



Steward News

IN THIS ISSUE

1. Union Patches
2. Seasonal Regular Status Update
3. Convention: Pension Resolution
4. Hours of Work Change of Dispatch Staff
5. IA Weight Limit
6. IA Start Time Hours
7. Faller Stipend
8. IMT Finance Section Chiefs
9. How to Handle Bullying, Sexual Harassment, and Discrimination?
10. Union Dues: what am I paying for?
11. Meet James Ritco, steward and Wildfire Committee member

Recent Topics

1. Union Patches

Two years ago the BCGEU and BCWS entered into a Settlement Agreement regarding the use of Crew Logos and patches. The case allows for the crews who were initially named in the grievance to wear their traditional logos on employer issued hats and stickers for hard hats.¹ The use of patches on Reds was not identified in the Settlement Agreement and therefore will likely not be permitted on the red Nomex shirts in the near future. It is important for Stewards to understand the uniform provisions in the Main and Component Agreements to help provide clarity as employer issued clothing is released. If you have any unresolved questions please reach out to the committee.

2. Seasonal Regular Status

The Committee is requesting that the Employer make available to members a list of seasonal regulars and auxiliaries in order of seniority hours. This would allow members to verify the accuracy of their seniority hours and allow for a more transparent process. At this point, there

should be 500 offers for seasonal regular status for those who have met the threshold of hours. We are also still waiting on resolution related to the issues with MOU 35 language and will update Stewards as soon as possible.

¹ Crews named in the initial grievance are: Telkwa Rangers, Telkwa IA, Rainmakers UC, Heatseekers UC, Salish UC, Blackwater UC, Sierras UC, Big Horns UC, Fire Devils UC, Rhinos UC, Firehawks UC, Rocky Mountain UC, Monashee UC, Valhalla UC, Shoreacres Arrow IA, Flathead UC

Contact us

Do you have a matter you would like to bring forward? Contact your Wildfire Committee by email Wildfire@bcgeu.ca.

3. Convention: Pension Resolution

A resolution was passed at the recent BCGEU Convention in support of Public Safety Designation for Wildland Firefighters. This resolution would see the BCGEU along with our national union (NUPGE), lobby the federal government to include wildland firefighters as a public safety occupation. This would allow pension contributions to increase from 2 to 2.33%. Such a change would allow for earlier retirement (like structural firefighters, police, paramedics). This is in addition to previous advocacy efforts such as a recent letter to Finance Minister Bill Blair from NUPGE (see letter attached).

4. Dispatch: Hours of Work Change

Dispatchers are now on a 7 day per week schedule, which will significantly reduce overtime opportunities (the previous schedule was Mon-Fri with Sat-Sun as days off). As a result of the shift change, the employee will hire more staff to make up for the new schedule.

Further, the union has brought concerns that some FCs do not have 2 dispatchers on whenever staffed. Such a practice does not allow for scheduled breaks, it also places an undue burden on a single dispatcher in the event of dealing with an emergency.

5. IA Weight Limit

The Union is pleased by recent work done by the Employer to review the IA weight limit. The review assesses the feasibility of increasing the weight limit. The current limit of 200 lbs puts undue physical and mental stress on members who are near it. Increasing the limit would also aid in recruitment and retention for IA. Any changes, if there were any, would likely not occur until next year.

6. IA Start Time

For a trial period of one year, the Employer is implementing 0830 start times for IA (instead of 1030). The objective is to obtain data on response times, cost, staff well-being, and other relevant variables. The Union welcomes the trial as it offers our members greater work-life balance and promotes greater well-being.

7. Faller Stipend

Currently WAs and WT's do not receive a faller stipend unless they are a QFT or QST. The union brought concerns that WAs and WT's who are certified fallers should also receive the stipend as they may be involved in various falling activities such as faller training, acting as a rostered faller for the prep, or otherwise.

8. IMT Finance Section Chiefs

Finance section chiefs are the only IMT chiefs not paid at a 24 grid. This is the result of a classification review which put the Finance Chief position at a FO21. This issue, along with other classification issues like the exclusion of ICS for job classifications, are priority items to address for bargaining.

Contact us

Do you have a matter you would like to bring forward? Contact your Wildfire Committee by email at Wildfire@bcgeu.ca.

