



SHOP STEWARD HANDBOOK

UFCW LOCAL 1518



Together, we build a better life for all British Columbians

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

One of the most important jobs in a union is that of the Shop Steward. The job of a steward can be challenging and difficult, and at times, a thankless job. However it is also one I know you will find to be a rich and rewarding experience.

Many members in the workplace will expect you to have all the answers or know where to find them. It is our job to ensure you have the tools to make your job easier.

We hope that this handbook will assist you in your role as a steward and prove to be a good reference guide to follow when you find yourself dealing with the various situations that arise on a day-to-day basis in your workplace.

On behalf of all of the members, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the commitment that you have made to our members and your Union, UFCW Local 1518.

In solidarity,

Ivan Limpright
UFCW Local 1518

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

STEWARDS ARE THE KEY TO BUILDING OUR UNION

Being a steward means stepping up to play a key role in building our union. While not always an easy job, the role of a steward can be deeply rewarding—and something to be proud of.

There is a lot of information in this handbook, but the most important thing is to recognize all of the skills and practical knowledge you already have.

The best union education happens when workers pass along tips and information to each other. You should feel comfortable approaching other stewards and union staff with questions, concerns and ideas.

We are always more powerful together.

BUILDING STRONG CONTRACTS AND A STRONG UNION

Our union has an office, a strike fund, and full-time union representatives, but our strength as an organization fundamentally comes from our solidarity.

As stewards, we build solidarity working in all three areas of the “Union Triangle”.

- Empowering and engaging members
- Enforcing the agreement and solving workplace problems
- Organizing non-union workers

This handbook will show you how to work as an effective steward in each of the areas of the “Union triangle”



THE ROLE OF THE SHOP STEWARD



The union steward is a key “link” in our union. As a steward, you make the collective agreement meaningful by helping your co-workers implement their contract and defend their rights on a day-to-day basis.

You are in the best position to understand your co-workers’ concerns and priorities, organize with them to take action, and communicate their priorities to other union leaders. You are also the best person to educate co-workers about our union’s goals.

Organizer

The most important job of the steward is to build an active, united membership in their workplace. Our ability to defend and improve conditions will always depend on the collective power of our membership.

- Welcome new employees and let them know how they

can become involved.

- Constantly find ways to involve more members in the activities of our union such as solving workplace problems, supporting negotiations, participating in political action and organizing drives.

Communicator and Educator



The most effective forms of communication are one-on-one workplace conversations.

Flyers, newsletters, emails and meetings are all important, but the best way to inform members, get feedback, and encourage participation is through personal contact.

- Listen and learn about workers' problems and concerns.
- Teach workers about our union, their rights under our contract, bargaining goals and important issues affecting working people.
- Always challenge members to help win improvements.

- Unite and inspire your co-workers to work together.
- Stay informed and be a link between workers, stewards, officers and staff.
- Educate by example through participation in union campaigns and other activities.

Problem Solver

Stewards should be prepared with various strategies for solving problems. The steward plays a role in enforcing the agreement and defending our members' rights day to day.

- Mobilizing workers to solve problems as a group.
- Solving problems informally with management.
- Investigating grievances and bringing the issue to the attention of the union representative.

Workplace Leader

A shop steward sets the example as a unifying advocate for workers' rights.

- Build unity: finding common ground on problems that divide members.
- Be an active participant in the union.
- Always bringing someone along and mentoring others.
- Involve members when advocating on their behalf
- Make sure everyone is involved in the union and find ways to break down barriers

A Shop Steward Should

- Know your collective agreement, the structures, constitution and policies of your union as well as employment practices and conditions in your workplace
- Be a good listener, fair and approachable
- Give members guidance and direction
- Discourage division and be neutral and fair when listening to disagreements between workers
- Seek advice from you union representative when necessary
- Be prepared to mentor other new stewards or members

A Shop Steward Should Not

- Go behind the backs of the workers or without a mandate from them
- Sign off on any agreements without consulting with your union representative
- Agree to deals that are contrary to your collective agreement
- Caucus with other members against other shop stewards
- Represent a member without that member being present
- Act on behalf of management

YOUR UNION

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YOUR UNION

Every year thousands of British Columbians join a union at their workplace with UFCW Local 1518 to achieve job security, fairness and a voice at work.

