



# Toolkit

July 2015



Atlantique  
Atlantic





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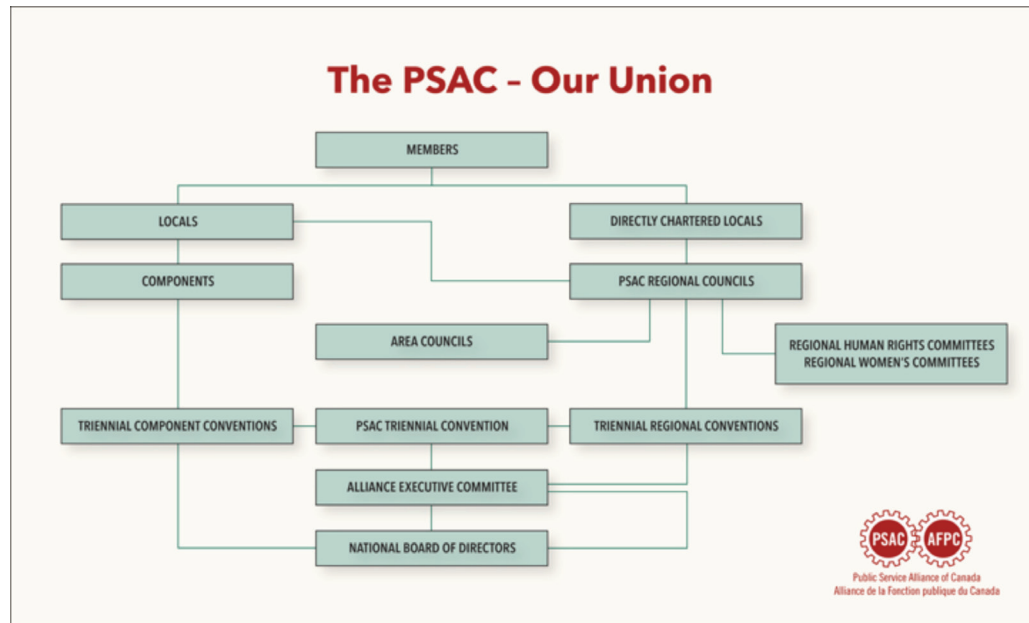


# Introduction

**Y**ou, the members, have asked that we create a booklet that would contain all the necessary information that you may need to attend a local union meeting, organize or attend public activities, set up an information table in your communities or lobby an elected official. You've asked for a go-to document rather than using resources from different websites, booklets and fact sheets. With that focus in mind, you will find a lot of useful information in this booklet.



# Structure of PSAC



## NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS (NBOD)

Comprised of the Component Presidents and the AEC.

## ALLIANCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (AEC)

Comprised of the National President, the National Executive Vice-President and the seven Regional Executive Vice-Presidents.

## COMPONENTS

Components are organized to bring together members who work for the same government department, agency or territorial government. Components have their own decision-making structure, hold their own conventions and elect their own leadership. The PSAC has 17 Components:

- Agriculture Union (AU)
- Canada Employment and Immigration Union (CEIU)
- Customs and Immigration Union (CIU)
- Government Services Union (GSU)
- National Health Union (NHU)
- Natural Resources Union (NRU)
- Nunavut Employees Union (NEU)
- Union of Canadian Transportation Employees (UCTE)
- Union of Environment Workers (UEW)
- Union of National Defence Employees (UNDE)

- Union of National Employees (UNE)
- Union of Northern Workers (UNW)
- Union of Postal Communications Employees (UPCE)
- Union of Solicitor General Employees (USGE)
- Union of Taxation Employees (UTE)
- Union of Veterans' Affairs Employees (UVAE)
- Yukon Employees Union (YEU)

### **DIRECTLY CHARTERED LOCALS (DCLs)**

A local that is not part of a Component is known as a Directly Chartered Local (DCL). DCLs are structured to meet the specific needs of their sector or workplace.

## **Structure of PSAC Atlantic**

### **REGIONAL EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT**

The REVP (and his/her alternate in his/her absence) is the chairperson of the Regional Council.

### **REGIONAL COUNCIL**

The Regional Council is comprised of 18 Directors (who all have 2 alternates). The Directors represent members of equity seeking groups, with non-Treasury Board/separate employers and in each Atlantic Province as follows:

2 Provincial Directors for New Brunswick

2 Provincial Directors for Nova Scotia

2 Provincial Directors for Prince Edward Island

2 Provincial Directors for Newfoundland and Labrador

Director for GLBT members

Director for young workers

Director for racially visible members

Director for francophone members

Director for members with disabilities

Director for aboriginal members

Director for women, Maritimes

Director for women, NL

Director for members with non-Treasury Board/separate employers – NL

Director for members with non-Treasury Board/separate employers – Maritimes



## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ATLANTIC REGIONAL COUNCIL**

The Atlantic Regional Council structure shall be founded upon and guided by solidarity, inclusiveness, fairness, equity, transparency, accountability, and union principles while recognizing the need to communicate in both official languages.

