



BECOME A UNION STEWARD

Revised February 2018

AUPE 

To represent
and support
AUPE members
through solidarity
and mobilization.

MISSION STATEMENT

ALBERTA UNION OF PROVINCIAL EMPLOYEES

WHAT IS A UNION STEWARD?

A Union Steward is the traditional title given to a Union member who is the Union's recognized representative in the workplace. In AUPE, a Union Steward is a member who has been nominated, and trained to act on behalf of other members. (Union Stewards are vital in a workplace. The number of Union Stewards depends on the workplace size, physical set-up, number of work units and hours of work.)

WHAT MAKES A GOOD UNION STEWARD?

A Union Steward represents their co-workers and are their spokesperson. Whether looking at the relationship between the Union and Members, or between the Union and Management, the Union Steward is key.

The Union Steward needs to have a keen interest in people and an enthusiasm for Labour's ideas and programs. The Union Steward should enjoy helping others, and have the desire and initiative to look after the interest of the members.

A good Union Steward will be:

- Impartial, fair, objective and professional;
- Friendly and easy to talk to;
- Quick in securing facts and information, and able to use them effectively;
- Enthusiastic about Union work and able to help Union members to understand the Union's role;
- Courageous enough to tell members when they may not have a case, and have the "guts" to stand up to the Employer when representing a member who has a case; and
- Someone who does not pass the buck.

Stewards' roles from the foundation of the Union movement.

They work to inform and motivate union members, to protect the Collective Agreement, and to keep the information flowing between the Membership and the Leadership. In the eyes of the members, Stewards are the Union by their actions and their conduct.

SUPPORT FOR UNION STEWARDS

AUPE provides support for our Stewards through education, mentorship, staff assistance and more.

The Union Steward always has their Membership Services Officer (MSO)/Union Representative to rely on for advice and mentoring. The Union Steward is protected by language in their Collective Agreements and under applicable legislation.

THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A STEWARD

1. Approach a member of your Chapter/Local Executive or an AUPE staff member.
2. Advise them you are interested in becoming a Union Steward.
3. Review Union Steward policies 10-14 and 10-16 (located in this document)
4. Read and review this booklet as it explains the roles and responsibilities of Union Stewards.
5. Fill out the nomination form and sign it, give the nomination form to a member of your Chapter Executive. If you don't have Chapters in your Local give the nomination form to your Local Executive.
6. The Local/Chapter Executive will review the nomination form and make the recommendation on acceptance.
7. They will then forward the nomination form to Edmonton HQ located at 10451 – 170 Street, T5P 4S7 to the attention of AUPE Education Section.
8. To register for Union Steward training call 780-930-3300 or 1-800-232-7284 and ask for the Core Course Registrar.

POLICY

EDUCATION

10-14 Policy on Grievance Handling for Union Stewards (September 2017)

The number of grievances being handled by the Union is steadily increasing. It is necessary that Union Stewards be involved in this process at the worksite and promote the Union position of attempting to satisfactorily resolve complaints and grievances quickly and at the lowest level. The number of technical challenges on grievances is also increasing and therefore there must be a system set up to prevent unnecessary losses.

This policy is designed to provide:

Assurance that there will be:

1. proper representation for the grievor on all grievances;
2. proper training process for Union Stewards;
3. proper flow of information so that the Union is aware at all times of what step each action is at and what documentation flows with the file;
4. that the Union Steward will be afforded appropriate support from AUPE to help them effectively represent the members.

Policy

1. Union Stewards must be nominated by their component in accordance with the Constitution. Only recognized Union Stewards may process grievances.

Note: A Union Steward may represent any member who is covered by an AUPE Collective Agreement, regardless whether they come from a different Chapter or Local.

2. Union Stewards must be properly trained in grievance handling as per Policy 10-15, prior to dealing with grievances. This can be done through the recognized Union Steward training program.
3. Union Stewards responsibilities are to handle grievances prior to arbitration (except for the Level that immediately precedes arbitration/adjudication). The Membership Services Officer will normally be involved at this step (or the Union Steward should at least have reviewed the grievance with the Membership Services Officer). During the processing of any grievance, the Union Steward shall consult regularly with the appropriate Membership Services Officer to receive guidance on grievance wording, precedent decisions, and various do's and don'ts to keep in mind. As well, the Union Steward shall submit copies of all grievances and related documents to the Membership Services Officer immediately as they are received.