UFCW Local 1518 members work in a variety of industries from retail to warehousing, from healthcare to industrial food processing, making us one of BC's largest unions.

WE ARE A TRUSTED VOICE

UFCW Local 1518 is trusted by over 20,000 British Columbians who we have helped achieve **job security**, **fairness** and **respect** in their workplace.

We are driven by our values and act with **honesty** and **integrity** in everything we do.

Our commitment to integrity and honesty is why we are BC's largest private sector union.

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT MEMBERS

Becoming a member of UFCW Local 1518 means that you always have **someone to support you**. We believe in empowering our members and supporting each other.

When you join UFCW Local 1518 you will have professional union representatives, legal counsel, health and safety experts and 20,000 members standing with you.

WE ARE AN EFFECTIVE VOICE FOR CHANGE

With UFCW Local 1518 in your workplace, you have an effective vehicle to solve workplace problems.

Based on values of respect, dignity, and fairness, we are committed to building **better workplaces**, **better communities** and **better lives**.

This commitment underpins everything we do as an organization.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

In short: job security, fairness and human rights.

As a socially-conscious union, we work to end discrimination and unfair treatment in all its forms - both in the workplace and in society at large.

Supporting human rights is at the core of who we are as a union.

Without a union, management can treat employees arbitrarily or in a discriminatory way. But with a union you have rights! A union contract empowers members to defend themselves against bullying, discrimination or abuses in the workplace.

Our union cares and campaigns for affordable child care, secure pensions, and higher minimum wages, among many other important issues.

Having job security, a voice at work, and benefits makes a big difference in people's lives. That's why one of the most important things we do as a union is helping non-union workers enjoy more rights by forming a union.

When we organize workers who do not yet have a union, we raise the standards and working conditions in the industry as a whole. Our strength is in numbers and the more non-union workers we can organize, the more we can keep raising standards for our existing members and all workers.

YOU ARE THE UNION!

UFCW Local 1518 is member-led, member-run and member-worked.

The leaders of our union are members who are elected by members and most of the work done at the workplace level is done by volunteer shop stewards and other members.

Like any other not-for-profit membership organization, our sole reason for existence is to support members of the organization.

- Together, you and your coworkers make up the union in your workplace
- You elect your own bargaining committee to negotiate a contract
- You submit your proposals for what should be in your contract
- You vote on adopting your collective agreement
- You have the ability to elect shop stewards in your workplace
- You elect the officers such as President, Secretary Treasurer and Vice Presidents

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

All people deserve a good quality of life that includes being treated with respect, dignity and justice.

We stand together to achieve this goal in the workplace and beyond.

Together, we build a better life for all British Columbians.

OUR CORE VALUES

Integrity:

We behave with integrity in everything we do and say. We act in an open, ethical, truthful and forthright manner.

Respect:

We treat all people with dignity and consideration.

Duty and Responsiveness:

We carry out our duties with a high level of engagement, focus and accountability.

Loyalty and Honour:

We encourage and support one another and stand together as an organization.

ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING

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YOUR STARTING PLACE FOR ENGAGING MEMBERS IS YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

It might seem easier to solve a member's problem by yourself, but an effective steward tries to help the members find the solution and involves them in actions to solve the problem.

1. It's a strategy that often finds better solutions
2. Issues raised by members are a prime opportunity to educate members about the work of the union

Your collective agreement is your starting point.

Workers join unions to be able to bargain one; they file grievances to enforce the one they have; they mobilize around issues to build support for bargaining solutions; they go on strike to support bargaining demands for a better one.

The very best time to involve people in our union is when something personally affects them.

EXAMPLE: ENGAGING MEMBERS THROUGH THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Over the past few weeks, a supervisor has on several occasions cut short Sally's coffee break. Sally complains to her steward.

