about 100 drivers on the extra board, we will also have an insurance plan if absenteeism increases. The new schedule goes into effect on April 12. Rider communications will start going out next week.

We are also going to institute rear-door boarding to further enhance the safety of our drivers. We won't accept cash but are still encouraging people to buy a fare. We don't want to diminish space for social distancing by encouraging more riders with a no-fare policy.

Thank you all – whether you're on the front line with our riders, or you are performing an essential administrative function. Let's all remember social distancing, to wash our hands and to stay home if

we feel sick. Our teamwork at and away from work is essential to getting the world back to normal as soon as possible.

cc: Post on all Agency Bulletin Boards
Post on all COVID-19 web pages
Text link to all employees