

**FYI – as discussed on the Local Union Conference Calls, the email below went to the following employers today:**

**W. Rodney McMullen, CEO, Kroger**

**Vivek Sankaran, CEO, Albertsons**

**Gordon Reid, CEO, Stop and Shop**

On behalf of the 1.3 million members of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) and an international team of medical and scientific experts, we urge you to partner with us and require masks for all retail food customers, vendors, and grocery store workers in the United States.

The science is clear.  People with COVID-19 are most infectious in the early part of the malady.  During that time, many people experience no or few symptoms.  Infected individuals are, thus, shopping in stores, going to work and spreading the virus without ever even knowing it.  As a result, workers in grocery stores are at a very high risk of contracting this dangerous illness.

Our team of scientists and medical experts are willing to brief you on why it is essential to change policies immediately to stop the spread of COVID-19.  The medical team is widely respected in their fields of expertise.  Jeremy Howard is a distinguished research scientist at the University of San Francisco, founding researcher at fast.ai and a member of the World Economic Forum's Global AI Council.  Dr. Anne W. Rimoin is a Professor of Epidemiology at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health and Infectious Disease Division of the Geffen School of Medicine.  She is the Director of the Center for Global and Immigrant Health and is an internationally recognized expert on emerging infections and global health.

As you know, UFCW represents hundreds of thousands of workers in the retail food industry and food processing industry.  Our members have been on the front lines working every day to help put food on the table for families across the country.  Since this pandemic began, thousands of our members have become ill from COVID-19, and some have even been hospitalized and died.  We hope you share our concern for the health and safety of your employees, your customers and our food supply and will act to protect them.

Here are the facts: the virus is largely spread by larger droplets emitted when people talk and breathe.  These droplets can be stopped (90%+) at the source by a simple cloth mask.  In about 0.1 seconds after these larger droplets are emitted, much of it evaporates, leaving much smaller particles that will float in the air for a longer time.  Non-medical grade masks that workers have access to are unlikely to adequately protect them if used only sporadically.  Medical grade masks are in short supply and priority access is given to hospitals and first responders.  Safety will increase dramatically if customers and workers all wear masks, even if they are not medical grade.

We urge you to take immediate action to require masks for everyone in your grocery stores in the United States.  Our medical team is available to brief you on the science and public health implications at any time. We believe such action is not just in the interests of our members and the health and safety of the general public, but it is ultimately good for business as well.  Customers, like workers, want to know the grocery stores they shop in are taking all necessary steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We must work together to save lives.

A. Marc Perrone

UFCW International President

Jeremy Howard

Distinguished research scientist at the University of San Francisco, co-founder of fast.ai, member of World Economic Forum Global AI Council

Anne W. Rimoin

Professor, Department of Epidemiology; Director, UCLA Center for Global and Immigrant Health; Director, UCLA-DRC HealthResearch and Training Program

Zdimal Vladimir

Head of Department of Aerosols Chemistry and Physics; Institute of Chemical Process Fundamentals of the Czech Academy of Science

Lei-Han Tang

Professor, Hong Kong Baptist University, Beijing Computational Science Research Center, Council Chair, The Physical Society of Hong Kong

Christina Ramirez

Professor of Biostatistics, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health

Adriaan Bax

Member, National Academy of Sciences

Marc Suchard

Professor of Human Genetics, Biostatistics and Biomathematics,UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine

Zeynep Tufekci

Associate Professor, UNC School of Information and LibraryScience; Adjunct Professor, Department of Sociology; Writer: The Atlantic and NY Times

Shaheen Mahtar, (retired)

Professor at University of Stellenbosch, Chair of Infection Control Africa Network (ICAN)

Lex Fridman

Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics, MIT

Arne von Delft

University of Cape Town; Co-founder of TB Proof

Frederik Questier

Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Austin Huang

Warren Alpert Medical School, Brown University

Danny Hernandez

Measurement and forecasting researcher, OpenAI