

# STEWARD SURVIVAL GUIDE

Ask me about  
our union

1518  
UFCW 

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**Health Care Dental/EHC:** 1.888.275.4672

Stewards are the backbone of our union and a fundamental part of how we amplify our voice in worksites. By enforcing the Collective Agreement, standing up to injustices, ensuring members are informed of their rights, and inspiring members to get involved in their union, you are the leaders in your workplaces, fighting for fairness.

Stepping into the role of a Shop Steward can be challenging, but it's also rewarding. In the pursuit of improving working conditions, you are making a difference in the lives of your co-workers, and **we thank you for your important contribution.**

Our commitment to you is to provide even more support from your union! This pocket guide contains handy notes and materials that you can reference to provide the best representation possible. Stay in touch with your union reps, who are always here to help you, and stay tuned to your email for union updates, news, and steward-specific opportunities.

In solidarity,



Kim Novak  
President, UFCW 1518



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# CONTRACT VIOLATIONS

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Many of the problems members raise with Stewards stem from contract (Collective Agreement) violations. When a member confides in you, your first job is **to listen**. Then you should dive deeper and gather facts (see p. 17), involving the member in the resolution process every step of the way.

# Listen First

- › Give members your undivided attention.
- › Treat the member's issue as a unique experience. Validate their feelings and give them space to air their personal grievances.
- › Follow up by asking "is anyone else affected by this?" or, "does anyone else have the same problem?"
- › Never make promises or guarantee outcomes.
- › Keep other Shop Stewards informed, because they may be hearing similar concerns.
- › Confirm that you are interpreting the member's message correctly by summarizing their main points back to them.
- › Take notes. For more info on note-taking, see p.14



## NON-GRIEVABLE ISSUES

Some issues that your coworkers raise will not be grievable, nor directly tied to provisions contained in your Collective Agreement.

*What is your role when these issues arise?*

- ▶ **Host informal talks with the employer:**  
Use your discretion & be a mediator for members!
- ▶ **Be air-traffic control:**  
Direct members to other resources that might help them.
- ▶ **Look to the future:**  
Note any language missing from the Collective Agreement so the membership can course correct in future rounds of bargaining.
- ▶ **Build networks:**  
If members are fired up, they're primed to get involved. Point them to committees, sign-up sheets or tasks that will build their power.



# Grievances

Grievances are useful, low-barrier tools for resolving four types of employer violations:

## **1. Collective Agreement Violations:**

Your Collective Agreement is legally binding, but some employers will breach its terms. Stewards must keep members informed of their rights and protect those rights when they're under attack.

## **2. Past Practice Violations:**

You know those perks and practices that have been around so long, you took them for granted? Maybe the employer has been providing free parking, coffee, or a staff refrigerator for years, but they are not spelled out in the Collective Agreement. If the employer suddenly changes such a policy, the union can grieve it as a "Past Practice Violation."

As a Steward, you should make note of these benefits for your next round of negotiations to see if your coworkers care enough about them to get related protections written into your agreement.

### 3. Breaking the Law

In situations where the employer may have broken the law, Stewards can take one of two routes: Either pursue a grievance or take legal action. Consult with your union before picking a course of action.

### 4. Individual Rights Violations

In addition to Collective Agreements, the Human Rights Act also protects members and their individual rights to equal treatment in services, accommodation, and employment, without discrimination based on race, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, same-sex partnerships, family status, or disability.

A violation of the Human Rights Act in the workplace is grounds for a grievance.

Unsure if a problem requires a grievance? Check with a Union Staff Representative. Do not proceed with a grievance just to keep a member happy—you risk losing your credibility. If a member is not satisfied with your assessment, give them their union rep's contact info.

*The Steward must never assume full authority for determining whether an issue is grievable. Seek advice from UFCW 1518.*

## COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE?

*Has management done any of the following:*

- ▶ Violated the union contract?
- ▶ Violated a health & safety statute or a provincial or federal law?
- ▶ Violated a past practice?
- ▶ Acted unfairly or committed a violation of individual rights?

*If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are dealing with a legitimate grievance.*

*Infighting: a member cannot file a grievance against another member. You can be an informal mediator though—just keep management out of it.*

# Types of Grievances

## Individual Grievances

Most grievances affect a single person. The steward or the Union Rep should file individual grievances, not the member.