### **The Atlantic Regional Council shall:**

- i) Be responsible for the affairs of the PSAC Atlantic Region between Triennial PSAC Atlantic Regional Conventions;
- ii) Apply PSAC policies according to the needs and realities of Atlantic members;
- iii) Have the power to develop regulations as are necessary for the proper conduct of the business of the union;
- iv) Define the issues that the REVP Atlantic should submit to the Alliance Executive Committee and the National Board of Directors of the Alliance;
- v) Address all issues important to the PSAC members in the Atlantic Region;

## **PSAC ATLANTIC REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

- i) Education
- ii) Finance
- iii) Women
- iv) Human Rights
- v) Health, Safety and Environment
- vi) Political Action





# Regional Committees

## AREA COUNCILS

Area Councils are cross-Component/DCL organizations comprised of members from different locals within a defined geographic area. They are primarily responsible for political action and engage with PSAC campaigns. Area Councils are recognized in the PSAC Constitution and their delegates have voice and vote at PSAC National and Regional Conventions. Area Council delegates also have the right to submit resolutions to both PSAC National and Regional Conventions.

The formation of new Area Councils is governed by Section 14 of the PSAC National Constitution and requires approval from the AEC.

Area Councils are required to meet at least four times a year and their minutes must be provided to the REVP.

### **In the Atlantic Region, there are currently seven Area Councils:**

- Greater Moncton Area Council
- Miramichi Area Council
- Charlottetown Area Council
- Gander Area Council
- St. John's Area Council
- Nova Scotia Area Council 1
- Sydney Area Council

## REGIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEES

PSAC Regional Women's Committees (RWCs) provide an opportunity for PSAC women to organize in their regions and work together collectively. They give recognition and credibility to women's rights as an important concern of the union. Committees aim to inform and educate women on the political, social, economic, and workplace issues that affect them. RWCs also speak for women with a strong, common voice and advocate policies that promote women's rights. They also mobilize women to participate in the union and to take action on the issues and empower women with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to exercise effective leadership. In our region, we currently have eight active RWCs:

- Saint John, NB
- Charlottetown, PE
- Sydney, NS
- Halifax, NS
- St. John's, NL
- Central, NL
- Rocky Harbour, NL
- Goose Bay, NL



## HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEES

Regional Human Rights Committees play an active role in the education of members, employers and communities about human rights issues. They act as a resource to members on human rights issues, as well as a hub of activism. These committees are established in accordance with Section 15 of the PSAC Constitution, which enables the establishment of regional equity committees representing any of the four equity groups, or human rights committees, representing all of the four equity groups. To find out more, contact your regional office. In our region, we currently have three active Human Rights Committees:

- Halifax, NS
- Moncton, NB
- Charlottetown, PE

## YOUNG WORKERS COMMITTEES

The main objectives of Young Workers Committees are to educate young workers about the labour movement as a whole; engage, mobilize and retain young workers; and raise awareness on a series of issues that young workers face today. Young Workers Committees are designed to give young workers a starting point to become committed activists. Such a committee provides also a place to network with other young people on issues unique to workers in the early stages of their careers. As of the 2015 PSAC National Triennial Convention, “young worker” is defined as persons 35 years of age and under. In our region, we currently have one active Young Workers Committee in St. John’s, NL.

## NATIONAL ABORIGINAL PEOPLES CIRCLE

The National Aboriginal Peoples’ Circle (NAPC) was created in 1993 to give aboriginal members the opportunity to come together and discuss issues that affect them in the workplace, in their communities and at national and international levels. Two representatives from each region (one female and one male) are elected to NAPC at the National Equity Conference.

As part of NAPC, the National Aboriginal Peoples’ Network is open to any member who self-identifies as Aboriginal (First Nation, Inuit or Métis). Members are able to share information and network through an email database and sometimes in person. Several communities across the country have active regional circles that carry out the campaigns and projects of the NAPC.





# Education Courses

The PSAC is proud to offer its members a union education program that ranks among the best and most comprehensive within the Canadian labour movement. Our various courses provide members with learning opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and personal confidence. Union education encourages participation and promotes mutual respect and understanding between members and the union leadership. A trained membership is an active membership, and active members build a strong union.

