



What is a Job Steward?

As a steward, you play a vital role in supporting members when they have questions about the Collective Agreement, workplace concerns, or are asked to attend a meeting with the employer. Some of the responsibilities of being a Steward are:

- Answering questions for members
- Distributing important information and maintaining our union bulletin boards
- Helping members interpret and understand their Collective Agreement
- Listening to members regarding their concerns
- Sitting in on meetings to ensure members are treated fairly
- Acting as a liaison between members, Lead Stewards and Business Agents
- Assisting in filing grievances when the Collective Agreement hasn't been followed
- Building the Union in your workplace
- Treating all members fairly and with respect

Thank you for your commitment to representing and advocating for our members. Your role as a steward is critical in supporting our members, ensuring their voices are heard, and upholding their rights in the workplace. Your dedication plays a key part in fostering a positive and fair work environment.

Guidelines and Expectations for Stewards

To ensure a consistent and effective approach, please follow this new process. By following this process, we can ensure members receive timely and informed support.

Member Contacts the Steward

- When a member requires assistance, they will reach out to a steward in their branch or unit.
- If a member doesn't know who their steward is, they will call the CUPE 1004 office and will be provided the name and contact information of stewards in their branch or unit.

Steward's Role When Members Contact Them

- When a member calls, please ensure that you respond in a timely manner, even if it's just a quick call back to say that you're working and will get back to them at a later time - then make sure you don't break that callback promise.
- Listen carefully to the member's concerns and take notes. Be aware of privacy while on the call and try to get to a place where you won't be overheard. Notes are extremely important. Please ensure they are fulsome and clearly written.
- Ask what is going on and let the member speak. Be an active listener. Gather all relevant details and clarify any uncertainties
- Sympathize without judging. You are the problem solver and advocate - not a judge. Statements like "Wow that must feel like a really difficult situation to navigate" and "I'm so sorry to hear that you were treated that way/had that experience" can help to make the member feel at ease.
- After the member has spoken, ask "What would you want done about this?" Asking what the member wants helps establish the member's expectations. Don't make promises but let them know you will begin work on their issues. Give them a timeline on when you'll be able to get back to them next - and make sure you keep to that timeline, so be realistic about how long it will take you. Remember the principle in labour law: work now, grieve later.
- Assess the situation and determine the best course of action, if you feel comfortable doing so. Some ways that different issues can be handled are:
 - Addressing with management directly
 - Raising at Labour Management
 - Referring safety issues to OH&S worker reps
 - Begin the grievance process
- Refer to your steward resources including the Steward's Toolkit and [Steward Handbook](#).
- Seek guidance if needed—if you're unsure at any stage, reach out to the Lead Steward for advice and direction.

Guidelines and Expectations for Stewards

Collective Agreement Questions

- Hear out the member, take notes on the details of their issue, and let them know you will get back to them with an answer.
- You may need time to find the answer in the Collective Agreement. Give them a timeline on when you will be able to get back to them and make sure you stick to that timeline. Be realistic about how long this may take you.
- Research the agreement and provide accurate information. Collective Agreements can be found on the [CUPE 1004 website](#) under the Units header. If not sure, contact a Lead Steward.
- Ensure members understand their rights and how the language applies to their situation.
- Do not make commitments to members about outcomes—focus on ensuring a proper review of the issue.
- Remember the principle in labour law: work now, grieve later.
- Possible Grievances – if uncertain whether an issue warrants a grievance, refer to the [Grievance Fact Sheet](#) to gather information then contact the Lead Steward for guidance.
- If you are sure that the issue warrants a grievance, contact the Business Agent to start the grievance process.
- Refer to your steward resources including the Steward's Toolkit and [Steward Handbook](#).

Meetings with the Employer

- When a member is called into a meeting with the employer, you may be contacted to provide support by:
 - The member
 - The employer
 - The Lead Steward
 - The Vice President of the Local
 - The Business Agent assigned to your worksite
- You will not lose any pay by agreeing to support the member in the meeting and have the right to do union business like this on employer time.
- Types of meetings that you may be called for include investigations, discipline, accommodations, return to work, attendance management
- You can request to meet with the Employer to resolve issues informally. This is useful ahead of a grievance being filed. If you are in discussion to resolve a grievance, ensure you are in close contact with your Business Agent on the matter prior to agreeing to any resolution.

Guidelines and Expectations for Stewards

Steward's Role When Representing Members In Meetings With the Employer

- If possible, ask the employer what the meeting is about and what you can expect from the meeting before connecting with the member.
- Take the time to pre-meet with the member to ensure they understand the purpose of the meeting as well as their role and your role during the meeting.
- Provide guidance to the member on their rights, including the right to union representation.
- Accompany the member and take notes for documentation.
- Debrief with the member afterward and discuss next steps, if needed. Don't make promises but reassure them you're working on their issues or there as continued support. Provide them with a timeline on when you'll be able to reconnect with them next.

Involving the Lead Steward & Business Agent (BA)

- If you have any questions or you are unsure on a course of action or next steps, contact the Lead Steward in your branch or unit. The Lead Steward will advise the Steward and, if needed, escalate the matter to the assigned Business Agents (BA).
- If you know that a grievance needs to be filed, or some other official action on behalf of the union needs to happen, contact the BA.
- The BA will review the facts and determine possible next steps, such as:
 - Meeting with the employer
 - Sending an email
 - Attending a meeting
 - Filing a grievance
- The Lead Steward supports stewards in carrying out the determined next steps.
- The Lead Steward will liaise with the BA to ensure proper handling of issues.

Handling Documentation

- You must hold on to your notes and keep them in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA).
- For all grievance files, all related notes will need to be provided to the Business Agent. This includes notes from investigation meetings, pre-meetings, debrief meetings, discussions with the member and employer, Grievance Fact Sheet, etc.
- You can provide your notes in person by dropping off at CUPE 1004 office or by emailing them to the Business Agent.

Guidelines and Expectations for Stewards

Handling Grievances and the Grievance Procedure at CUPE 1004

- The Steward, Lead Steward, and BA will work together to determine if a grievance is necessary. When a steward has a grievance to file, they will gather all relevant information, fill out the grievance fact sheet and check list (found in your Steward's Toolkit), and then bring that information to the Business Agent for review and potential filing of the grievance.
- If the Steward is comfortable in doing so, the BA may ask the Steward to draft the grievance form. You will have grievance form templates in your Steward's Toolkit on common grievances.
- Once finalized, the BA will file the grievance form, as BAs have carriage of grievances.
- Stewards will be invited to follow along with the grievance as it moves through its process - this can mean:
 - helping the BA gather and clarify further information relevant to the grievance
 - attending further meetings and grievance presentations and taking notes
 - meeting with the member to update them on their grievance
 - assisting with writing grievance presentations and presenting the grievances