

# Machinists Union Demands CDC Protect Transportation Workers



April 10, 2020

The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) today called on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to increase access to novel coronavirus testing for the nation's air, rail and transit workers.

"While transportation workers have answered the call in the most patriotic and caring ways possible, they are also contracting the novel coronavirus at alarming rates," said IAM General Vice President Sito Pantoja, IAM District 19 President Mike Perry, IAM District 141 President Mike Klemm and IAM District 142 President Dave Supplee in a letter to the Director of the CDC, Robert Redfield MD. "Sadly, some of these brave workers have died, others are currently fighting for their lives."

The IAM Transportation Department leadership demanded that the CDC prioritize coronavirus testing for transportation workers who cannot be tested for the novel coronavirus unless they are symptomatic.

"The CDC has warned that 25 percent of individuals who have contracted the novel coronavirus are asymptomatic," continued Pantoja, Perry, Klemm and Supplee. "Under current federal testing guidelines, airline and rail workers cannot be tested for COVID-19 unless they are symptomatic. This creates a very dangerous situation for essential workers who must report to work, especially when that work requires interaction with the traveling public. Even with vigilant social distancing and appropriate PPE at the workplace, which is lacking across the country, having workers who have contracted the novel coronavirus and are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic places them, their families, co-workers and the traveling public at risk."

To date, the United States has completed coronavirus testing for less than one percent of the US population.

"The CDC must act to protect the essential workers that are saving lives," continued the union's leadership. "IAM members, and all transportation workers, are ensuring that critical medical supplies, essential consumer goods, US mail, and other essential workers and first responders are transported to where they are needed most. It's time the US government does all it can to protect them."

[Read the entire letter here.](#)