Visit our website or contact your PSAC Regional Office for more information.

## Who To Contact For What

### CONTACT YOUR LOCAL:

1. For workplace issues, including issues with management or health and safety
2. To sign a union card or update your contact information
3. To find out about local executive meetings or speak to your elected union official
4. For information about workplace committees
5. For information about bargaining

### CONTACT THE PSAC REGIONAL OFFICE CLOSEST TO YOU:

1. To find out more about PSAC education and register for a course
2. To find out about PSAC committees and to sign up to attend a meeting
3. If you are part of a DCL and need representation
4. If you need support or materials for an event
5. To get in touch with a member of the region's Council

### CONTACT THE REVP'S OFFICE:

1. To invite the REVP to an event or a meeting
2. To forward any media inquiries
3. To request changes to the regional website

### CONTACT THE ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE RETIREES:

1. To find out about issues related to pensions in the federal public service and beyond
2. To join the retiree organization, as long as you are 50 years or older
3. To access health and dental benefits and death benefits in retirement

# PSAC Campaigns

At any given moment, the PSAC carries various campaigns to defend public services and protect the rights and interests of its members and the general public. See below for a summary of PSAC's main campaigns as of July 2015.

For more information on PSAC's campaigns, you can explore its Website at [psacunion.ca](http://psacunion.ca).

## WE ARE ALL AFFECTED

**WE ARE  
ALL  
AFFECTED**

We are all affected by government cutbacks because we all rely on services like food inspection, Old Age Security, environmental protection, preservation of parks and historic sites, search and rescue, assistance to veterans, support for our troops, border security and transportation safety. Canadians find it harder and harder to access the services they need and sometimes they only find out after the facts that such and such a program has been cut. Government job cuts are bad for our communities, our country and our economy. Workers and their families are forced to cut spending, small businesses lose customers and local economies suffer. Public service workers are our families, friends, neighbours and customers.

## VETERANS

Ignoring widespread opposition, the government has shut down nine Veterans Affairs offices that provided crucial front line services to thousands of veterans across the country. Those closures and other cuts at Veterans Affairs have left Canada with the lowest ratio of Veterans Affairs workers to veterans ever. The Department has lost more than 900 jobs – 24.6% of its workforce – since 2010. That means veterans are waiting longer and travelling further for the services they are entitled to and need.

Since the closure of nine offices in January 2014, veterans say they now must drive for hours to see someone in person or wait on hold on the phone. Despite the best efforts of Veterans Affairs Canada workers, the new system is virtually impossible for them to manage. One in five Canadian veterans suffering from a mental illness and injury is being forced to wait more than eight months before their requests for help are answered.





## EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Since the 1990s, the Employment Insurance Program has been decimated by successive Liberal and Conservative governments to the point where it no longer fulfills its mission to protect Canadian workers from the hardship of unemployment.

The proportion of unemployed workers receiving employment insurance benefits has fallen dramatically since 1990, reaching a historic low over the last few years. In 2012, for the first time in almost 40 years, the beneficiaries-to-unemployed ratio fell below 40%.

We hope that Canadians from all walks of life will voice their concern for one of Canada's most important programs that aims to reduce inequality, help our most vulnerable citizens, and ensure a fair and more prosperous future for our country.

## SICK LEAVE

The Conservative government wants to eliminate all accumulated sick leave for public servants, reduce the amount of annual sick leave to 37.5 hours a year – subject to the absolute discretion of the employer – and institute a 7-day waiting period without pay before workers can access short-term disability benefits.

The Bill C-59, on the implementation of the budget, attacks the collective bargaining rights of federal public service workers by authorizing Treasury Board to modify collective agreements to remove sick leave and impose a short- and long-term disability plan outside of collective agreements. The Bill will circumvent the Public Service Labour Relations Act as well as ongoing negotiations.

No one should face a choice between going to work sick or losing pay. PSAC will continue to fight for provisions that will result in a healthier workplace and that will improve the public service. We will also advocate for paid sick leave for all workers across Canada.

## CHILD CARE

Child care in Canada is expensive and hard to find. As it stands, the majority of parents must rely on a patchwork of largely unregulated child care services with no guarantee of quality. The cost of child care represents a crushing burden for most families. Outside of Québec, less than 20 per cent of children have access to regulated child care spaces.

In 2006, the Conservative government destroyed the beginnings of a national child care program and replaced it with a small monthly taxable payment. It doesn't come close to covering the real cost of childcare, barely covering the cost of two days' worth of child care in a big city.