Working alone, the steward calls the supervisor to remind him that rest periods are guaranteed in the collective agreement.

The steward gets management to promise that Sally will get her breaks going forward, and reports to the member that the problem has been fixed.

In contrast, an effective steward uses the complaint as a springboard for engaging and empowering members.

This steward speaks to other co-workers to see if anyone else is having their breaks cut short.

If so, the whole group plans a meeting with the supervisor to present their concerns. The results of that meeting would be reported back to the members at the workplace and the union representative.

If nobody else is having their breaks cut short, the steward would meet one-on-one with Sally to educate her on how this is a violation of the collective agreement and agree upon an

approach to solving the problem. Then Sally and the steward would meet with the supervisor together.

And the results of that meeting would be reported back to the other workers as well as the union representative.

While having a steward solve a problem by themselves and meeting with the manger alone might seem faster, it is less effective.

By involving as many members as possible in solving a violation of the collective agreement – the engaging and empowering steward forges a link between the union and its members.

Letting members participate in the solution, and giving them quick feedback on the results, creates educated union members who are empowered to take on more issues in their workplace.



ADVANTAGES OF ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING

It's more effective

An employer is more likely to listen and bargain when a large number of workers support and are active in the union.

Members gain confidence when they share in victories

Hearing about a union win is good. Knowing something you did made an employer do the right thing is better.

You can build others up and bring others along

Most of us became activists because someone helped bring us along and asked us to be involved. Pay it forward.

You can tackle more problems

Having a strong core of supportive members makes the union more effective. 50 people and a steward can deal with more issues than a steward can alone.

HOW CAN STEWARDS BUILD AN ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP?

As a steward, it is your job to be a leader. If your co-workers are not participating in our union, try to figure out ways to get them involved!

The more you involve members, the easier it becomes. The same member who won't attend union meetings might be willing to volunteer with investigating a grievance or organizing a social event.

Find out what interests people, and keep trying.

Don't expect everyone to be involved right away. If only a few people participate the first time you ask, that's fine—now there is a core group to start with.

Think about who is missing and why. Each time there is an action, make a plan to involve a few more people!

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

The more frequently new employees have positive discussions with union activists, the greater their commitment to our union.

That's why one of the most critical roles of union stewards is welcoming new employees into our union. It's important to avoid the tendency to lecture people; ask questions that draw out their experiences and share why you decided to become involved.

Let the new employees know what a union is (including everyone's role in making it stronger, and an introduction to the contract) and how they can reach you in the future.

Check back with them to see how they're doing and invite them to union meetings, actions and events.

WHAT INFORMATION CAN HELP YOU ENGAGE YOUR CO-WORKERS?

Building strong relationships with people you work with is key to your effectiveness as a shop steward.

In order to be an effective shop steward you need to know as much as possible about ALL of the people you work with.

There are some obvious facts that are important to know:

- **Who are they?** Names, contact information
- **Where do they work?** Departments or work areas
- **When do they work?** Shift or work schedule
- **Are they familiar with unions?** Positive/negative experiences
- **How long have they worked here?** Seniority

You might also want to know:

- **What are the problems they'd like to see addressed at work?** For a single parent, scheduling might be a top priority. For a worker near retirement, the priority might be reasonable workloads. For a young worker, pay might be the top concern. Knowing what your co-workers care about helps you connect them with our union in meaningful ways.
- **What is their current opinion of our union?** If you are prioritizing your efforts, it's worth knowing how workers feel about our union. Focus on the people who seem to be undecided.
- **Which group of co-workers do they socialize with?** People often make decisions in groups, not just individually. If someone eats lunch each day with a group of co-workers who are very critical of our union, it may be difficult to get them involved. If they spend time with people who are positive about our union but haven't yet gotten involved themselves, talking to them should be a priority.
- **What community organizations are they involved with outside of work?** If someone is active at their place of worship, neighbourhood association or other community group, they may be willing to let others know about our union's campaigns and activities.



