

Labor's Language: Glossary of Union Terms

Labor agreements, publications, and even officials often use terms that are almost exclusive to the labor arena. To help stewards feel more comfortable operating in this area, "Labor's Language: A glossary of Labor's Terms" will be a regular feature of the *Steward Edition*.

Accretions: Employees added to the bargaining unit once a union is certified as a representative of the unit.

Administrative Law Judge (ALJ): A civil service appointee of the National Labor Relations Board who conducts unfair labor practice hearings in the region where such cases originate.

Advisory Arbitration: Form of arbitration often referred to as fact finding where the decision of the arbitrator is not binding.

Alter Ego Employer: An employer who changes the name and outward appearance of a business, but is in fact the same employer. An employer cannot rid himself of his obligation to recognize the legitimate bargaining representative through an alter ego.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): National law forbidding discrimination against employees on the basis of disability and requiring reasonable accommodations for qualified disabled employees. The ADA is enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and by private lawsuit.

Annuity: A form of an investment plan, usually provided as a retirement plan, that provides for income for a specified period of time, such as a

number of years or for life.

Arbitration: A method of settling a labor-management dispute by having an impartial third party decide the issue. The decision of the arbitrator is usually binding.

Area Standards Picketing: A form of picketing with the purpose of encouraging an employer to observe industry standards in that locality.

Area-wide Bargaining: Collective bargaining which covers all unionized employers and their workers in a specific geographical and industrial setting.

Attrition: Reduction in the labor force of a company through natural causes such as voluntary quits, retirement, or death as opposed to layoffs.



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UFCW 876 STEWARD EDITION

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Action Reflects Membership Consensus

Steward Elections to be Conducted in 2007

In response to members' desire to have a greater voice in the selection of their union stewards, the local's new administration established a Steward Review Committee.

"Previous administrations moved away from having members elect their stewards, and allowed business representatives to appoint them," Roger Robinson, Local 876's president, said. "Members resented being cut out of the process, even when they approved of the business representative's steward selection."

To address members' concerns, Robinson appointed a six-person Steward Review Committee composed of rank-and-file Executive Board members. After much discussion, the committee decided the best course of action would be for a complete renewal of all steward and alternate positions to be conducted through an election process in 2007.

"This was a very thoughtful discussion aimed at addressing members' concerns, and should not be perceived as a slight to current stewards," Robinson said. "I can't stress enough, the decision to hold steward elections is by no means a reflection on the

steward group. In fact, we fully expect many current stewards to have their positions confirmed by their coworkers."

Local 876 business representatives will determine when steward elections will be held and oversee the process. Details of the election process, qualifications for candidacy, and the responsibilities of stewards and

Don't Settle for Less -- Enforce Your Contract

Daily life is filled with all sorts of agreements between people and institutions. From the informal car-pools and potlucks, to legally binding car loans and mortgages, once made, both parties are expected to uphold their end of the agreement, or there will be consequences.

Union contracts are no different. After weeks, months, and sometimes years of tough negotiations between a union and company, a deal is struck -- a pact is made, an agreement is reached. And, after acceptance by the membership, the contract becomes a

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alternates are detailed on the following pages.

Questions regarding this information should be directed to your business representative.

legally binding document. Both the company and its employees are required to uphold their end of the agreement, or face the consequences.

It is the union steward's job to make sure the company upholds their end of the agreement, or force them to face the consequences.

"Any agreement is only as good as its enforcement," Roger Robinson, Local 876's president, said. "The best contracts become worthless if their terms aren't enforced, which is why stewards must be tough and firm in

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Steward Guidelines as Set by the Steward Review Committee

Qualifications for Candidacy of Steward and Alternate:

1. Eligibility

- Any working member in the store/unit.
- One year in good standing with union at the time of the election.
- Full time or part time employee.

2. Availability

- Ability to serve a four-year term.
- Available during normal work hours.
- Attendance at member grievance meetings.
- Volunteer attendance during non-working hours, vacations, or leaves, if warranted.

3. Personal Qualifications

- Personable, knowledgeable and approachable.
- Good communicator.
- Excellent understanding of contractual language, including any separate contracts within the unit, if applicable.

4. Grocery & Meat Steward/Alternate Situations

Where there is both a grocery and meat steward in any given store, based on store interest, there is the option of:

- (1) When interest is evident, conducting two separate elections in each department, using the same guidelines for both elections.
- (2) Due to lack of interest in either department, conducting one election for the entire store, in which all employees may participate. In these cases, the elected Steward/Alternate will represent the entire store.

Steward/Alternate Election Process and Guidelines

Steward and alternate elections will be conducted at all units in 2007 as scheduled by the business representative. The exception being any units where a Steward election was conducted after October 1, 2006. All elections will be conducted according to the following process.

