

Local 947

Affiliated with
International Union of Journeymen
& Allied Trades

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SHOP STEWARDS HANDBOOK

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES:

IMPORTANT!

The procedure in many shops is that the Shop Steward obtain completed union forms and remit them to the Union Office and/or company providing health insurance benefits. It is imperative that the union form and the new member's monthly contributions (dues, medical contribution, etc.) be received for the new member to obtain coverage. We recommend that the Steward immediately have all new hires complete the form and give the completed form to the bookkeeper to ensure receipt of forms and payment in a timely manner.

Completion of IUJAT Enrollment Form:

The Top portion (Section 1- Employee Information) of the form must be completed by all members and must be completed in its entirety (please include date of hire).

The names and birth dates of all dependants (Section 2 – Dependant Information) are required if the new member is to have medical coverage.

Prior to your employer being able to deduct Union dues from your pay, all new members MUST complete Section 3 (the dues authorization section) located on the right hand side of the enrollment form. It is important that each member sign for dues authorization.

Section 4 – If the collective bargaining agreement provides Security Fund contributions for the member, it is important that each member select a beneficiary.

Section 5 – Life insurance must be completed if the collective bargaining agreement provides life insurance coverage for the member. It is important that the member selects a beneficiary and includes the beneficiary's address. Please note that at any time, if a member wishes to change beneficiaries for either their Security Fund or Life Insurance coverage, he or she must do so in writing. Beneficiary changes should be mailed to Attn.: Fund Office.

NOTES:

Your collective bargaining agreement is not just a legal document outlining your wages, benefits, hours and working conditions. It is a dynamic mechanism whereby you as stewards can enforce your rights and negotiate additional terms and conditions in a positive way. If the CBA is ignored, on the other hand, it can erode those same rights.

Thus, the keeping of a diary of weekly events can empower the steward and, correspondingly, empower your members. A good diary has been known to strike mortal fear into the hearts of managers and supervisors who would attempt to bully, abuse, or violate employee rights.

Remember, after the initial contract is signed, management has the right to make reasonable work rules and to administer discipline under those rules. However, such work rules must be sent to the Union with a copy to the shop steward. The Union is allowed the right to review a rule and can grieve an unreasonable rule. Furthermore, the rule must be explained to the workforce and the consequences for violating the rule must be communicated.

Stay vigilant and you will prevail. This is why Unions win the greatest number of grievances in discipline cases and usually win, particularly in discharge cases. A steward's diary is essential to testimony in these areas.

Leader – He/she enlists the cooperation of his/her fellow workers and initiates action in their interests. He/she seeks to prevent grievances by his/her effort to remove the causes of grievances and by constantly looking out for contract violations.

Counselor – The Steward advises and assists the Union member on many matters, which are outside the scope of normal collective bargaining.

WHAT THE STEWARD NEEDS TO KNOW

- The contract – clauses, procedures, past interpretations.
- The shop or department rules, conditions, processes, operations.
- Job duties and rates
- Methods of wage payment.
- Seniority standing of members
- State and Federal laws, regulations.
- Union members in every department.
- Employer representatives with whom he/she must deal.
- Effective ways of dealing with people.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT WRITING A GRIEVANCE:

- **Use the union's Grievance Form:**
Have the member with the grievance sign it and send a copy to the union.
- **Be as brief as possible**
- **Don't argue your case in the written Grievance:**
The written grievance only informs the employer of the complaint, it should have no arguments supporting the case. Of course, you should have them written down for your information and for other Union officers.
- **Provide a complete Statement of the Facts:**
It should include the five (5) W's – Who, What, When, Where, and Why – plus the Union demand.
- **Write the way you talk:**
Don't be intimidated by the employer representative. The most impressive kind of grievance is one that briefly but clearly states the situation.
- **Practice Makes Writing Easier:**
When you first start to write grievances, it requires a lot of hard work. If you stick to it and practice, writing becomes much easier.
- **Be Definite:**
Too many stewards say things like "I hope I have a grievance" "I think I have a grievance." When you put a grievance in writing, you do not "hope" or "think" that it is a grievance, you know it is, as far as the employer is concerned.