BECOME AN EXCELLENT LISTENER

Conversations involve speaking and listening. For many people, speaking is easy, but listening takes some practice.

Engaging with members means listening to them — so here are a few tips on listening with intention, and really hearing what people have to say.

- Try to listen more — a lot more — than you speak. A good goal to aim for is to listen 80% of the time and speak 20%. That may not always be possible, and for some people it may be very difficult, but it's worth trying to achieve. The goal forces you to slow down your own thoughts and really take in what the other person is telling you.
- Be fully present. Don't be distracted. Give your full attention to the speaker. (No looking at your cellphone!)
- When someone is speaking (especially if they are saying something we disagree with) it's very easy to mentally argue with them, or start thinking about how to counter

their points. Try to avoid doing this. When you are thinking about what you're going to say next, you're not really listening.

- Resist the temptation to jump in and “correct” what you see as misconceptions or misinformation.
- Ask open-ended questions like “Can you tell me a bit more about that?”
- Summarize what the person said to make sure you understood correctly. You can also follow this up with a positive suggestion/question. For example: “I understand that you feel that management singled you out in the past. Is that right?”
- When you do respond to a speaker, try not to lecture, or present facts to show why they are wrong. Instead, try to respond to their concerns in a way that shows you understood them — even if you don't agree with them.
- If you can solve a problem on the spot, great! But more likely you will be offering to look into an issue or find out more.
- Look for points of agreement with the other person, and try to leave a positive impression.

ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS ARE THE KEY TO BUILDING “OUR UNION”

When members talk about our union do they say “we”?

For example, if management starts a new policy a member doesn’t like, do they say “what are we going to do about it?” or, “what is our union going to do about it?”

If members think of our union as “we,” then they view themselves as part of an organization as in diagram # 1.

If not, they see “the union” as separate, as in diagram #2.

Union = Members/ Stewards	Union Stewards Members
Members see that winning better conditions depends on them.	Members expect services for their dues.
When there is a problem, they ask what “we” are going to do about it.	When there is a problem members ask what is the “union” going to do about it.
Members see the stewards, staff and officers as leaders, not as people who will fix their problems.	Members think the steward’s, staff and officer’s job is to fix things for them.
Stewards, staff and officers discuss problems (and options for addressing them) with members.	It is difficult for members to learn about our union.

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By having one-on-one conversations with co-workers, stewards can help make #1 a reality. This will improve our ability to solve worksite problems, win strong contract language and build a better life for all British Columbians.

SOLVING WORKPLACE ISSUES

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Solving Workplace Problems

Engaging and empowering co-workers to solving workplace problems is the steward's primary responsibility.

As an effective steward, your goal should always be to solve problems informally when possible.

Many, if not most, workplace problems can be solved this way.

Stewards simply approach supervisors or managers, make a case and convince them to do the right thing.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Seek and use the knowledge and support fellow stewards, and active members to help you solve problems.

- Problems are often solved and grievances settled not just based on who has the strongest case or most logical arguments, but because of the solidarity and strength our union has in the workplace.
- If you see or hear of a problem or a possible contract violation, you do not have to wait for workers to come forward to complain about it. Be proactive and look for opportunities to engage other members in solving problems.
- Your job is to fight for your co-workers and defend their rights under the contract. This does not mean you will always like or even agree with every worker you represent, but it does mean you must often separate your personal feelings from your overall duty to our union and the contract. Remember that even in cases where a worker clearly made a mistake, our union is still responsible for fighting for the worker's chance to improve and ensuring that management has issued any discipline in a fair manner consistent with the collective agreement.

Our union and the employer are equal parties to the collective agreement. This means that as a union steward, you have the right and obligation to deal with your supervisor as an equal when you are doing union work. And if you need help, your union representative is there to support you as well.



SORTING THROUGH PROBLEMS AND IDENTIFYING GRIEVANCES

As a steward, you may receive all kinds of complaints from co-workers.

