



FYI



| PLEASE POST |

Date: April 19, 2024
To: Sooke Transition House
Re: Friday Fact: What is a Union?

Name,

Unions (plural noun) · **the Union** (noun)

1. the action or fact of joining or being joined, especially in a political context.
2. a club, society, or association formed by people with a **common interest or purpose**.

Who is the Union?

You are! And so are all your co-workers except for your site supervisors and management. A union is a collective of workers joining together to push for better working conditions.

This goes well beyond just your workplace though; you are connected to thousands of other unionized workers across the province doing similar work to you and fighting for safer, better working conditions.

There are also staff assigned to support workers and stewards at your workplace. These staff are here to support workers using their "Union Tools" such as the grievance procedure, forming a labour management committee and supporting the Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) committee on health and safety issues.

The BCGEU prides itself on fighting for equality for all in the workplace. The BCGEU is anti-oppressive and stands as an ally with marginalized communities. In the union there is no place on any worksite for bullying and harassment.

What does the union do?

At the heart of the matter, a union protects your most basic rights as a worker. This can mean many things ranging from:

1. Your right to bring up and refuse unsafe work without your employer being able to discipline you for it.
2. The employer needs "Just cause" to fire or discipline a worker.



3. You have stewards in place who can support you if you are having issues in the workplace as well as file a grievance if the employer is breaking the collective agreement.
4. Use your voice to bring up issues in the workplace and find solutions with your coworkers without the risk of being disciplined.
5. Bargains with the employer agency (CSSEA) for increases to wages, benefits and more.

In the next weeks, we will go into further details of how to use these tools and why you, as a worker, need to be involved and active in your union for you to get the most benefit from them.

How can you get involved?

Talk to your steward, sign your membership card, check the member portal, attend an education day, join a committee, be a steward, sit on your Local, attend local meetings, or simply talk to your co-workers. The union is for everyone!

The next email will be about knowing your rights!

In Solidarity,

Kate Banky

Local 301 Chairperson

Prabhjot Kaur & Kathleen Mann

BCGEU Staff Representatives

P.S. Stay up to date on union news by signing into BCGEU's Member Portal. Access it with your login at <https://my.bcgeu.ca/> or, if you haven't logged in before, you can sign up for an account here: <https://my.bcgeu.ca/signup>.

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