Sources of Information:

I. PEOPLE WHO CAN SUPPLY YOU WITH INFORMATION WHILE WRITING THE GRIEVANCE:

- **Grievant**
- **Fellow Workers**
- **Other witnesses to the grievance**
- **Fellow Union stewards and officers** - *they can supply ideas about similar grievances in the past.*
- **Supervisors**
It is usually best to speak to the employer about a grievance before you actually fight the case. Get the employer's views so you will have a better idea of the employer's reasoning. You also can get a clearer idea of the facts after hearing them from both the worker and the supervisor.

II. EMPLOYER

- **Seniority Lists**
- **Safety Records**
- **Absentee Records**
- **Medical Records**
- **Employer Records**

III. UNION RECORDS

- **Union Contract**
- **Past Grievance File**

PRESENTING THE GRIEVANCE:

Effectively Dealing with People:

- No two people are approachable in the same manner; this applies to union members and employer officials alike.
- The Union representative is after results that will benefit the worker and the group as a whole; he/she must overcome personal likes, dislikes, fears and prejudices.
- Union representatives should not assume that their thinking processes operate in the same way as that of the members to whom they are speaking.
- Effective human communication with the members or the employer, particularly when discussing complex issues requires considerable patience and time.

- Treat the members and employer representatives as you would like to be treated.
- Let any break in good relations with employer representatives come from the other side.
- Remember that the representative to whom you are speaking is not always personally responsible for the complaint or grievance; therefore, you may get less cooperation from him/her by trying to place the blame on his/her shoulders.
- It is not wise to place the employer representative, or any person, in a position from which they cannot retreat on an issue without a great deal of embarrassment. If possible, leave a back door open to provide an easy way out.
- Continually evaluate the points the other person is making. Look for underlying motives of their position. What is said and apparent on the surface may not be the real issue at stake.
- Take a positive position...not defensive. In trying to convince the other side to see your point of view, attempt first to get them in a “yes” frame of mind.

Some points to remember when presenting the case:

- **Prepare your case beforehand**
- **Avoid arguments among union people in the presence of employer**
- **Get the main point of the employer’s argument**
- **Disagree with dignity**
- **Avoid unnecessary delays**
- **Settle the grievance at the lowest possible step**
- **Supervisor’s role – let him/her tell you how he/she is right before you show him/her where you believe they are wrong**
- **Avoid bluffing – it is wiser to develop a reputation for honesty**

THE STEWARD’S STRATEGIC POSITION IN THE UNION ORGANIZATION:

The “vital link” between the members and the officers.

A continuous “on the spot” administrator of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

A central position in the relationship between the Union, workers and the employer.

THE STEWARD:

- Represents workers to the employer (handles grievances)
- Represents workers to Union organization
- Represents Union to the employer
- Represents Union to workers
- Interprets the employer to workers
- Interprets the employer to Union

METHODS OF SELECTING STEWARDS:

- Election by members in unit/department.
- Appointed by officer of local union

GENERAL DUTIES AND SPECIAL SKILLS OF THE STEWARD

Organizer – This function includes organizing the unorganized in his/her location, combating anti-Union activities, and developing membership interest and participation in Union affairs.

Educator – In this capacity the steward gives information about the history and achievements of the Union movement, and current Union activities and policies. He/she helps explain and interpret the contract.

Interviewer – The Steward listens to complaints and answers questions from fellow workers. He/she seeks to get the full, true facts about all grievances and other complaints by talking with aggrieved workers and other persons who may be involved or have pertinent information.

Negotiator – The Steward helps prepare and present grievances of workers, along with your Union representative, to the proper employer representative (supervisor, department head, or others, depending on the contract provision) in order to obtain fair and satisfactory adjustment.