

From: Jake Metcalfe JakeM@afscmelocal52.org

Subject: Atwood building issues

Date: October 15, 2020 at 12:49 PM

To: Sheehan, Kate E (DOA) kate.sheehan@alaska.gov, Sutch, Nancy A (DOA) nancy.sutch@alaska.gov

Cc: Toya Winton ToyaW@afscmelocal52.org, Samantha Harris SamanthaH@afscmelocal52.org, Penner, Brian (DOA sponsored) bpenner@apea-aft.org, Jordan Adams jordan@local71.com



Hi Kate and Nancy:

As we discussed a couple days ago, ASEA members on the third floor of the Atwood building have been concerned about the beg bug issue on their floor since late September 2020. I explained to you that our members received inconsistent information early on and then learned early this week that in fact live bed bugs had been found in the same office on that floor. Nancy got back to me on this and explained that fumigation would take place ASAP. I appreciated the prompt attention given to this issue.

As you know, I contacted you yesterday because we heard from members on the 15th floor who had been instructed to evacuate the building. They were uncertain why, so I asked you to find out. Not long after my communication to you, I learned, and informed you, that members had been told that the Atwood HVAC system had been infested with bed bugs. At or near the same time, the media reported that there had been an outbreak of COVID cases among the Governor's staff.

Today, Toya and I have heard from additional members in the Atwood Building about the bed bug infestation and the COVID outbreak in the Governor's office. Members are upset about the lack of, and inconsistent, information they have on the subjects. Some members were told not to return to work until Tuesday because the building was going to be fumigated. Members learned today that the building is open and business is going on as usual.

In general, anyone paying attention knows that the COVID issue in Alaska is fast approaching out of control status. Rightfully so, our members and your employees are freaked out and concerned about infection. ASEA members near the Governor's office share this anxiety. Members there tell us they knew nothing about the infection in the Governor's Atwood office until they learned about it from the media. They still don't have information know about exposure or potential exposure to the virus. Obviously, they are stressed out, anxious and concerned about their health and the risk they face both about infection and infestation. The lack of information from management/leadership makes their stress and anxiety worse. ASEA's ask, in this crisis, is for SOA leadership to do a better job of communicating with all employees on these issues. Our members, non-members and all state employees deserve information and entitled to respect on these public health issues.

I'm not aware of any management/leadership communication with ASEA leadership, ASEA members, other bargaining units or non-union employees on these issues. If that happened, please share that communication with ASEA. If not, I can't stress how important it is from a public health and safety perspective that SOA leadership communicate with its bargaining unit leadership on these issues. Alaska is in the middle of a health crisis unlike any we have ever known. Employees need to know they are safe in the work place and need to have accurate information about what is going on in the work place immediately. That information needs to be communicated accurately, quickly, regularly and consistently with all employees

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We know and understand that everyone is busy dealing with multiple health and personnel issues. We know that issues can pop up fast and furious. However, in a crisis there needs to be a crisis communication system. That system must involve ASEA and other bargaining unit representatives, so we can help communications and educate our members on what is going on. This system should have been set up long ago, but it is still not too late.

One fact is certain, this crisis will get worse before it gets better. ASEA is willing to help improve communications, and is available to meet with your representatives. My guess is the other bargaining units are willing as well.

We must do a better job of informing each other and our members about safety issues, how they are being dealt with, and that all safety precautions are being taken to keep us all safe. This information relieves employee stress and makes for a more productive work force. When these issues happen, we should meet immediately and discuss how to deal with the issue and how to communicate on these issues with members.

Please let me know if you are interested in our offer to help you be more transparent. We look forward to discussing this and providing any help to make this happen.

Thank you for all you do and your prompt attention on this matter.

Sincerely,

Jake Metcalfe
Executive Director
ASEA Local 52

They want more information