Some of these will be complaints you can pursue through engaging your co-workers, meeting with management informally and/or contacting your union representative about filing a grievance.

After you hear a complaint and gather all the facts, you may decide it is a grievance and/or something you can engage other members around.

The process of sorting out issues is one of the most important functions of a steward. You should consult with your union representative when deciding what course of action to take.

Remember—a grievance is only one tool for solving worksite problems. Some issues require you to have other strategies in your “toolbox.” Always work in collaboration with your union representative when deciding the best tools to use.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF IT IS A GRIEVANCE?

A grievance may be defined as a contract violation or a violation of laws, policies, or past practices.

Can you grieve violations of a company policy or work rule?

Yes. If the way the company applies a policy or rule does not violate any other contract section, the company may violate the contract's management rights clause if the company is acting unfairly or unjustly.

Can you grieve violations of "past practice"?

In many cases, "past practices" (something that previously occurred regularly) are considered grievable, even if they are not written down. If the past practice meets all the necessary criteria of a violation of past practice, it can often be grieved.

Can you grieve violations of the law?

There are several ways that legal violations, such as health and safety or employment standards violations can also be grievances.

WHEN SHOULD YOU ENGAGE OTHERS IN SOLVING A WORKPLACE PROBLEM?

Any time you are confronted with a problem, you should consider all the possible strategies for solving it.

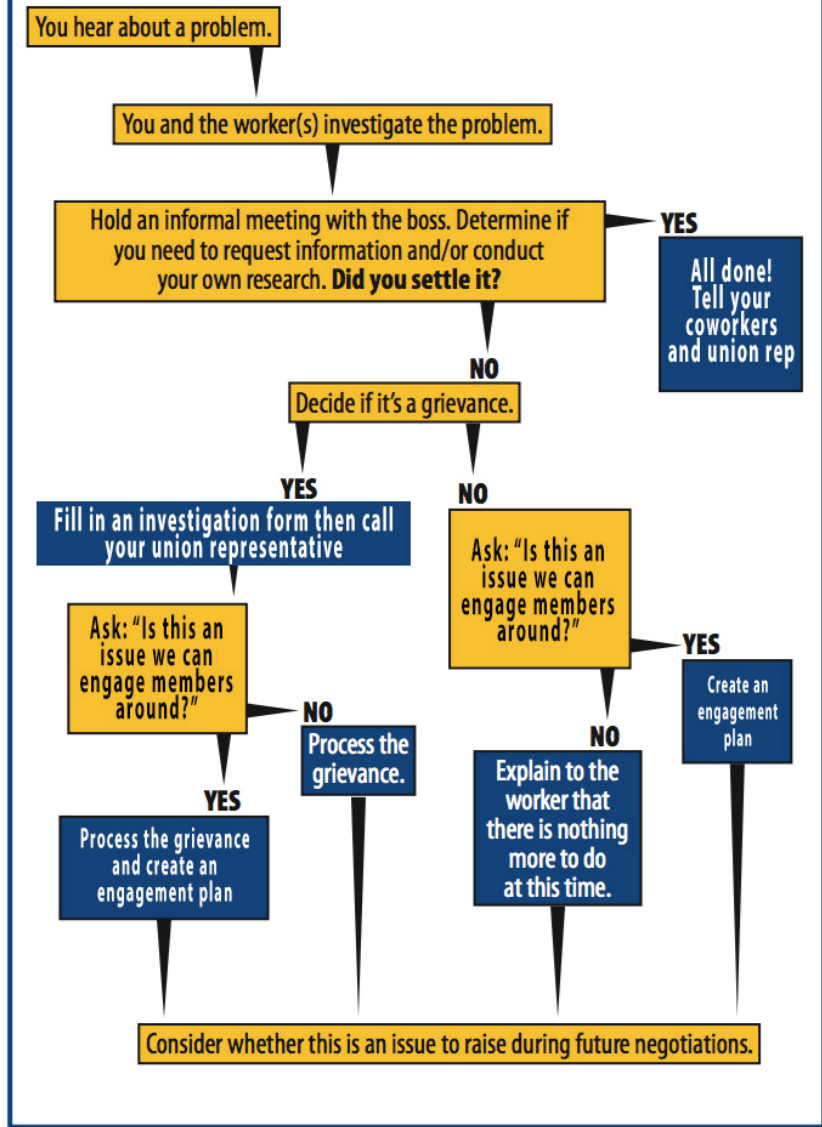
1. Will an informal meeting between the steward, the grievor, and management likely resolve the problem?
2. Should you work together with your union representative in filing a grievance and educating your co-workers so management takes the grievance more seriously?
3. Should you organize a group of affected workers to meet with managers?

