

Thursday, 21 May 2020

## Poll shows less than 10% of workers have basic COVID protections at work

Polling conducted for the ACTU shows a staggering lack of basic preventative measures in Australian workplaces and highlights the need for immediate action to improve WHS standards.

Key findings from the poll:

Asked if their employer had implemented basic preventative measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19;

- 11% of those currently in the workplace and 4% of those working from home said they had additional hygiene measures like hand sanitiser or access to soap and water
- 4% of those in the workplace said there was additional cleaning or disinfection occurring
- 9% of those still in their workplace and 8% of those working from home said there was a plan in place in case they or a co-worker developed symptoms or tested positive
- 1% had access to additional paid pandemic leave
- 0% of those still in their workplace said their employer had made any effort to support their mental health

Social distancing, the highest-profile preventive measure, which states, territories and the federal government have been mandating for months, is only in place for 70% of people still in their workplace, and 59% of those working from home.

The polling shows workers on lower incomes are more likely to say they would go to work even if they were sick. Universal paid pandemic leave would allow all working people to take time off when they need to in order to protect themselves and the community.

This data shows there is an overwhelming majority of Australians without the basic protections we know will help prevent the spread of the virus.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“More needs to be done to keep workers safe. We are more than two months into the lockdown period and almost 90% of working people say their workplaces don’t have hand sanitiser.

“Pandemic leave, or some form of additional paid leave is necessary to ensure that people can get tested or self-isolate, but has been provided to 1% of working people.

“This polling shows how much work is left to be done before the economy can be safely re-opened. The union movement is launching a campaign to make workplaces as safe as possible, but we need immediate action from all governments to prevent a second wave of infection.”

**ENDS**

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