Public investment in a national child care system pays for itself and creates a more equal society and a more sustainable economy. Canadian children deserve better. All families need affordable, quality child care. We need strong federal leadership to put in place a comprehensive child care system.

### FEDERAL ELECTION

The federal election will be held on October 19, 2015. This is our chance to vote for a better future for all Canadians.

Canada has dramatically changed in the past ten years under the Conservative government. Critical public services have been cut and entire programs shut down, environmental laws have been weakened, scientists have been muzzled, and unions have been attacked relentlessly. We can't risk another Conservative government.

Ask your candidates what they will do to protect and promote public services. Talk with your friends and coworkers. Share information about the election on Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks. Encourage others to vote and, of course, cast your ballot on October 19.



**I WILL  
VOTE**

## PSAC Videos

The PSAC posts videos on YouTube on its campaigns and on a variety of themes of interest to the members and the general public. We encourage you to explore our national and regional YouTube channels to view our videos.

PSAC National: <https://www.youtube.com/user/PSACwebmaster>

PSAC Atlantic: <https://www.youtube.com/user/PSACatlantic>





# Resources for Planning & Holding an Event





## TALKING TO THE MEDIA TIPS

None of the superb speakers you have ever heard were born with their talent. They all developed their skills by doing media interviews. They learn from every interview they do and are constantly honing their message and improving their skills. Media expertise is about practice. Performing well in the media is not an art form – it is a learned skill.

**Gather the necessary material:** If your event or action is part of a central campaign, your union will have materials on hand that outline the key messages of the campaign. Use the PSAC or Component webpages and social media pages to obtain information. If the subject matter is unique to your region or to the event at which you're speaking, contact your PSAC Regional Office to request some speaking notes.

**Practice your key message:** You must go into every media encounter with a key message. PSAC will provide you with this. With that message, think of two points/examples that you want to get across that reinforce this message, regardless of the questions you're asked.

Make a list of any questions you think might come your way. Prepare your answers to them.

**Learn to bridge:** A crucial skill for all media interviews. It's a way to get back to your main point even if the reporter/interviewer is trying to take you in a different direction. Bridging creates a transition so that you can move from one subject to the message you want to communicate, for example:

- I understand the point you are trying to make, but from our perspective...
- That might well be true, but I think it's important to remember that...
- Before we leave that point, let's just remember that...
- I'm not familiar with the study you're quoting from, but what I can say is...

## MEDIA INTERVIEW TIPS

- Know the three key points you want to communicate before you begin.
- Answer questions concisely.
- Use facts and anecdotes to back up your claims.
- Once you've made your point, stop talking.
- Repeat your message.
- Bridge back to your message whenever possible.
- Be honest. If you don't know the answer, don't guess.







- Use generally understood words. Avoid acronyms and jargon.
- Never say “no comment”.
- Don’t get angry.
- Never say anything “off the record”.
- Don’t be tricked into replying in the negative. For example, if a reporter asks you “Why are you defending gold-plated pensions?”, answer “Public sector pensions are fair.” instead of “Our pensions are not gold-plated.”
- Be prepared when the journalist asks, “Is there anything else I should ask or that you’d like to add?” Wrap up with your key messages.
- Consider your appearance: Put on a button and/or carry a union sign. Don’t chew gum, don’t eat and don’t wear sunglasses. Sit up/stand up straight.
- Don’t look into the camera. Look at the interviewer. In a multi-guest interview, look at whomever is speaking. Don’t pay attention to distractions happening around you.

“ I understand the point you are trying to make, but from our perspective...” ”

### WHEN THE MEDIA COMES CALLING

When you receive a media call, get the reporter’s contact information and forward that information to the REVP’s office.

We will determine the nature of the interview, the subject matter and angle of the story and determine whether we should proceed with the interview and what should be our message.

### ON-THE-FLY INTERVIEWS

Television, radio and/or newspaper reporters sometimes attend PSAC events to cover the story. Often, they will interview speakers at events or identified union spokespeople. These spokespeople have received media training and follow prepared speaking notes to ensure consistent messaging.

However, sometimes reporters will approach people in the crowd looking for comments. You should know what the event is about, why it’s taking place and what the key demands are. What is the main message? If the event has been organized by PSAC, you will have already received a leaflet or backgrounder addressing these basic points.

