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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

April 8, 2020

**UFCW Calls on CDC to Issue Mandatory Guidance for Frontline Workers During Coronavirus Outbreak**

*America’s Largest Food and Retail Union Sends Letter to CDC Director Redfield Calling for Additional Protections for Grocery Stores, Pharmacies, and Food Processing Facilities*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, the [**United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)**](http://www.ufcw.org/about), which represents 1.3 million workers in food and retail, sent a [letter](http://www.ufcw.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/61/files/2020/04/AMP-Letter-to-CDC-.pdf) calling on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to immediately issue mandatory guidance for grocery stores, pharmacies and food processing facilities to ensure that America’s frontline workers and our country’s food supply and prescription drugs remain safe.

**UFCW International President Marc Perrone** released the following statement:

“American workers in grocery stores, pharmacies, and food production are on the frontlines of the coronavirus outbreak to make sure families have the food and medicine they need. Every day, these brave workers are in close contact with sometimes thousands of customers, increasing their own risk of becoming infected with the virus.

“With the growing threat of the coronavirus, we are urging the CDC to issue new mandatory guidance that standardizes safety protocols for grocery stores, pharmacies, food processing and meatpacking facilities. Given the nature of the threat, the CDC must also provide new guidelines for physical distancing, enhanced cleaning, disinfecting and hygiene practices, personal protective equipment (PPE), and best practices for customers.

“It is absolutely critical that the CDC do more to help protect frontline workers who are at daily risk of  becoming infected and even dying from the Coronavirus. This is about not just saving the lives of these workers, but also about protecting the customers they serve. It is about protecting and maintaining the safety of our food supply. Keeping these workers safe will help keep America safe. The CDC must act now to issue strong new safety guidance. American lives are on the line. These workers' lives are on the line. We cannot wait any longer.”

**Background**:

Today, the [UFCW sent a letter](http://www.ufcw.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/61/files/2020/04/AMP-Letter-to-CDC-.pdf) calling for the CDC to issue mandatory guidance specifically for grocery stores, pharmacies and food processing facilities, during the COVID-19 outbreak.

In the letter, UFCW called on the CDC to issue detailed guidance on the following in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among workers and customers and to keep food supply and prescription drugs safe:

**Grocery Stores and Pharmacies**

* 1. **In-Store Social Distancing:**
     + Limit the number of consumers in a store at any given time to 20 to 30 percent of the store’s capacity.
     + Implement procedures to ensure that both employees and customers always remain at least six feet apart.
     + Procedures should include a marked “social distancing line” which begins six feet away from all checkout counters.

**2. Improve Disinfecting, Sanitizing & Hygiene Practices:**

* + - Employees must be provided with sufficient break times to wash their hands as necessary or, at a minimum, every 30 minutes.
    - Sanitize frequent touchpoints, including point of sale terminals at registers throughout the day.
    - Provide disinfecting wipes for customers to disinfect carts, as well as at cash registers.
    - Designate employee(s) to ensure cleaning guidelines set by the CDC are followed.
    - Provide set time to allow for stores to be properly sanitized and re-stocked.

**3. Mandate Wearing of Personal Protective Equipment:**

* + - Mandate that all workers wear masks, gloves, and any other personal protective equipment (PPE) available at the workplace.
    - Mandate all employers to provide N95 masks, gloves, and other PPE when it becomes available.

**4. Urge Americans to Help Save Lives by Shopping Smart**

* + - Call on all Americans to practice the following each time they visit a grocery store or pharmacy:
      * Always wear a [cloth face cover](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html), ideally a mask, when inside the store.
      * Limit number of shoppers to one per family
      * Practice social distancing throughout the store – not just at check-out stands.
      * Properly discard their own PPE in trash cans.
      * Respect special shopping times for seniors.

**Food Processing and Packing Plants**

* 1. Improve Safety Conditions:
     + Mandate that all employers provide PPE, and that workers wear PPE during the workday.
     + Ensure social distancing practices are implemented across the workplace at all times where possible.
     + When social distancing is not possible, PPE must be provided and used by all employees. No exceptions.
     + Make sure that safety practices are clearly posted throughout facility and are in the necessary languages for employees to read.
     + Provide PPEs for workers, including face masks.

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*The*[***UFCW***](http://www.ufcw.org/)*is the largest private sector union in the United States, representing 1.3 million professionals and their families in grocery stores, meatpacking, food processing, retail shops and other industries.*

*Our members help put food on our nation’s tables and serve customers in all 50 states, Canada and Puerto Rico. Learn more about the UFCW at*[***www.ufcw.org***](http://www.ufcw.org/)