

Steward News...

a publication for CUPE Activists in Alberta

Summer 2006

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REPRESENTING MEMBERS AT MEETINGS WITH EMPLOYERS

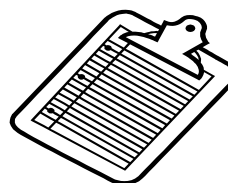
Leaders must be tough enough to fight;
Tender enough to cry;
Human enough to make mistakes;
Humble enough to admit them;
Strong enough to absorb the pain;
Resilient enough to bounce back
and keep on moving.

Rev. Jesse Jackson



Steward... An advocate for the member

- You are there to assist and defend the member
- You have the right to ask questions
- You have the right to speak privately with the grievor before, during and after any meeting with the employer



You will want to take notes while you are meeting with the employer. If you need time to get everything down, ask the employer to give you a minute to catch up or to slow down. If possible, you might have another steward in the room to take notes of the meeting.



THE FACTS

- ❖ Ask for the employer's facts in the case
- ❖ Ask for a copy of the employer's discipline policy
- ❖ Ask what is the reason for the discipline
- ❖ Ask what previous discipline this member has had and how it relates to the current discipline
- ❖ Ask how the employer has disciplined others for the this type of action

If you are called in at the last minute to a discipline hearing, ask for time to meet with the grievor before meeting with the employer. This will give you the opportunity to find out what the grievor believes he/she is being disciplined for and to determine what role the grievor will have in the meeting.



PLAN MEETINGS AHEAD

Planning and preparing for any meeting with the employer will not only help you to win your argument, it will help to gather information that may help you with the current case and it will help to develop a respectful communication and relationship with the employer.



MEETING ETIQUETTE

During any meeting with the employer, you will want to follow this etiquette:

- Be calm, calm, calm
- Maintain an even tone
- It's okay to repeat the Union's position
- Stick to the facts
- If you need a break to discuss anything with the grievor- advise the employer. Is it necessary to reschedule? How long will the break take? Do you need to do further research?

RESEARCH

- Before you attend a meeting with the employer, you will want to do as much research as you can.
- You will discuss the grievance with the grievor and any witnesses.
- You will check the local's file to see if this type of grievance has been dealt with before.
- What documents will help you with your case?
- The collective agreement, any employer policies, any information from the grievor's personnel file that applies to the current grievance.
- Have a full discussion with the grievor about what may be said at the meeting with the employer, who will talk, how you will deal with any new facts that come up and what your goal will be at the meeting.

A STEWARD'S TOOLKIT

What to keep handy

- ❑ Copy of your collective agreement
- ❑ Notepaper and pen
- ❑ Watch and calendar
- ❑ Grievance forms
- ❑ Grievance fact sheets
- ❑ Copy of your local by-laws and national constitution
- ❑ Copy of Steward's Handbook (available from Effective Stewarding Workshop)
- ❑ List of union members and contact information
- ❑ Seniority Lists
- ❑ Union membership sign-up cards
- ❑ Names and contact information for local executive and officers
- ❑ Copy of Local and Alberta Division newsletters
- ❑ CUPE member's kit (available from your National Representative)
- ❑ Other resources from CUPE such as:
 - Previous Steward's News
 - Booklet on Stopping Harassment
 - Booklet on Disability Rights in the Workplace
 - Right to Refuse cards



YOU MAY HAVE OTHER ITEMS TO ADD TO THIS LIST. LOOK AT IT OFTEN TO ADD NEW MATERIALS OR RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM YOUR UNION.

Plan Ahead

Plan what you will do if the employer (whether supervisor or manager) acts inappropriately, yells, gets into name calling, wants to debate collective agreement language, says you won't win at arbitration or acts physically aggressively. No one needs to sit and be yelled at or treated in a disrespectful, bullying manner.



After the Meeting

Spend some time discussing the meeting with the grievor:

- ✓ Did the employer have different information than you and the grievor?
- ✓ Were there differences in the employer and grievor explanations?
- ✓ What were they?
- ✓ What will you do with the differences?
- ✓ What will be the next step in the grievance?

UNION EDUCATION

Union education helps us develop the tools we need to defend our rights.

Union education puts our individual struggles into



context and shows us that we are part of larger struggles and movements for change - that we are not alone. Through union education we learn to strategize together, to fight back and win.

For more information about CUPE workshops, contact your CUPE Education Representative

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Check our CUPE Websites

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