When a member's rights have been violated but they refuse to file a grievance, Stewards should still file it on behalf of the union. In this way, we defend the union contract and protect the rights of all members.

## Group Grievances

Stewards can pursue group grievances when the same problem affects several members at once. Examples of issues that might require a group grievance include:

- › Management changing the starting time for steady day shift members even though there is a stated start time in the union contract.
- › Management sends home all members in an area of the workplace who have clocked in and fails to pay a reporting allowance as required by the contract.

## Policy Grievance

Stewards pursue policy grievances when the employer does something that hurts all unionized members at the workplace. Sometimes a policy grievance is accompanied by an individual or group grievance.

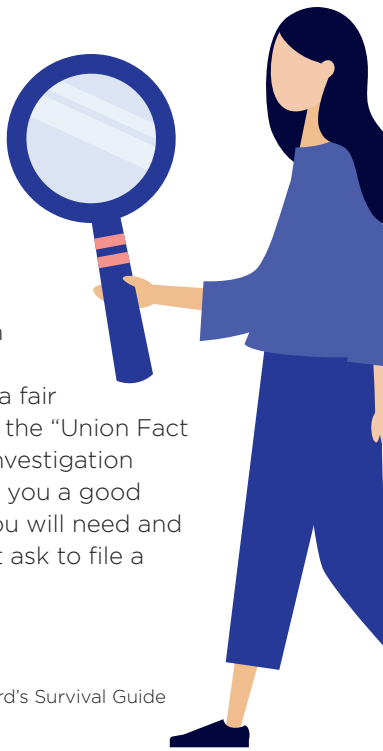
# Investigating a Grievance

## Best practices

Familiarize yourself with the grievance procedure in your worksite's Collective Agreement. This section is meant to supplement these provisions.

## Gathering Facts

Successful grievances start with interviewing the griever. Active listening, good notetaking, and a fair but critical eye are key. Refer to the “Union Fact Sheet” on p.17 to kickstart the investigation process—these documents give you a good sense of the information that you will need and the kinds of questions you must ask to file a successful grievance.



## Checklist:

- Interview the griever as soon as possible after the incident.
- Listen carefully to the griever's problem and ask them why they believe it requires a grievance.
- Involve the griever in solving the problem and developing a strategy. Keep them updated on the progress of the grievance.
- Interview witnesses and management. Get a written statement from witnesses from all involved.
- Keep written records of all interviews and keep them confidential and safe.
- Date your notes.
- Request any management records.
- Determine if the problem affects other members.
- Seek advice, if needed, from the local union.
- Review the case with the griever so you are prepared for the first grievance meeting.
- Keep your local union and any other Stewards informed throughout the process.

# Interview Decorum

Review this checklist before you go into interviews with grievors to get the best results!

- Let the members know what your role is and the purpose of the interview.
- Explain that you need as much information as possible to move towards resolution.
- Let the member talk without interrupting. Let them “think out loud” before you ask questions—they may work the solution out on their own.
- Acknowledge their emotions first, such as anger, fear, or frustration.
- Sum up the member’s story. Ask if your summary of the story is correct.
- Repeat certain words or phrases the member has used to get more information about something.
- Do not make assumptions. Do not put words in the member’s mouth either.
- Use positive body language. Make eye contact and show you are listening. Be sensitive.
- Take good notes—brief and concise. Write down only key words. After the meeting, review your notes and fill in the blanks.

After you've given members a chance to tell their side in your interviews, ask clarifying questions that will elicit more than YES/NO answers. For example:

- › How often has this happened?
- › What day(s) did it happen?
- › How many minutes a day?
- › What exactly did management say?
- › Were there any witnesses?
- › Were there any video cameras?
- › Is there anything that could have caused management to do this?

A good steward tracks the progress of each grievance and presses for prompt attention at each stage to ensure that members get fair representation.