Please consider the following information before participating in any interview:



- Some components prefer that only their national officers (Regional Vice-Presidents/National Vice-Presidents) speak on behalf of the union. Others allow local presidents or members of the local executive to speak. Talk to your local to find out the protocol within your component.
- Don't be afraid to politely decline to speak with a reporter. Encourage them to speak directly to the identified spokesperson or event organizer.
- **If approached by media, never identify yourself as an employee or give your job title. If you speak to the media you are speaking on behalf of the union, so give your union title and/or identify as a PSAC activist.**
- Never share information that the general public doesn't already have access to. Sharing inside information from the workplace could result in disciplinary action.
- Never go off the record with a reporter. Assume that everything you say will be used and choose your words accordingly.
- As mandated by the PSAC Constitution, the Regional Executive Vice-President (REVP) is the political voice for the PSAC in their region, including primary media spokesperson on all union issues. In some cases, the REVP may direct media inquiries to component national officers if the nature of the inquiry is very specific or technical. Media inquiries can always be directed to the REVP, either in person (if in attendance) or to their office.
  - If you're not comfortable speaking to media, or not authorized to by your component, consider writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or participating in an online dialogue through social media. However, always identify as an activist or citizen rather than an employee.
  - In the case of holding an event, never contact the media directly without first consulting with the REVP's office.



### HOW TO TAKE A GOOD PHOTO

1. Look your subject in the eye.
2. Use a plain background.
3. Use the flash even where you are outdoors.
4. Move in close. If your subject is smaller than a car, take a step or two closer before taking the picture and zoom in on your subject. Your goal is to fill the picture area with the subject you are photographing.





5. Move it from the middle. Centre-stage is a great place for a performer to be. However, the middle of your picture is not the best place for your subject. Bring your picture to life by simply moving your subject away from the middle of your picture. Imagine a tick-tack-toe grid in your viewer and place your subject at one of the intersections of lines.
6. Lock the focus. If your subject is not in the centre of the picture, you need to lock the focus to create a sharp picture. Most auto-focus cameras focus on whatever is in the centre of the picture. But to improve pictures, you will often want to move the subject away from the centre of the picture. If you don't want a blurred picture, you need to first lock the focus of the camera with the subject in the middle of the viewer and then move the subject away from the middle of the viewer before taking the picture.
7. Know your flash's range. Taking pictures beyond the flash's range is a common mistake because pictures taken beyond the maximum flash range will be too dark. For many cameras, the maximum flash range is less than fifteen feet – about five steps away.
8. Watch the light. The light affects the appearance of everything you photograph. For example, bright sunlight from the side can enhance the wrinkles of an older person, but the soft light of a cloudy day can subdue those same wrinkles.

*Adapted from Kodak.com*

## CREATING A POSTER OR LEAFLET

Once you figure out your message, determine how to get it across in as few words as possible. Your message must be effective but not offensive. Using humour, sarcasm and wit are fine, unless they alienate others.

Short, to-the-point slogans are better than long statements.

Use everyday language that best captures the idea. Stay away from technical terms, acronyms, and jargon.

Ensure the main message, slogan or demand as well as any information pertaining to time, day, date or location of an action are clearly visible.

Choose artwork that is simple and appropriate for the subject matter. Use a high contrast, black and white graphic cartoon or photo that reproduces easily on a photocopier or small press. Remember, your images should reflect the diversity of your workplace.

Use one central theme per leaflet. Don't use too much text.

Remember to proofread your text. Computer spell checkers only find words that are misspelled, not words that are misused or repeated.





Include your organization's name, logo, website and/or contact information.

Pick a type font (examples: Arial, Times Roman) and size (example 14 point) that are easy to read.

Print or photocopy on light coloured paper.



### CREATING A RALLY SIGN

Make sure the print on your signs is large, with tall lettering that is easy to read at a distance.

Use both sides of your sign, poster or banner. It is okay to create two different messages, one for each side.

Use a dark colour for lettering against a light background or light lettering against a dark background.

Lower case letters are easier to read, especially from a distance, so avoid whole sentences in full capitals.

Plan in advance for inclement weather. Choose materials that are waterproof or find a way to make them so by using a plastic covering, laminating and/or by using rainproof fabric for banners.

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM PSAC REGIONAL OFFICES

The PSAC can provide its members with a large variety of resources and promotional and information material. We have, for example, flags, posters, information leaflets and booklets, and buttons, to name just a few. Locals and members who want to organize or participate in a union or public activity can contact their Regional Office to get some supplies.





# Political Information & Resources





## Your political rights – USE THEM!

One of the hallmarks of a healthy democracy is the ability of citizens to participate freely and actively in determining who they elect to govern and make decisions on their behalf.

PSAC members are encouraged to actively exercise their democratic political rights by:

- signing a candidate’s nomination papers;
- wearing a party or candidate button in public;
- placing an election sign on your property;
- giving political opinions in public;
- working as a canvasser for a political party or candidate;
- working in a campaign office;
- participating in the formation of party or candidate policies;
- taking part in election-day activities on behalf of a party or candidate;
- attending peaceful demonstrations on political topics;
- soliciting funds from the public for political campaigns and parties;
- attending a political convention as a delegate;
- writing letters to the editor endorsing a candidate or party.

