

Educational material about some of the most common questions received by the Union.

What is a Collective Agreement?

A Collective Agreement is a legally binding contract negotiated between an Employer and a Union, outlining the terms and conditions of employment for a group of unionized employees (a bargaining unit). It's essentially a "rule book" that defines working conditions, wages, benefits, and other aspects of the job, covering everything from pay and leave to grievance procedures.

What is the difference between HR and my Union?

- Human Resources are the "agent" of the Employer and management, not the Union or the unionized worker. Their role is to represent the Employer and their managers, act in the best interest of the Employer, and to reduce liability to the organization.
- Your Union is your agent, representing you and acting in your best interest no matter what the issue is. We always have your back.

I have an issue with my exempt manager. What do I do?

- Always contact your Union representative who will be able to listen to the issues, provide feedback, and guide you in the right direction.
- If you have an issue with a manager and then you go to HR, you would be going to the people who may potentially represent your manager against you. Anything you say to them maybe used against you. Always contact your Union.

I have an issue with a Teamsters coworker. What do I do?

- Always contact your Union representative who will be able to listen to the issues, provide feedback, and guide you in the right direction.
- The Union does not take sides against fellow Teamsters. The Union can resolve, fairly represent, and mediate between both Teamsters to minimize or avoid escalations.
- A Teamsters member should not engage in behavior that causes harm to other Teamsters members or the Union.

My manager says that they have an open door policy. What does that mean?

- That is called "lip service". Your manager can be friendly but they are not your friend. If you choose to walk through that door, then please know that anything that you say to them can reach HR and therefore be used against you.

I was asked to attend an HR meeting. What do I do?

- Never attend an HR meeting without Union representation, whether that HR meeting is self initiated or not. Anything you say in an HR meeting may be used against you. Always contact your Union Representative who will act in your best interest.

My manager starts communicating with me mainly by email, documents conversations and meetings, and starts using words like "expectations". What does that mean?

- Every situation is different. This may be a sign or a red flag that your manager maybe documentting matters to build a case or "establish a pattern" against you. It is a common practice when a manager believes that a worker may not be meeting performance expectations and therefore now documents events in writing to possibly present forward in a possible future HR meeting. The use of words such as "expectations" or "meeting expectations" is a hint.
- Before jumping to conclusions, please contact your Union representaive so that they can better understand the specifics of the situation and so that you can be given informative advice.

If my manager maybe misbehaving, abusive, not following processes/ policies, or violating my rights. Should I be worried about coming forward?

- You the unionized Teamster hold significantly more power over your non-unionized manager than they do over you. Exempt managers are not unionized and therefore are not protected by a Collective Agreement nor the **BC Labour Code**. You are protected!
- If a manager engages in questionable behaviour that they should not engage in, then most likely they may also engage in fear tactics against you to prevent you from coming forward. If you do not step forward and report it, then you enable them to continue with that behaviour.
- When a manager is misbehaving, most of the time their own HR agent may not be aware of that misbehaviour until you come forward so that it can be addressed. The Union and the Employer can address any unacceptable workplace behaviour if we are made aware of it.
- Keep in mind that it is in the Employer's best interest to have a harmonious workplace, and they may become less inclined to support or keep a troubling manager in the organization who becomes a long-term liability to them.
- A manager has the right to manage and ensure that the operational needs of the organization are being met, but they do not have the right to abuse their management powers to violate your rights or disadvantage you. Management is held to higher standards.
- Many times workplace conflicts happen due to misunderstandings between individuals. Please contact your Union so that we can better understand the situation, advise, work together to de-escalate and resolve.

What are my workplace health and safety rights?

- The Right to Know - Workers have the right to be informed about potential hazards in their workplace, including information, training, and supervision to protect themselves.
- The Right to Participate - Workers have the right to participate in keeping their workplace healthy and safe, which may include selecting or being a health and safety representative or committee member, attending Joint Health and Safety Committee meetings, and reporting unsafe conditions and practices.
- The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work - Workers have the right to refuse work, where there is reasonable cause, that they believe could be dangerous to themselves or their co-workers. You cannot be penalized for refusing unsafe work. To get educated about the process and on what is a "valid refusal", please visit www.worksafebc.com. Always talk to your Union beforehand.

I am being asked or directed to do work that may not be part of my job.
What do I do?

- Every situation is different. Contact your Union Representative who will be able to listen to the situation and advise of the next appropriate step.
- Do not refuse an operational directive. In a unionized industry, "work now grieve later". Contact your Union.

What is a class specification?

- It is commonly referred to as "job description". It is an official and protected document that states what your duties and responsibilities are in the role or position that you occupy, along with the minimum qualifications and standards required for that position.

What are my rights and benefits?

- The Collective Agreement lists your rights and benefits. Always read and familiarize yourself with your Collective Agreement. A worker who knows their rights is a strong worker.
- Please contact your Union Representative if unsure about some of the language in the Collective Agreement.

What protects my rights?

- Your Union.
- The Collective Agreement.
- The BC Labour Code.
- The Employment Standards Act.
- The Workers Compensation Act/ Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.
- The BC Human Rights Code.

Do the Teamsters and the GVRDEU work together?

- The Teamsters and the GVRDEU are two separate Unions but we always work together and support each other. We always stand in solidarity with each other.
- A united and well-informed membership makes a strong Union.

Are my conversations with my Union protected?

- Your conversations with your Union representative are always confidential. We do not disclose any information to anyone. We follow your direction.
- The Union will listen to you, give advice, make recommendations, represent, protect, and act in your best interest.

The above represent some of the most common questions received by the Union. The Union encourages the membership to always be involved, active, and vocal within their Union. The Union encourages you to always contact your Union Official Murwan Salame and share any feedback or concerns that you may have so that they can be addressed or clarified. A united and well-informed membership makes a strong Union.

On behalf of your Union and President Stan Hennessy, thank you for your hard work and support.

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