*If you find out that the member's claim is not supported by the facts, it is better that you discover this, rather than management.*



## UFCW LOCAL 1518 UNION FACT SHEET

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Grievance No. \_\_\_\_\_

Union Rep: \_\_\_\_\_

To be filled out by the Steward and given to the Union Representative to be filed with the Union Office. **Please Print.**

Type of Grievance:  Individual  Group  Policy

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

### WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE GRIEVANCE?

#### ***GRIEVOR***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification/Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Rate: \_\_\_\_\_

Store/Bargaining Unit Seniority (date): \_\_\_\_\_

Steward: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

***\*Get grievor statement immediately.***

#### ***MANAGEMENT***

Manager's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Industrial Relations Officer (if any): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Management Involved Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***WITNESS OR OTHER PERSONS INVOLVED***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement Provided:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement Provided:

**WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT IS THE GRIEVANCE ABOUT?** (Give specifics in as much detail as possible.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Section(s) violated: \_\_\_\_\_

**WHEN DID THE GRIEVANCE OCCUR?** (Date and time grievance began? How often? For how long? Is it within time limits to proceed with grievance?)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**WHERE DID THE GRIEVANCE OCCUR?** (Exact location – department, aisle, etc., include diagram, sketch or photo if helpful.)

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**WHY IS THIS A GRIEVANCE?** (Violation of contract? Supplement? Law? Past practice? Safety regulations? Rulings or awards? Unjust treatment? etc.)

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**WANT GRIEVANCE SETTLED AND REDRESS IN FULL** (Adjustments necessary to completely correct situation; in case of discharge ask for back pay.)

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# HOW TO COUNTER BULLYING & HARASSMENT AT WORK:

- › Refer to [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com) for the definitions of bullying and harassment:  
Home › Health & Safety › Hazards & Exposures › Bullying & Harassment
- › Report the incident as soon as possible to your employer, following workplace policies and the Collective Agreement. Contact your union rep if the harassment is coming from a manager.
- › Help members write a detailed incident statement (context, date, time, location, if it was within security cameras, quotes and witnesses)
- › After the employer has conducted their investigation, they will present the findings to the complainant and the alleged harasser.
- › If the member disagrees with the employer's findings, they have the right to grieve the investigation process.
- › You can also refer the member to the WorkSafe BC Prevention Officer.

# Arbitrations

Every Labour Code, Labour Relations Act, or Trade Union Act in Canada contains a provision for final and binding third-party arbitration, which is where a grievance will go if you've exhausted every step of the grievance procedure (as it is written in your Collective Agreement) without settlement.

If the employer does not respect time limits or provide an answer as required by the union contract, the union can advance the grievance to the next step, until the issue is before an arbitrator or arbitration board.

The arbitrator, or an arbitration board, will determine whether the arbitration is proper or whether the grievance is within the authority of an arbitrator or arbitration board to settle.

*Violating the grievance procedure is a grievable violation as well and should be filed.*

# MEETING WITH MANAGEMENT

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Part of every grievance procedure is meeting with management. The sooner that you participate in these meetings, the better—it means that you avoid costly delays, discontent, and loss of morale.

In addition, senior management rarely overrules lower management's decisions. A fair settlement at the very beginning of the grievance procedure bodes well for the griever and for your working relationship with senior management.

## Stating your Case

In your meetings with management, stick to the facts and state how the union wants the grievance settled. Here are some tips:

- › **Be calm and polite.** Remember, in promotions or disciplinary matters the employer carries the burden of proof. The onus is on management to justify the company's position. Asking "why" can help you obtain information without talking too much, which puts you in the power position, rather than defense.
- › Let management talk themselves further into a grievance, but **do not let the conversation stray far from the real issue.** When management finishes explaining their side, return to the main points of the grievance.

- › **Do not let management “trade” grievances.** The employer might try to strike a deal by saying, “If you give us a win on this one, we will give you a win on another?” Tell them “No.” Grievances are a dialogue, but they are not a bargaining chip. Settle each grievance on the merit and justice of each case.
- › If management tries to provoke you, **keep calm and collected.** Shouting and pounding the table never settled anything. You may have to be firm, especially if management is trying to bully you, but remain in control of the situation.
- › Avoid personal comments and **do not make threats.** Blowing up and threatening to shut down the department or the workplace is not effective. Remember, there are other stages in the grievance process for you to win your case.
- › You must **set a deadline** for an answer from the employer, in accordance with the union contract. If the employer refuses, proceed to the next stage of the grievance procedure. Sometimes delays are justified, but sometimes they are just a stalling tactic.
- › Once management agrees with you on any point do not continue to repeat it. It is important to know when to stop talking. **Make notes** of areas where management has agreed with your points.