For some PSAC members – those covered by the Public Service Employment Act – some restrictions apply. None of the activities listed above should be carried out during your working hours.

There are also separate and special rules that apply if you wish to be a candidate in a federal, territorial, municipal or provincial election.

When determining how you want to exercise your democratic rights, follow the following guiding principles:

- Don’t conduct any political activity on the job.
- Don’t identify yourself as a federal public sector worker when working on a campaign, e.g. canvassing, making phone calls, etc.
- Don’t identify yourself as a federal public sector worker when communicating opinions about election issues, political parties and politicians through blogs, Facebook, Twitter or other social media.





- Don't wear your uniform if you are required to wear one at work, or your government identification, at public meetings such as candidates' meetings.
- Don't drive a government identified vehicle when participating in election activities.

If you are disciplined in any way for participation in a political activity, this can be grieved.

If you are disciplined, contact your Local/ Branch or your Component for representation and advise your PSAC regional office. Any attempts by management to restrict your political rights should also be brought to the attention of the PSAC regional office.

### **SPEAKING OUT ON CUTS TO FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICES: GUIDELINES FOR UNION REPRESENTATIVES AND MEMBERS**

The PSAC has been working to provide Canadians with details about the cuts to federal public services and their impact on the public and local economies. Canadians have a right to this information.

Every public service worker has the right to freedom of expression and other civil and political rights which are enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The constitutional rights of every public service worker are also a central tenet of the Public Service Employment Act.

Our union officers have a right to speak out on behalf of our members. However, for members in the federal public service, some restrictions apply.

#### **Rights of union representatives – local, regional and national**

Members who hold union positions have considerable latitude to comment on cuts to public services and the impact of these cuts in their capacity as union representatives. They are constrained only in that their comments cannot be reckless, such as telling untruths, or malicious, such as making slanderous or libellous comments about individuals, e.g. managers.

#### **Rights of members**

Members who do not hold union positions have more limitations on their ability to speak out. They must balance their right of freedom of speech with their duty of loyalty to the employer as neutral and impartial public servants.

There is a federal Values and Ethics Code and there are departmental-specific codes that members must adhere to as a condition of employment. These codes include obligations to avoid potential conflicts of interests and protect confidentiality. The objective is a neutral and impartial public service.

Members generally have the right to speak out as whistle-blowers. They can also speak out if they have proof that the government is engaged in illegal acts or if the health and safety of the Canadian public may be at risk.





However, members could be putting themselves in jeopardy if they comment publicly on policies they administer or on policy decisions (such as the decision to cut certain services) that affect them directly. If they comment publicly, they could expose themselves to possible discipline if their comments are perceived to affect their impartiality or the public's perception of their impartiality.

Members may provide factual information about the work they do and what cuts are taking place.

### **How to help members speak out**

The media are anxious to speak to actual members performing the jobs that are being cut and some of our members are prepared to do this. They need to be aware of the possible consequences. They also need to know that their union can make the comments on their behalf. For example, a Local President can speak out that food inspection services are being cut and the impact this will have on the public, based on information provided by members but without identifying them.

If at all possible, members should contact their union first for guidance before agreeing to be interviewed by the media.

### **Cautions about speaking out anonymously**

In some cases, PSAC can arrange for members to do "protected" (i.e. anonymous) interviews with the media. Members should still contact their union before agreeing to such an interview. One of the concerns with anonymous interviews is that if the workplace can be identified through the interview there could be repercussions on co-workers.

Members should also exercise caution if commenting on web sites or on radio shows even if they are not identifying themselves. Members should not use employer computers to post comments on web sites, even anonymously. Comments on Facebook and on Twitter are also considered public and could put members at risk.

### **What happens in the event of employer retaliation and discipline?**

PSAC is committed to protecting the rights of our members and will vigorously defend members and union officers in the event of retaliation or discipline.

Any member who has been asked to meet with management or has been warned about speaking out should contact their union right away – their Steward or Local President, their Component or the nearest PSAC regional office.

### **CASE LAW REFERENCES**

PSAC has been successful in expanding the rights of our members as public service workers.







### **Wearing union material in the workplace**

In a 2012 decision, the Public Service Relations Board determined that the employer violated the collective agreement and section 5 of the Public Service Labour Relations Act when it prohibited CBSA border services officers from wearing union bracelets with the message “I support the bargaining team / J’appuie mon équipe de négociation.” Employers can order employees not to wear union material that is derogatory, damaging or detrimental to the employer. In this case, wearing a union bracelet was considered a legitimate union activity since there was nothing illegal or abusive in the content of the bracelet’s message.