9. Bullying and Harassment Issues

Members have the right to work in an environment this free of discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying, and misuse of managerial/supervisory authority. Here are some general first steps to take to address any form of bullying or harassment.

Article 1.9 Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures

It is encouraged that prior to proceeding with a formal complaint, members may approach their supervisor, BCGEU steward or other representative to discuss potential resolutions to the issue at hand.

If the matter is not resolved, then the member should approach the first excluded level of management (for most of us in BCWS, that would be the FC manager or deputy) that is not involved in the matter of concern. This should occur within one year of the alleged occurrence or incident. The Employer has an obligation to investigate and is expected to take steps towards resolution within 30 days of the issue being raised. When the first excluded level of management is the respondent, then the member should approach the respondent's supervisor.

Written complaints shall specify the details of the allegation(s) which include but are not limited to: name, title and ministry of the respondent; a description of the action(s), conduct, events or circumstances involved in the complaint; the specific remedy sought to satisfy the complaint; date(s) of incidents; name(s) of witnesses (if any); prior attempts to resolve (if any).

The Union and the member involved shall receive, in writing, the proposed resolution within 30 days of providing the complaint.

Article 1.10 Bullying Between Peers and Misuse of Managerial/Supervisory Authority

Members may approach their direct supervisor, or the first level of excluded manager who is not involved in the complaint, for assistance in resolving the issue informally. This should occur within 30 days of the alleged occurrence. We recommend having Union representation for this process.

If the supervisor or first level of excluded manager fails to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the member within 15 days of notification, the member can make a written complaint to the supervisor or first level of excluded manager.

The written complaint must be filed within 45 days of the alleged occurrence. This complaint will be provided to the respondent, and will include the following information: the name(s) of the people involved; the specific actions alleged to constitute bullying between peers or misuse of managerial/supervisory authority; the dates of these specific actions; names of witnesses; an explanation of why the actions complained of constitute bullying between peers or misuse of managerial/supervisory authority; an outline of the steps which have been taken to resolve the matter; and, the remedy sought.

If you are unsure of the process and have questions, we encourage you to reach out to your local BCGEU Area Office for Union support and guidance.

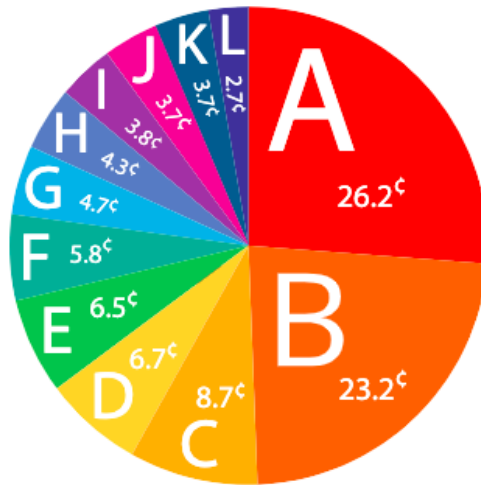
Contact us

Do you have a matter you would like to bring forward? Contact your Wildfire Committee by email at Wildfire@bcgeu.ca.

10. Union dues: what are you paying for?

This is one of the question I get the most as a steward. Here is a cost breakdown of where your dues end up:

**How your
BCGEU
Dues
Dollar
works
for you**



- A** Local membership services, area offices, activist appreciation events, workplace leadership, scholarships, benefits, international solidarity, etc
- B** Provincial membership services (Departments - Exec/Admin, HR, Finance, Administration, Facilities)
- C** Fighting grievances, arbitrations, compensation appeals and exclusions, union observers
- D** Campaigns, strategic partnerships, charitable donations, political action, communications, diversity, and research
- E** Component & Cross-Component Committee education programs & service
- F** Negotiations, job classifications & evaluations, appeals and pensions
- G** Joint employer - Union committees, executive and policy and advisory committees, conventions and conferences
- H** Affiliation fees (CLC, NUPGE, BC Fed, Labour Councils)
- I** Organizing programs
- J** Membership education & OHS programs
- K** Building maintenance & utilities
- L** Strike Expenses

Contact us

Do you have a matter you would like to bring forward? Contact your Wildfire Committee by email at Wildfire@bcgeu.ca.