- › When you win a grievance: Do not brag or review your position, just accept your victory politely. Remember, the member is waiting anxiously to know how it turned out. Be sure to **tell the griever about the outcome**, especially if they were absent from the meeting.

*Whenever you progress to a new step in the grievance procedure, tell the griever and the employer.*

### More Tips

- › **Keep up a united front:** Never disagree in public with a member or your local union. If you quarrel with each other in a meeting, management will use this wedge to divide and conquer.
- › **Take a break:** If a difference of opinion develops between you and the member, call for a break or adjournment and discuss the issue in private. Also, it is often advisable to discuss a management proposal by yourselves—as a union—before you take any definite position.

# Disciplinary Meetings

Any time that management calls a member into a meeting that might be disciplinary, the member has a right to a Steward and union representation.

Your primary role in a disciplinary meeting is to ensure that the member is treated as fairly as possible. In general, the Steward should follow these guidelines during a meeting:

- Get as much information before the meetings begin. Do not let management withhold information. Document any denials of information.
- Speak to the member prior to the meeting, if possible. If questioning has started prior to your arrival, ask for a break to find out what happened.
- When the Steward arrives, management should inform the Steward of the subject matter of the interview (the type of conduct for which discipline is being considered).
- Take notes. Good notes have won Stewards cases.
- Stewards must be allowed to speak during the interview, but do not have the right to determine the reason or purpose of the meeting.
- If there are witnesses at the meeting, you should

question them. You have the right to ask the witnesses questions to determine the accuracy of their testimony or identify any biases they might harbor.

- You have a right to clarify information. If you are denied that right, make sure that the denial is entered on your notes.
- It is perfectly proper for members to answer questions with “yes,” “no,” “I do not remember,” or “I don’t know.” Once the member has answered the question, they are under no obligation to elaborate.
- At most meetings the Steward can stop the meeting at any time to speak privately with the member.

*If management is unreasonable at any point in the process, you can always advance to the next step.*



# Challenging Disciplines

Here are some of the questions that you must answer if you are grieving a discipline:

1. Go through the 6Ws—Who, What, When, Where, Why, and Want.
2. What is the alleged violation?
3. Was the procedure fair?
4. Was the rule/policy/standard reasonable?
5. Was the grievor aware of the alleged violation?
6. Was progressive discipline applied?
7. Did management meet its burden of proof?
8. Are there other circumstances?
9. What is the grievor's past record?
10. What is management or the department's past record?

## WHAT IS THE RESOLVE?

- › In any disciplinary meeting, or in a grievance, it is important to find out what the member will accept as a resolution (or “resolve”) to their problem. Sometimes, what they want cannot be accomplished because the Collective Agreement doesn’t speak to their desired resolution. Be honest with them and let them know what their options are. Then work together to accomplish that resolve.



# BUILDING POWER

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Stewards do not just protect members' safety, health, and existing rights; they also inspire them to raise the bar. By enhancing member engagement, you can help your fellow members expand their rights.

Being proactive is central to being a good Steward. You fill myriad roles, some of which include:

**1. First point of contact:**

You're the liaison between the larger union and the members at your worksite, keeping the two connected and synergized.

**2. Shop floor eyes and ears:**

You monitor trends in your industry, shifts in working conditions (or applications of the collective agreement and labour law) and any changes in the day-to-day operations of your worksites.

**3. Communications officer:**

You disseminate union information and persuasive messaging to help workers get informed, find their voice, and grow their passion for union activism. You start conversations, and you're attuned to members' reactions to these conversations

**4. A peer:**

You're a trusted leader who not only understands the frontline experience but knows the members in your unit on a more personal level.

**5. Internal Organizer:**

Because you understand the power dynamics in your workplace, you are poised to build worker strength.

# Internal Organizing

Stewards can help build worker power by ensuring there's a strong union presence in every department, shift, and—eventually—workplace.