With the recent rise of jurisdictional objections arising from grievance wording and processing, it is necessary that, prior to submitting a written grievance, the Union Steward consult with the Membership Services Officer to ensure the grievance is properly written and filed. (If time limit adherence does not permit such consultation, contact the Membership Services Officer and ask him/her to obtain an extension of time limits so that you may discuss the grievance with the Membership Services Officer or file the grievance and then consult with the Membership Services Officer as soon as possible and definitely prior to the grievance hearing.)

4. The Membership Services Officer will likely assume handling of the grievance at last level prior to arbitration/adjudication. The Union Steward should continue to be involved.
5. The Union will determine whether the matter ought to be submitted to arbitration/adjudication. If the Union decides to submit the matter to arbitration/adjudication, representation shall be provided as necessary.
6. Remember: All documents received by the Union Steward must be copied and forwarded immediately to the Membership Services Officer so that the grievance can be properly dealt with. It is imperative that this process be adhered to so as to ensure that the duty of fair representation owed by the Union to the grievor is adhered to.
7. The President of the Union has delegated authority to the Union Staff to do such things as extend time limits and waive levels. If you find that these types of things are required, please contact your Membership Services Officer immediately. If you are in doubt as to whether you have authority to take an action, contact your Membership Services Officer for advice immediately.
8. As Union Stewards, it is important that you do not exceed your authority as you may be exposing yourself or the Union to liability.

POLICY

EDUCATION

10-16 Policy on Union Steward Expectations (September 2017)

1. Once an AUPE member has been properly nominated and has completed the AUPE Union Steward training program it is expected that they will assume their roles and responsibilities as outlined in this policy. It is also expected that Union Stewards will work in conjunction with their regional AUPE Office/ Membership Services Officer [MSO] in order to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
2. To be effective at the workplace, Union Stewards must:
 - Know and become familiar with the Collective Agreement, the Union constitution, bylaws, structure and operations, and various legislations;
 - Protect and Defend the rights of Union members by enforcing the Collective Agreement and other workplace and Union rights such as Occupational Health and Safety and Human Rights legislation;
 - Building and Strengthen the Union through education, advocacy and distribution of Union literature;
 - Communicate pressing issues between the workplace and AUPE Headquarters and Regional Offices.
3. Union Stewards will:
 - Interpret Collective Agreements;
 - Represent Members in Meetings and Investigations;
 - Attend Disciplinary Meetings;
 - Handle Grievances.
4. A record will be maintained for each active Union Steward by the Membership Services Officer for the purpose of tracking Union Steward utilization.
5. If a Union Steward feels that they are no longer able to assume the full responsibilities of a Union Steward, they must complete a Union Steward Withdrawal Form. The completed form is to be sent to the AUPE Education Department. The Education Department will send a letter confirming the withdrawal to the Union Steward, the appropriate Membership Services Officer and the Chairperson of the affected component(s). The Union Steward Database will be updated. (See Forms – Union Steward Withdrawal Form).
6. In the event that a member in their capacity as a Union Steward fails to fulfill their roles and responsibilities, the matter shall be referred to the Component Chair to address.

In the event that the issue is with the Local Chair in their capacity as a Union Steward, the issue shall be referred to the Executive Committee to address.

After being addressed, should a Union Steward continue to not meet the expectations as laid out in Policy 10-16, the member shall be referred to the Union Steward Withdrawal form.
7. In the event that a Member in their capacity as a Union Steward has acted in a manner that adversely affects the union, and/or the membership, the matter shall be dealt with in accordance with AUPE Constitution – Article 29 – Member Conduct, Complaints and Discipline.

UNION STEWARD TRAINING

In order to attend the Foundations for Union Stewards the following courses must be completed: Introduction to Your Union, Contract Interpretation, Introduction to Health and Safety and Basic Conflict Management. Please review AUPE's core course calendar at www.aupe.org to select a date and location that works for you.

