

March 2021

The USW's Leadership on PPE for Airport Screeners

At the start of the pandemic, your union, the United Steelworkers (USW), worked hard to push reluctant employers to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for members working as airport screeners.

Here's what happened:

- As early as January 2020, USW Health and Safety Co-ordinator Sylvia Boyce wrote to employers of screeners, recommending masks.
- In March 2020, the state of emergency was declared.
- Employers continued to deny the necessity of PPE and ministry inspectors failed to enforce PPE provision by employers.
- The USW took leadership in demanding emergency meetings of the Garda National Health and Safety Policy Committee (NHSPC).
- USW representatives Sylvia Boyce, Al Bieksa and David Lipton were the key spokespersons for workers at these meetings and drafted formal recommendations.
- Garda and CATSA continued to deny the need for face shields.
- In April, Boyce arranged for Ottawa Airport Screeners to receive 3-D printed faceshields, made by USW members in the Niagara region.
- Initially, the government deferred to employers. But with relentless pressure from the USW's Boyce, Lipton, Bieksa, and also USW's Mark Rowlinson, Assistant to the National Director, and Michel Courcy, USW staff representative servicing USW Screeners at the Montreal airport, in meetings with Transport Canada and other government agencies, Transport Canada ordered the provision of face shields to screeners in May 2020.

The USW was up to the challenge of doing the tough work advocating for you, our members, to keep you and your families safe and getting you the PPE needed. Your health and safety at work is important to us, and that is why the USW has a strong reputation as THE health and safety union.

It wasn't easy dealing with the government bureaucrats. But because the USW represents such a large number of screeners across Canada who work for GardaWorld, Securitas and G4S – and using our partnership with the IAMAW – we have the leverage and power that get results for our members.

Stay Strong as Steel with the United Steelworkers (USW).