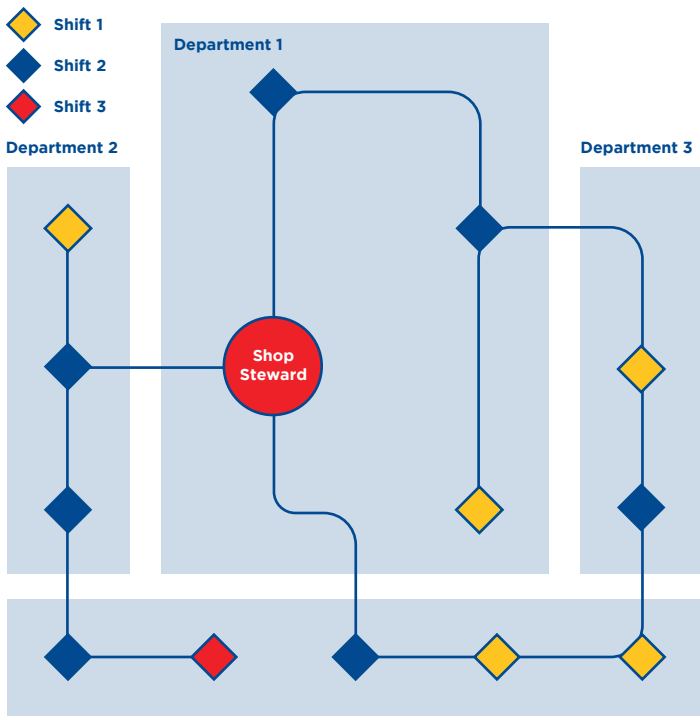
Where do you have leaders that aren't involved in the union...yet? Where do you have a high concentration of anti-union folks? Why are they anti-union?

*Ex. Is Bob “not engaged” because he doesn't agree with the bargaining team's strategy or because he has kids and a sick parent, so he's too busy? Or is he burnt out? These details matter because they will change how Stewards and leaders should approach Bob when the unit begins mobilizing.*

Consider what each coworker who you've identified as a member with untapped potential cares about. What's one thing related to the union that they could get on board with—lead with a conversation about that topic to pique their interest.



Stewards should start drawing mental lines between their coworkers' names—who talks to whom? Who has physical and/or social access to members that need to be reached? The end goal is to saturate every department and shift with union presence.



# STEWARD DICTIONARY

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The following is a selection of workplace and labour movement terminology, definitions, and acronyms.

**Arbitration:** method of settling disputes through the intervention of a third party whose decisions is final and binding. The third party can be a single arbitrator or a board consisting of a chairperson and one or more representatives. Often used to settle major grievances and contract interpretation disputes.

**Assessment:** special charges collected by unions to meet particular financial needs on a special project.

**Back Pay:** wages due for past services—often the difference between money already received and a higher amount resulting from a change in rates.

**Bargaining unit:** group of workers in a department, plant, firm, or occupation represented by a union for the purpose of collective bargaining.

**Base rate:** lowest rate of pay, expressed in hourly terms, for the lowest paid qualified worker classification in the union contract.

**Boycott:** individual or public removal of support for a specific product or service, usually because of a strike or lockout. A sanctioned boycott is one which has been approved by a central labour body.

**Bullying:** deliberate and repeated assertion of power through aggressive physical, non-physical, and/or psychological actions directed against one person or a group of people by another person or group.

## **Canadian Commercial Workers Industry Pension Plan**

**(CCWIPP):** trusteed pension plan to which the majority of the UFCW Canada members belong. The plan provides a guaranteed monthly income to retired members based on years of service. Rates are negotiated through union contracts.

**Certification:** Labour Relations Board sanction that a union is declared the exclusive and only bargaining agent for the employees in a bargaining unit.

**Checkoff:** a clause in the union contract authorizing an employer to deduct union dues and sometimes other assessments and transmit these funds to the union.

**Closed shop:** a clause in the contract stating that all employees in a bargaining unit must be union members in good standing as a condition of securing or continuing employment. Since all employees benefit from having a union contract, they must all belong to the union as a condition of their employment.

**Collective bargaining:** method of determining wages, hours, and other conditions of employment through direct negotiations between the union and employer. The result of collective bargaining is a written contract which covers all employees in the bargaining unit, both union and non-union members.

**Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA):** See union contract.

**Collective bargaining unit:** group of workers in a craft, department, plant, store, firm, industry, or occupation. In some circumstances, the bargaining unit can include employees who are not members of the union that is their certified collective bargaining agent.