The Foundations for a Union Steward course will focus on the Union Steward as a Grievance Handler. The following areas will be covered to ensure a thorough process is followed for managing grievances. The areas include: Roles and Responsibilities of a Steward, Interviewing Members, Legislation, Investigations, Disciplinary and Non-Disciplinary Grievances, Grievance Writing and Presentation. The program will include anti-racism training, duty to accommodate situations and exposure to many other workplace scenarios. Members will be expected to attend all three days of training and complete a homework assignment within a specific time period to continue on to the mentoring component of the program.

Upon receiving the completed homework assignment, members will be contacted by the Senior Membership Services Officer Advisor to arrange a mentoring opportunity with AUPE Membership Services Officers in the location nearest to you.

Upon completion of the mentoring component of the program, members will receive their certificate and be designated as a Union Steward in accordance with Policy 10-14 Policy on Grievance Handling for Union Stewards; Policy 10-16 Policy on Union Steward Expectations and be expected to fulfill the following duties:

Union Stewards will:

- Interpret Collective Agreements;
- Represent Members in Meetings and Investigations;
- Attend Disciplinary Meetings;
- File and Present Grievances.

AUPE CONSTITUTION

Article 21 - Locals Without Chapters

21.03 (f)

"...The Executive Board is empowered to nominate Union Stewards for assessment, training and appointment by AUPE between annual general meetings of the Local. All members of the Executive Board shall be deemed to be stewards."

21.03 (i)

The Annual General Meeting of the Local shall nominate Union Stewards for assessment, training and appointment by AUPE as it deems necessary;

Article 23 - Chapters

23.04

"...This Board is empowered to nominate Union Stewards for assessment, training and appointment by AUPE between annual general meetings of the Chapter."

23.10 (f)

The Annual General Meeting of the Chapter "...shall nominate for assessment, training and appointment by AUPE such Union Stewards as it deems necessary."

UNION STEWARD NOMINATION FORM

Please check the appropriate box

I would like to: ☐ Become a NEW Union Steward ☐ REINSTATE my Union Steward status
(please note requirements must be met)

Please Print Clearly

Name:

Address:

City/Town:

Postal Code:

Home Phone:

Workphone:

E-mail:

Local:

Chapter:

Employer:

Worksite:

Signature of Member

☐ I have read policies 10-14 and 10-16

The Local/Chapter has reviewed the Nomination:

Accept ☐

Decline ☐

Locals with Chapters:

Chapter Executive Member (please print and sign name)

Locals with NO Chapters:

Local Executive Member (please print and sign name)

Please forward this nomination form
to the attention of Education Section

AUPE Headquarters
10451 – 170 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5P 4S7

Solidarity Place Edmonton (HQ)

10451 – 170 Street
Edmonton, AB T5P 4S7
P: 1-800-232-7284
F: 780-930-3392
F: 780-930-3397 (Labour Relations)
TF Fax: 1-888-388-2873

Athabasca Regional Office

Street: 4903 – 49 Avenue
Mail: Box 2227
Athabasca, AB T9S 2B7
P: 1-800-232-7284
F: 780-675-3727

Calgary Regional Office

200, 2116 – 27 Avenue NE
Calgary, AB T2E 7A6
P: 1-800-232-7284
F: 403-283-7328

Camrose Regional Office

4704F – 49 Avenue
Camrose, AB T4V 3K9
P: 1-800-232-7284
F: 780-672-2296

Grande Prairie Regional Office

102, 9815 – 101 Avenue
Grande Prairie, AB T8V 0X6
P: 1-800-232-7284
F: 780-532-0580

Lethbridge Regional Office

203, 1921 Mayor Magrath Drive S.
Lethbridge, AB T1K 2R8
P: 1-800-232-7284
F: 403-327-5827

Medicine Hat Regional Office

3, 1001 Kingsway Avenue SE
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 2X7
P: 1-800-232-7284
F: 403-526-6471

Peace River Regional Office

9910 – 99 Avenue, Box 6895
Peace River, AB T8S 1S6
P: 1-800-232-7284
F: 780-624-4859

Red Deer Regional Office

101, 4719 – 48 Avenue
Red Deer, AB T4N 3T1
P: 1-800-232-7284
F: 403-340-1210



Questions?

Call the Member Resource Centre toll-free at 1-800-232-7284

Open Monday – Friday, 8:30 – 4:30
*leave a message after hours and an agent
will call you back the next business day*

Email: info@aupe.org

www.aupe.org