Source: *Bartlett et al v. Treasury Board (Canada Border Services Agency), 2012 PSLRB 21*



### **Stickers and petitions in the workplace**

In 2011, the Union filed a policy grievance after employees were prevented from distributing petitions or wearing stickers in the workplace to promote PSAC’s “Hands off our pensions” campaign. The Public Service Labour Relations Board determined that the employer violated the no-discrimination clause of the collective agreement when it prevented employees from wearing these union stickers or posting petitions on bulletin boards.

There was nothing derogatory or detrimental to the employer in the content of these materials. However, the employer did not violate the collective agreement by preventing the use of its electronic network to circulate the petition since the employer had the right to restrict the use of its property.

Source: *Public Service Alliance of Canada v. Treasury Board, 2011 PSLRB 106*

## **UNION ACTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE: THE REAL RULES**

PSAC members have the right to promote and build our union in the workplace. Members have the right to be kept informed on the employer’s premises during non-work time, before or after shifts and during paid or unpaid breaks and lunch periods. This is the law.

Members have the right to:

- *Read union literature.* Members can also sign petitions and share information about the union’s campaigns during non-working time.
- *Talk union.* Members can talk to co-workers about the union at work as they would any other subject – and help keep everyone informed about union activities.
- *Hand out leaflets before and after work.* Members can distribute materials outside or inside the workplace. (See: *Desk drop on p. 24*) Even if the entrance is in a commercial area, members have a legal right to engage in this activity. The employer is prohibited from interfering with these lawful union activities.





- *Desk drop.* Members can “drop” information at members’ work stations, providing they have permission from the employer. With the employer’s permission, the union may distribute publications that reflect the union’s perspective on workplace issues, as long as the information is accurate and non-defamatory. This is a great way to invite members to information sessions, provide updates on union business and recruit new volunteers.
- *Post information on union bulletin boards.* Collective agreements generally allow members to use workplace bulletin boards for union purposes. Make these boards “communication central” for the union by keeping them up to date. Remember to include contact information for local representatives.
- *Wear a union message.* Members can wear buttons, lanyards, stickers, t-shirts and other items that communicate the union’s message. Even if members wear a uniform, there are ways of wearing a union message!

If management interferes with the rights of members or discourages them from participating in our union in any way, stewards must take action:

- get information from the affected member(s);
- contact their supervisor to resolve the issue;
- if there is no satisfactory response, file a grievance;
- if management insists on interfering, advise the member to comply and then grieve.

If you need assistance through the grievance process, please contact your Component or PSAC regional office. PSAC wants to track any employer interference with your rights and what you did to resolve the problem. You can help us by sending that information to [unionrights@psac-afpc.com](mailto:unionrights@psac-afpc.com).

### **RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

In 2006, an employee at Canadian Heritage was terminated after she refused to step down as president of a Quebec sovereignist organization and made statements in the media supporting her organization’s objectives. The Public Service Labour Relations Board acknowledged that public servants have the right to participate in political activities but must also preserve the reality and perception of an impartial and effective public service. The Board concluded that termination was excessive and ordered the employer to reinstate the grievor and offer her an equivalent position which would not present a conflict of interests.

Source: *Gendron v. Treasury Board (Department of Canadian Heritage)*, 2006 PSLRB 27





### **Publicly criticizing government policy**

In 2001, a Health Canada employee was disciplined for publicly criticizing a governmental policy to ban Brazilian beef. The grievor's suspension was reduced as it was deemed excessive. The Public Service Staff Relations Board admonished the grievor for failing to use the employer's internal recourse mechanism before going public. The grievor's comments did not fall within the exception to the duty of loyalty rule as they were not considered to be legitimate whistleblowing.

Source: *Haydon v. Treasury Board (Health Canada) 2002 PSSRB 10*

### **Defining an impartial public service**

In 1985, a Revenue Canada employee was fired after openly criticizing the government's plan to adopt a metrification policy and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The termination was upheld. This pre-Charter case set the framework for balancing the right to freedom of expression with the employee's duty of loyalty. The Supreme Court of Canada acknowledged that some speech by public servants about public issues is allowed but emphasized that public servants must exercise a degree of restraint to ensure that the public service is perceived as impartial and effective at fulfilling its duties. In cases where the government has committed an illegal act or a policy may jeopardize the life, health or safety of the Canadian public, freedom of speech prevails over an employee's duty of loyalty.