**Conciliation and mediation:** process which attempts to resolve labour disputes by compromise or voluntary agreement. Unlike arbitration, this process is run by mediators, conciliators, or a conciliation board and does not bring a binding award. The parties are free to accept or reject their recommendations.

**Contracting out:** practice of an employer having work performed by an outside contractor and not by regular employees in the bargaining unit. On the other hand, subcontracting is the practice of a contractor delegating part of his work to a subcontractor.

**Contract proposals:** proposed changes to a union contract put forward by the union or the employer during negotiations.

**Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA):** regular pay increases based on the changes in the consumer price index sometimes with a stated top limit.

**Decertification:** termination of a union as the exclusive bargaining representative by the Labour Relations Board.

**Discrimination:** the different treatment of an individual based on race, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical, mental, or any other personal attribute.

**Dues:** payments by union members for the financial support of their union (i.e. representation, legal support, education etc.). Union dues are tax deductible and act as job insurance for union members.

**Duty to accommodate:** proactively eliminate any standards, practices, or rules that discriminate against workers based on race, sex, disability, age, ethnic origin, religion, marital or family status, etc. Accommodation means changing the rule or practice to incorporate alternative arrangements that eliminate the discriminating barriers.

**Duty of fair representation:** clause of many labour codes which states that all workers, whether members of the union or not, have the right to representation by the union that represents the workplace. It also states that the union must not act in a manner that is arbitrary, discriminatory, or in bad faith towards any employee in the bargaining unit.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** intended to help employees deal with personal problems that adversely impact their work performance, health, and well-being. EAP counsellors typically provide assessment, support, and referrals for various issues including substance abuse,

emotional distress, safe working environment, health, family/personal relationship issues, major life events (births, aged parents, accidents, or death), etc.

**Employment equity:** principal that the workplace should be truly representative of the general population in its inclusion of minority groups, women, and workers with disabilities.

**Estoppel:** principle in which the employer or union has created a past practice and one party tries to bring an end to that past practice, the party is stopped from relying on or changing the practice.

**Fringe benefits:** non-wage benefits, such as paid vacations, pensions, health and welfare provisions, life insurance, etc. These benefits are negotiated with employers during bargaining.

**Grievance:** procedure for following up an alleged violation of the union contract, law, or past practice. The procedure for handling the grievance is defined in the union contract.

**Harassment:** the expression of perceived power and superiority over another person or group, usually for reasons of gender, age ethnicity, sexual orientation disability, family or marital status, social or economic class, political views, religion, or language.

**Job classification:** job rating based on an analysis of the requirements to do the work.

**Job description:** the duties and responsibilities that an employee is expected to carry out.

**Job evaluation:** system designed to create levels or categories of a job based on factors such as skill, responsibility, experience, time, or effort. Often used to create a system of wage differentials between jobs or job classes.

**Job security:** clause in the union contract that protects a worker in the event of a workplace closure or permanent layoff. This is usually done through a financial formula involving seniority.

**Jointly trusteeed:** a pension or other member benefit plan that is controlled equally by employer(s) and union(s).

**Labour Relations Board (LRB):** board established under provincial or federal labour relations legislation to manage labour law, such as certification of a trade union as bargaining agent, investigation of unfair labour practice, and other functions prescribed under the legislation.

**Layoffs:** temporary, prolonged, or final separation from employment as a result of lack of work.

**Leave of absence:** permitted absence for an employee for a period, usually without pay.



**Local (Union):** UFCW Canada locals have their own bylaws and elect their own officials. They are responsible for the negotiation and day-to-day administration of union contracts covering their members.

**Lockout:** occurs when the employer decides to stop workers from working, thus applying economic pressure on you and your co-workers in an attempt to persuade you to give in to the employer's demands.

**Management rights, Employer rights:** clause in every union contract giving management authority over all terms and conditions not laid out in the union contract, such as the hiring of workers.

**Master agreement/Provincial agreement:** union contract that covers members at several locations across a province for example, Save-On-Foods or Sobeys.

**Mediation:** way to settle labour disputes. The parties use a third person (a mediator) as a neutral go-between.

**No strike clause:** a contract clause eliminating the freedom of workers to strike during the life of the agreement.

**Open shop:** a workplace in which union membership is not required as a condition of securing or continuing employment.