Step 1: The business representative will leave a posting announcing an "Open Steward Position" in the employee break room, or other designated area readily accessible to all members, for at least one week.

Step 2: Members interested in serving as steward/alternate sign the posting.

Step 3: The business representative removes the posting and verifies applicants' qualifications.

Step 4: Should an election(s) be necessary, the business representative will schedule, conduct and organize an election(s), with all elections being conducted within 10 to 14 days following the removal of the "Open Steward Position" posting sheet. Scheduling of election times will be based on the number of members in a unit; location of the unit; and the needs of the membership. Local 876 will make every reasonable attempt to accommodate the largest percentage of the membership.

Step 5: The election will be conducted by secret ballot. The candidate with the top ballot count will serve as steward, while the candidate with the second highest vote total will serve as alternate. Business representatives will maintain custody of all election materials, and announce winning applicants.

Local 876 reserves the right to have the Steward Review Committee recommend, make changes, fill vacancies, and conduct removals based on just cause, and or failure of compliance to these guidelines.

Requirements of an Elected UFCW Local 876 Steward

A Local 876 steward is responsible for enforcing the union contract at the workplace and representing members in the grievance procedure and other encounters with management. In addition, the steward is responsible for keeping the membership in his/her unit informed and updated regarding union related matters including, but not limited to; contractual protections, UFCW constitutional rights, Local 876 by-laws; union dues and initiation fee structures, notice of membership meetings, contact information for Local 876 and other union-related sources, union member-specific programs, and upcoming programs and volunteer opportunities within Local 876.

The steward's role as communicator and liaison to the business representative and Local 876 is paramount in how well the membership in the unit work together. As communicator and immediate support person at the workplace, a steward's role is vital, and should be taken on only after serious consideration. Protecting and supporting the general welfare of the membership and its union is a main component of the union's strength.

In addition to these general requirements, all Local 876 stewards are required to:

- Attend the Annual Local 876 Steward's Day
- Attend advisory or bargaining committee meetings, or any specially-called contract-related meetings
- Attend two General Local 876 Membership Meetings annually
- Maintain the Steward Box
- Regularly post materials on, and maintain, the Union Bulletin Board

Requirements of an Elected UFCW Local 876 Alternate Steward

Ability to serve four-year term, assist steward with duties and responsibilities when needed or requested.

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Enforcement of the Contract, Law Critical

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their enforcement of the contract."

Local 876 relies on its stewards to evenly and consistently point out each time a manager's actions violates the contract, request he or she correct their actions, or face the consequences -- a grievance, sometimes with a monetary settlement paid to the grievant.

"Every time members and their steward let a manager get away with violating the contract, they are settling for less than their employer agreed to, and letting the company get away with renegeing on our agreement," Robinson said. "Sometimes it may seem easier to look the other way, but members are doing themselves, and their union, a real disservice by failing to enforce their contract."

Use It, or Lose It

"Use it, or lose it," is a phrase often used to convey the importance of enforcing the terms of a union contract or risk losing the language in the next negotiations.

"Employers can present a very compelling argument for eliminating contract provisions that aren't enforced," Robinson said. "It's hard to say the language is important to members if they fail to demand its enforcement."

In addition to the eventual weakening of their contract, members are also risking immediate and costly losses by failing to enforce their contract's terms.

"Many contracts have language preventing managers and supervisors from doing bargaining unit work. When we don't enforce this language, by allowing management do our work, we are taking money out of our members' pockets," Robinson said. "Members, especially Stewards, need to stand up and point out these violations, insist the manager or supervisor stop violating our agreement, and file a grievance if he or she refuses. Be tough, don't let their excuses convince you to let them slide 'just this once.'"

Action on the part of Local 876 stewards is especially critical because stewards set an example, good or bad, the rest of the members will follow.

"If stewards demand the contract be enforced, members will be more likely to insist management uphold their end of the agreement," Robinson said. "If stewards let contract violations take place, members probably will too. Partially, because they believe management isn't doing anything wrong because the steward is allowing it to happen."

The local urges stewards and members to take the same position with laws designed to protect them, such as Workers' Compensation and Item Pricing.

"There are laws that directly and indirectly protect our members, and they will only stay on the books as long as we fight to keep them, and demand they be enforced," Robinson said. "Over the last few years, we have put a great deal of energy into the fight to save Item Pricing, primarily because it means job security for many of our members. Due to our efforts, and Governor Granholm's support, we recently withstood a fierce attack on this law. It was no help that some of our members went along with management and broke the law by not pricing stock. Through their actions, these members were supporting the effort to eliminate Item Pricing, which will reduce the hours required to run a retail operation by 15 to 20 percent, taking money out of members' pockets by causing their hours to be cut, and jobs to be eliminated."