



Transportation Communications Union/IAM

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



God Bless America

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Social Services Department

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April 1, 2020

TO ALL NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES
ALL ASSISTANT NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES
ALL LOCAL LODGE OFFICERS

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

Based on today's environment surrounding the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, issues are arising where railroad employees are being encouraged or requested to "voluntarily quarantine," and/or "self-furlough." Members need to understand the implications of doing so and the impact on their Railroad Retirement benefits and medical coverage.

The U. S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has developed a set of Questions and Answers that address several situations pertaining to employees who self-quarantine, take voluntarily furlough, employer mandated quarantines, and other situations.

Additionally, the RRB announced what impact the recent passage of the Coronavirus Aide, Relief and Economics Security (CARES) Act will have on unemployment and/or sickness benefits.

First, it is important that members be prepared in the event they may fall into the unfortunate situation of being furloughed or become sick or ordered to be quarantined. Members should register on the Railroad Retirement Board's online portal, <https://www.rrb.gov/Benefits/myRRB>. Immediate website access is available after responding to some personal questions. The system no longer requires a Pin be mailed to the registrant.

The attached RRB release outlines the impact of the CARES Act on benefits:

- The Act provides for the waiver of the 7-day waiting period for the initial registration period for sickness and unemployment claims
- The Act provides for enhanced unemployment benefits under the RUIA
- The Act provides additional unemployment benefits of \$1200/2 weeks
 - This amount is in addition to the regular benefits of \$733.98 bi-weekly payment
- The Act provides for extended unemployment benefits under the RUIA
 - Additional unemployment benefits up to an additional 130 days of unemployment benefits.

Further details can be found on the attached release.

Additionally, attached is a set of RRB Questions and Answers addressing situations involving employer mandated quarantines; employees who volunteer to be furloughed, employees who voluntarily self-quarantine and the impact of sickness and/or unemployment benefits.

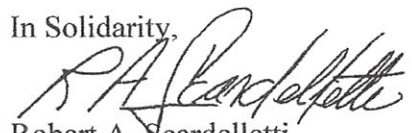
As shown in the attached, employees who self-furlough or volunteer furlough will not be entitled to unemployment benefits from the Railroad Retirement Board as they are not available and ready for work. Therefore, employees should not be encouraged to self-furlough or volunteer to be furloughed; otherwise, they will lose their unemployment benefits and also could jeopardize their medical benefits. Any voluntary (self) furlough scenario will require approval by the National union.

Until further notice, all RRB local offices are closed to the public but Board staff continues to work and answer calls. Additionally, the RRB anticipates no delays in payments for those currently on disability or retirement benefits.

It is imperative that you review these provisions and advise your members that they could lose benefits depending on the situation under which they stop working.

Should you have any questions, please contact the TCU Social Services Department at 301-840-8746.

In Solidarity,



Robert A. Scardelletti
National President

Attachments

cc: Executive Council
Carmen Division Officers
Department Directors