**Overtime rate:** a higher rate of pay fixed by law or a union contract for all overtime hours. Commonly time and a half (1.5x) or double (2x) time.

**Past practice:** principle on which the union uses to protect its members from their employer changing and/or disciplining members from a long-standing practice without proper notification. These grievances normally arise when dealing with the management rights clause.

**Picketing:** act of blockading a workplace during a strike or lockout, or, in an informational picket, handing out leaflets or other information at or near a target workplace.

**Piece rate (piece count):** management system used in warehousing, textiles, or agricultural sectors to manage workers' speed and efficiency.

**Probationary period:** time during which a new employee is in a experimental period or trial period by the company and usually subject to discharge without union challenge, except where the discharge is discriminatory. Commonly this period is 90 days (or three months).

**Ratification (vote):** vote by the union membership of a negotiated union contract. If the union contract is approved, it is considered ratified.

**Red circle rate:** rate of pay for an employee or group of employees that is above the maximum pay for that class or job description. This is intended to lessen the hardship when a wage is lowered through no fault of the employee.

**Reinstatement:** return of a discharged employee to their former job.

**Re-opener:** clause in the union contract calling for the reopening of the contract at a specified time prior to its expiration for bargaining to discuss subjects such as a wage increase, pension, etc.

**Scab:** person who commits the cowardly act of crossing a picket line with the intent to work or otherwise undermine a strike.

**Seniority:** designation of an employee's status compared to the other employees. Determines the order of layoff, promotion, recall, transfer, vacations, etc. Seniority can be based on length of service or hours worked. It is the best way unions have to eliminate favoritism by making sure all employees are judged fairly.

**Severance pay:** money paid to employees who are fired without good legal reason or permanently laid off through no fault of the employee.

**Sexual harassment:** harassment or unwelcome attention of a sexual nature. It includes a range of behaviour from mild transgressions and annoyances to serious abuses, which can even involve forced sexual activity.

**Shop steward:** rank-and-file elected or appointed position to represent members on behalf of the union at the workplace, in matters of the union contract.

**Strike:** withholding of labour by workers to place economic pressure on the employer with the aim of encouraging agreement in bargaining. Strikes happen when an acceptable contract cannot be reached between the union and the employer.

**Strike vote:** a secret ballot vote conducted among members of a union in a bargaining unit to determine whether or not to authorize strike action if necessary. Does not necessarily result in a strike.

**Suspension:** forced layoff from work as a disciplinary measure.

**Union:** an organization of workers that furthers the workers' interest in wages, hours, working conditions, and other matters. Unions are also sometimes referred to as associations, guilds, councils, or federations.

**Union contract:** collective bargaining agreement between the union and the employer. It covers such issues as wages, hours, working conditions, benefits, rights of workers and the union, and procedures to be followed in settling disputes and grievances.

**Union security:** clause in the union contract designed to protect the institutional life of the union. This will also lay out the rules and regulations a union will follow in the workplace, such as the ability to service. Through this clause all members' benefits will be protected.

**Union shop:** place of work where every worker covered by the union contract must become and remain a member of the union. Almost all UFCW Canada workplaces are union shops.

**Union representative:** generally, a full-time worker who communicates between members, stewards, and the local union. The union representative is trained in areas such as grievance handling, negotiations, and organizing.

**Work-to-rule:** practice in which workers obey all laws and rules concerning their work, which will usually create a slowdown. It can also be a refusal to perform duties which are not explicitly included in the job description.

**Worker compensation board:** programs under federal, provincial, or territorial jurisdiction which provide income compensation and medical therapy for workers suffering from occupational injuries and/or disabilities. Funded by statutory employer contribution, such as Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) formerly known as the Workers' Compensation Board. Go to the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada website at: <https://www.awcbc.org/en/> for a Canada-wide listing of worker compensation boards.

**Working conditions:** conditions concerning the workers' job environment, such as hours of work, health and safety, paid holidays, vacations, rest periods, free clothing or uniforms, possibilities of advancement, etc. Many of these are included in the union contract and subject to collective bargaining.

**Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS):** federally regulated and mandatory posting of information on all materials in the workplace with potentially hazardous effects or side-effects, giving full disclosure of the nature of the materials and the proper procedures and safety apparatus to be used when working with them.

# NOTES

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