



STEWARDS CORNER

Monthly Newsletter for Union Stewards

Steward as an Organizer Part 2: Welcoming New Hires

One of the key tasks of a steward is to build solidarity among the members of the Union. This applies to all Local Unions whether or not they operate under "right to work for less" laws. It's about organizing a Union that draws its strength from the visible support of all of its members.

First impressions are important

The importance of a new hire orientation program cannot be underestimated. A formal program negotiated in the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) or an informal one that takes place on the job will make a big difference. The truth is that a lot of future members don't know what it means to "work Union" so it is up to Local Union leaders and stewards to educate new hires.

Build Relationships

The best thing for stewards to do when they meet to new hires is to offer a friendly face. A new hire's first days on a new job are overwhelming, so knowing someone they can go to for help will mean a lot. Asking questions about where they came from, and why they wanted to work at this facility/shop can open opportunities to educate members about what it means to be a Union member.

It's good to have a new hire kit and membership card when you meet with new hires. Local Unions can obtain them through their Staff Representative and District/Sub-district offices.

Review the benefits of membership

Here are some possible talking points when meeting with new hires. Keep in mind, that the relationship between the steward and new hire will influence how these points are received.

It Made a Difference

Possible Talking Point: Our Union helped me out when I first started working here. It was a lot of little things that added up. They helped me with benefits questions and learning the overtime procedure. They showed me around this facility and kept me safe. I want to do that for you.

Our Contract

Possible Talking Point: As members of the USW we elect our own leaders to negotiate and enforce our contract with the company. This contract, which must be approved by the membership, covers our pay, benefits, and other working conditions. In this economy, people with real power always have an employment contract: movie stars, CEOs, professional athletes, and union members.

Our Voice

Possible Talking Point: Membership in the USW means having a voice in the issues that directly impact our families: our wages, hours, and working conditions. This is a democratic union in which members meet monthly to hear from our elected leaders and the local's various committees working on our behalf and to vote on any important decisions impacting us. Being a member means having a voice in your working life.

Our Well-Being

Possible Talking Point: In addition to the benefits of the contract USW members are eligible for a number of different group discount purchasing and service programs that benefit you and your family (e.g. Union Plus, free college).

The Ask

Possible Talking Point: Inside the packet is a handout explaining how member dues are spent. No organization can succeed without resources. Membership dues give us the resources to effectively negotiate and enforce our contract as well as safeguard other workplace rights we have as employees. PLEASE JOIN US IN THIS EFFORT BY STANDING WITH YOUR CO-WORKERS AND FILLING OUT THE USW MEMBERSHIP CARD RIGHT NOW.

If your Local would be interested in training to develop a new hire orientation program please contact your Staff Representative to facilitate setting up a course.



To get future newsletters in your email use the QR code or go to: www.usw.org/StewardsCorner

Take the time to check out our free USW courses on-line at: education.usw.org



What Is a Grievance?

In non-union workplaces workers don't have much power to deal with issues on the job. Employers can ignore their workers' concerns and terminate them for any or no reason. This is called "at-will employment."

Your Voice on the Job

Workers in unionized workplaces have a voice on the job, and the grievance procedure is one of their mechanisms for exercising it. In a general sense, a grievance is a "cause for complaint." However, the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) specifically defines what constitutes a grievance and the steps of the procedure. In most cases, the CBA does this under articles or sections titled "Grievances," "Complaints," or "Grievance Procedure."

Grievance procedures generally define grievances as disagreements between the Union and Employer over the application and interpretation of the CBA, although every procedure is unique.

Different Types of Grievances

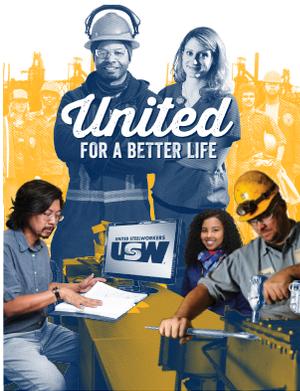
The different categories of grievances are outlined below. In every case, the CBA will come into play. For advice on pursuing grievances in any one of these categories contact a member of your Grievance Committee or Staff Representative.

1. **Violation of the CBA** – The CBA is always the first place to look when considering whether a grievance exists.
2. **Violations of applicable federal, state, local laws** – Many CBAs incorporate laws that protect workers such as the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA).

3. **Violation of Management's Rules, Policies, and Regulations** – Under many collective bargaining agreements, management has the right to issue rules that must be observed by the workers as a condition of employment. The union, however, has the right to grieve their "reasonableness." Management must enforce the rules fairly and abide by them when dealing with those that are covered by them.
4. **Violation of Management Rights** – While management's rights clauses place many aspects of a company's operations directly under management control, these rights also convey responsibilities for which management can be held accountable.
5. **Violation of Past Practice** – The violation of long-standing practices accepted by both parties can be grounds for a grievance. Deciding whether a past practice does in fact exist can be difficult.
6. **Just Cause for Discipline and Discharge** – The overwhelming majority of contracts stipulate that "just cause" must exist for management to issue discipline or discharge. While CBAs rarely define "just cause," standards have emerged that most arbitrators will accept and the Union should use when pursuing this type of grievance.

The grievance procedure is a critical tool for defending the CBA and representing members on the job. Stewards don't have to memorize it word for word, but it's good to know where it is in the CBA!

The next issue of the Stewards Corner will discuss the importance of time limits in grievance handling.



New member kits are available through your District. Have your Local Union leadership reach out to the assigned Staff Representative to order them for your Local Union.



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