

## COVID-19 Update from the BRS

Conditions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic are changing rapidly and the BRS continues to monitor the situation closely. “The primary concern with the COVID-19 pandemic is the health and safety of all our brothers and sisters and their families. There is nothing more important.” said BRS President Jerry Boles.

BRS echoes the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for companies, which advises several measures including encouraging sick employees to stay home, implementing flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices, providing appropriate hand cleaning and sanitizing equipment, and the performance of routine environmental cleaning on frequently touched surfaces.

In light of these above, BRS, along with other rail labor organizations, have called upon the Carriers to suspend all current attendance policies and any disciplinary action for an employee who stays home due to illness, as well as having the Carriers provide paid sick leave for any employee who stays home due to COVID-19. Further, BRS requests appropriate sanitation measures be put in place, including supplying employees with sufficient hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes.

BRS, in conjunction with rail labor, has called for available and accessible COVID-19 testing, coverage, and treatment for all employees, as well as disinfection of on-duty locations, including overnight lodging. Additionally, BRS is working with Congress to end the sequestration for Railroad Retirement unemployment and sickness benefits, as well as suspension of the seven-day waiting period. Furthermore, while the declaration of a national emergency limits our ability to negotiate, maintaining the current employment levels is a top priority, and we are using every means possible to protect our members.

BRS encourages all members to keep an eye on the situation and to actively communicate any problem or issue to their Local Chairman and/or General Chairman. The General Chairmen have been working closely with their jurisdictional Vice Presidents to mitigate any problems and issues as they come up. Your vigilance is paramount to BRS staying on top of rapidly changing conditions in the field and addressing safety issues and concerns.

During time of crisis, solidarity remains a key factor in overcoming the challenges faced, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no different. This is certainly an unprecedented situation; solidarity and unity have been the path we used to overcome past challenges and is what will get us through this one.