“Organizing” happens whenever workers unite together to create change. Workers who do not have unions “organize” to form labor organizations and people in already unionized worksites “organize” to make improvements.

Below are just some of the situations in which organizing and engaging your co-workers around an issue may be more effective than simply filing a grievance alone:

- When worksite organizing will strengthen our union and build workers’ sense of solidarity and purpose.
- When a large number of workers is affected by the problem.
- When managers are repeatedly violating the contract or refusing to settle grievances in a timely manner.

A STEWARD'S GUIDE TO PROBLEM SOLVING



INVESTIGATING WORKPLACE PROBLEMS

Investigating a problem or potential grievance almost always begins with interviewing the people involved to collect as many facts as possible and getting necessary information from management. Structuring your research and interview questions around the “5 Ws” of dealing with “HR”.

The “5 Ws”

- **WHO?** Identify the names of the worker or group of workers, the immediate supervisor, and any other persons involved in the complaint (witnesses, co-workers, etc.).
- **WHAT?** What exactly happened? What actions (or inactions) gave rise to the problem? Be specific!
- **WHERE?** If an incident was involved, determine the precise location, department, and job site of the incident.
- **WHEN?** Determine the time and the date of the incident. If it’s an ongoing problem, try to research when it started and when workers first learned of it.
- **WHY?** Why is this incident a grievance? What section of the contract has been violated? Are past practice, management rules, or provincial or federal law being violated?

The “HR”

- **HOW?** How can I involve the grievor and other members in solving this problem? How can I educate members about the problem and engage them to help our union win the potential grievance?
- **REMEDY?** What do the grievor and other members believe the remedy should be? What would the grievor consider a fair settlement?

UFCW LOCAL 1518 UNION FACT SHEET

The Union Fact Sheet can help you when investigating grievances. The sheet is not intended to go to management. It is for the union's investigation of grievances only.

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?)

Company Contends:

Previous Record of Discipline:

Verbal Warnings Issued: _____

Written Warnings: _____

Penalties Imposed: _____

Any Related Information: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Documentary Evidence (seniority list, wage schedule, record of similar grievances, etc.)

Signature of Steward

Date

Signature of Grievor



Company Contends:

Previous Record of Discipline:

Verbal Warnings Issued: _____

Written Warnings: _____

Penalties Imposed: _____

Any Related Information: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Documentary Evidence (seniority list, wage schedule, record of similar grievances, etc.)

Signature of Steward

Date

Signature of Grievor





PREPARING TO MEET WITH MANAGEMENT

Prepare your facts and arguments

Review all of the evidence you have collected and decide what your strongest arguments are in this case. It's better to have one or two strong, convincing arguments (and to keep repeating them) than to have five weak ones.

Write down the arguments and facts you intend to present.

Think about how you can argue for the remedy: why would it be in everyone's interest to settle this now?

Union Arguments

Supporting Facts



Anticipate management's position

You may have a good idea already (from your prior investigation) of what management's position is.

How will you respond to their claims?

What remedies might management offer and how will you respond?

Management Arguments

Union Responses

Prepare the grievor

Prepare the member for what will happen at the meeting, reviewing what you plan to say and what you anticipate management might say.

Make it clear that you will do most of the talking and that you (or a union staff representative) need to remain in charge being the spokesperson of the meeting.

