

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS

Craft-Maintenance Division State of California Unit 12
Locals 3, 39 & 501, AFL-CIO

Caltrans Responds to Our Health and Safety Homeless Camp Cleanup Grievance with a Bogus Response - June 8, 2018

For those of you hardworking Unit 12 Caltrans workers, according to your management, nothing is wrong. You can cleanup homeless excrement, needles, syringes, used toilet paper and feminine hygiene products because it's part of your job.

In a six page response to our grievance, Caltrans claims that they have specific policies for employees engaged in illegal camp removal and that workers are given detailed instruction beyond the policy. It goes on to say that prior to the camp removal, only employees specifically trained to handle hazardous materials and use PPE's are authorized to enter the encampment to begin cleanup operations.

PPE's that Caltrans claims they make available to their employees for encampment cleanup are: Disposable Tyvek Coveralls, Rain Gear, Disposable Rubber Gloves, Puncture Resistant Gloves, Eye Protection (safety glasses/goggles/face shields), Hard Hats, Rubber Boots, Respirators, and First Aid Kits.

While some Districts have already begun the vaccination process, Caltrans is developing contracts in the remaining geographical districts to offer and provide hepatitis vaccinations to employees with potential exposure.

Specifically, here are Caltrans' responses to the remedy requested by the IUOE Unit 12:

1. We do not believe that the Department is required to establish special cleanup crews. We can use employees in the classifications we have.
2. Caltrans reserves the right to assign work to personnel based solely on our operational need.
3. The Districts are providing the employees with the appropriate PPE gear.
4. The Department has begun vaccinations for Hepatitis A throughout the state.
5. Employees assigned to cleanup crews are being provided guidance to complete the task efficiently and safely.
6. We believe the work assigned to BU 12 employees conforms to the applicable classification specifications as administered by CalHR, therefore, no special pay is warranted.
7. Based upon the investigation and evidence presented above, we (Caltrans) find no violation of Article 4.1 Health and Safety of the Unit 12 contract.

Caltrans workers, please let us know how you feel about Caltrans' response by emailing me at scrouch@local39.org. Pictures of cleanup sites are welcomed. **UNION STRONG!**

Steve Crouch
Director of Public Employees