If you plan to have the member speak to some aspect of the case, rehearse this ahead of time.

Remind the member not to volunteer extra information not asked of them, and ask them to try to control their emotions during the meeting.

Plan a nonverbal signal to use in case either of you decides you need to pause for a caucus during the meeting.



TIPS FOR MEETING WITH MANAGEMENT

- **Act as an equal.** A grievance meeting should be a meeting between two parties on equal footing.

Ask yourself: “Would this supervisor treat another management person this way?”

If not, then you should not expect to be mistreated when acting as a steward, and may have to do extra work to command respect and assert your rights to be treated as an equal when handling grievances.

- **Remember your goal.** You are striving to settle the grievance at the lowest step.

Start out by assuming you have a chance to convince everyone involved that it would be best to resolve the issue quickly.

At early stages, try to avoid backing management into a

corner or putting them on the defensive; leave them an “out” so that they have room to cooperate in negotiating a settlement with you.

- **Stick to the point and take charge of the meeting.** If a supervisor wants to shift the discussion to unrelated issues, insist that you return to the grievance at hand. If management wants to stall with too much small talk or pauses for interruptions, firmly remind them why you are there and get the meeting back on track.
- **Maintain solidarity in the group.** Avoid ever having an argument among UFCW Local 1518 in the presence of management. Call a recess if needed. It’s critical for management to know that everyone involved is united behind the steward.
- **Repeat your best arguments and facts.** Don’t let management derail you or bait you into a defensive position on weaker aspects of your case. If you get off track, return to your best arguments. It’s okay and, in fact, usually effective to repeat yourself.
- **Disagree with dignity.** Avoid getting excited, angry, or hostile. On rare occasions, when planned and strategically timed, showing such emotion might be useful to make a point. But usually, losing your cool means you have also lost control of the meeting.
- **Be ready to end or suspend the meeting.** If unexpected information (from the member or the supervisor) surfaces during the meeting, you may need to call a caucus to talk with the member or collect your thoughts. If the information significantly changes the case, you may need to ask to postpone the meeting so you can better prepare.



WHAT TO SAY WHEN MANAGEMENT SAYS NO

Since it's nearly always in our union's best interest to reach a fair settlement early in the process, try to get as much information as possible about management's position when they are refusing to settle a grievance.

You may discover that they don't fully understand the grievance, or you might identify new settlement options.

- **Do you understand the problem we are trying to solve with our remedy? How do you see that problem?**
Maybe the supervisor isn't clear on the real issue. Getting them to state it may open the door to a resolution.
- **Can you explain how you arrived at that position?** If you understand management's logic you may be able to more successfully counter their arguments. Or maybe a particular supervisor misunderstands or doesn't know about a basic fact in the case.

- **What about our proposed remedy do you have a problem with?** Maybe the remedy's fine with the supervisor but one small thing bothers them. You might be able to find a solution as long as your basic issue is dealt with.
- **Do you have other suggestions for how we can resolve this?** Who knows, maybe they have an approach that will be acceptable or at least a place from which to start.
- **What are your concerns if you agreed to our proposed remedy?** The answer may surprise you: it may be something you can assure management is not in the cards. They may be overestimating the impact. Or they may misunderstand the true nature of the remedy you're seeking.
- **This is very important to us. Are you saying you have no flexibility at all?** If a supervisor indicates flexibility, you'll know you've got some room to operate. If they don't, at least you'll know you've hit the wall and can prepare for the next step.



STEWARDS' GRIEVANCE HANDLING CHECKLIST

Preliminary Facts

- o Talk to member as soon as possible.
- o Let member tell the story.
- o Listen attentively. Do not interrupt. Create a positive and sympathetic atmosphere.
- o Take notes.
- o When member finishes the story, ask questions.
- o Get details, names of witnesses and types of documents the member believes will help with the grievance.
- o Discuss what member wants. Explain the possible and realistic remedies. Inform members of strengths and weaknesses of the grievance.
- o Recap your understanding about what the grievance is and the settlement sought.
- o Canvass other stewards and members to determine if the issue is an isolated incident or part of a larger trend

Work with the Union Representative and Assist in Investigating the Grievance

- o Contact your union representative to determine if the issue at hand is a grievance and to discuss next steps.
- o Use the UFCW Local 1518 Union Fact Sheet to answer the "5 W's" and "HR".
- o Investigate with an open mind. Do not personalize issues or prejudge the grievance's merits. Maintain an objective attitude.
- o Review relevant contract provisions and company policies or rules.
- o Interview the member and the member's witnesses. Then, interview the company's witnesses. Take notes.
- o In past practice cases, identify as many examples of the practice as possible. Obtain first-hand accounts.
- o Request all relevant information and documents from company.

While the Grievance is Being Processed

- o Answer the member's calls and questions. Communicate regularly
- o Involve the member as much as possible in grievance meetings.
- o Look for ways to involve members in the workplace issue.
- o Regularly inform the member of the status of the grievance, including what occurred at grievance meetings and of upcoming grievance steps. Do so as soon as possible.
- o Continually update the member on what is happening with the grievance.

ORGANIZING TO WIN

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THE WHO WHAT WHEN WHERE AND WHY OF UNION ORGANIZING

WHY Does our Union Organize?

UFCW Local 1518 organizes to build power for our members.

The fundamental principle of the labour movement is that there is strength in numbers, and organizing new members is how we increase our strength in numbers. Through organizing non-union competitors, we increase our ability to maintain strong collective agreements.

In Retail and Industrial Foods, our employers have lost much of their market share to non-union competition. At the bargaining table, one of the first things we hear from an employer is:

“Down the road my competitor has 50% of the labour costs”

Our union's strength in bargaining and representing members is interconnected with our strength to organize.

Union organizing is also critical to building a better British Columbia. Union members historically are the middle class, and the middle class is what drives a strong economy that most of our jobs depend on.

The decline in union density is not an accident, but instead is a strategic attack on workers from conservative politicians and corporate CEOs who are looking to increase their profits by cutting costs wherever possible, including the cost of equitable human labor.

Organizing new workers in diverse sectors and building power in existing sectors can stop this decline.

WHERE are we organizing?

UFCW Local 1518 organizes workplaces which have the greatest impact on improving the bargaining power for existing members because many of our employers are losing market share to non-union employers. The union is actively talking to people at many commercial and food locations.

In the industrial sector there are many non-union competitors. These employers often offer much lower wages, lower health and safety standards, and sub-par benefits.



It is conversations between UFCW Local 1518 members and non-union workers that hold the key to our organizing success.

WHAT is the process of joining a union?

The first step of forming a union is to contact a UFCW Local 1518 organizer.

One of our professional organizers can help answer any questions one of your friends might have about joining a union.

The second step is for your friend to talk to their coworkers to see if there is support at the workplace for joining a union. If there is support for joining a union, the BC Labour Board will order a secret ballot vote to be held at the worksite.

A person cannot be fired for joining a union and the labour board will never tell an employer who has signed a union card.

If a majority of workers vote in support of joining our union, then we can start in negotiating a first collective agreement.

WHO is an organizer?

All stewards are organizers.

Many of the people who call us about joining a union do so because they know someone who is a member of UFCW Local 1518.

The union has an organizing department of trained professionals that help with communication, legal, and other needs of an organizing drive.

You likely have family, friends, and neighbors who work at non-union competitors. Even though they don't work with you, they can be in the union- YOU can be a highly effective organizer.

WHEN can you get involved in organizing?

Now! Are you interested in learning more? Do you have a friend working at a non-union competitor who might be interested in talking confidentially to an organizer?

If you are interested in learning more about how you can help build power through organizing others, let your union representative know.

THANK YOU

Along with reminding members that THEY are our union, stewards wear many hats in our union -- as organizers, communicators, educators, problem solvers and leaders.

Your efforts in all of these areas truly make a difference in building a better life for our members and all British Columbians.



Together, we build a better life for all British Columbians