Source: *Fraser v. P.S.S.R.B., [1985] 2 S.C.R. 455*

## **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES**

### **General guidelines**

- *Be transparent* – you must be prepared to be fully transparent and visible within any online community.
- *Be relevant* – keep your posts on-topic and timely.
- *Be engaging* – speak as a real person, in the first person and grab the community's attention.
- *Be simple* – use simple words and speak clearly; don't use jargon or talk up or down to the community.
- *Be credible* – back up with simple facts. Use examples where appropriate and don't hard sell.
- *Be present* – if you want to be active in an online community, make sure to check in frequently.
- Don't take part in online campaigns and petitions, correspond with MPs or conduct union business using your work email account.





### How to deal with conflict

- Recognize good ideas publicly.
- Engage rationally and respectfully with your perspective.
- Focus discussion on the higher goals of the community.
- Always communicate respectfully, be patient and encourage the community to do the same.
- Rants and long-winded conversations should be addressed initially, but if continued, they should be left alone to fizzle out
- Disengage and refuse to acknowledge abusive comments. Complain to the moderator if necessary.

### How to protect yourself

- Remember: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are public spaces. Never say anything online that you wouldn't say in your workplace or to your neighbour.
- Post from your personal computer or mobile device on your own time!
- Don't disparage your employer by referring to specific workplace conflicts.
- Don't speak ill of your co-workers (even if you don't name them).
- Avoid conflicts of interests. Use your best judgment and make sure not to post publicly about issues you may deal with as part of your job.
- Be vigilant with your security settings. Set up a Facebook list for co-workers (and your boss!) that limits what they can see. Remember: even if you post something on your personal page, you should consider it public.

If you have any doubts about a possible conflict of interests, speak to your union representative before posting online!

### HOW TO WRITE A LETTER TO A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

- Be concise when explaining why you're writing.
- Explain why the MP should care about your issue (i.e. how it will affect her/his riding and the people in it).
- Be clear about what you're asking the MP to do, demand specific action, for example:
  - i) Discuss your position with other members of his or her caucus.
  - ii) Raise questions with members of government on the issue.
  - iii) Put a motion forward for discussion in the legislature.
  - iv) Agree to submit signed petitions you have gathered on the issue.





- v) Generate support from elected officials in the other parties to put pressure on the government to act on your behalf.
- vi) Write to the elected official responsible outlining his or her concern about the issue.
- vii) Make a public statement on the issue supporting your position.
- viii) Consult with you on any further developments around the issue.

- Be sure to ask a question.
- Be sure to ask for a response from the MP.
- Be polite; show your concern about the issue without using aggressive language.
- Don't blackmail (i.e. avoid saying something like "I won't vote for you if you don't do this.")

To find out the contact information of your MP or Senator, please visit the website of the Parliament of Canada at [parl.gc.ca](http://parl.gc.ca).

“ Never say anything online that you wouldn't say in your workplace... ”

## HOW TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are an effective way to bring your concerns to the attention of a newspaper and its readership. The more individual letters on a subject that can be generated, the more impact you will have. Even if only a few get published, letters increase the likelihood of the issue being addressed at all.

- *Tie the letter to an article published in the newspaper.* The majority of letters that get published are written in direct response to pieces that ran in the newspaper the day before.
- *Make one clear argument.* The piece should be in favour of, or critical of a particular position taken by the paper or described in an article or letter.
- *Keep it short and send it quick.* No more than 200 words is ideal. And do your best to send your letter before noon. Also, check the newspaper's website to see if they have an online form for submitting letters.
- *Don't send attachments.* The subject line should refer to the article you are commenting on and the text of the letter should be pasted into the body of your email.
- *Be specific.* The letter should focus on a specific issue that was raised in an article or opinion piece.
- *Avoid union jargon.* Words like "local" and "component" as well as internal acronyms make letters hard to understand and are less likely to be published.



- *Include your contact information.* Often newspapers will call you to verify your identity before publishing your letter. Include your address and a phone number where you can be reached during the day.
- *Don't go it alone.* Find others to write letters when possible. This will show that other people are concerned about the issue too.
- *Follow up.* If you have sent your letter to the editor and have not heard anything within a week, make a follow-up call to check on its status. Be aware that editors receive hundreds of letters and may not immediately respond to you.
- *Don't forget the comments section.* Most newspapers include comment sections in their online editions. Post your responses online and organize your friends and allies to do the same.

### HOW TO ENGAGE ON ONLINE COMMENT BOARDS

Online comment boards are increasingly influential in shaping public opinion and how the news is reported. Journalists often measure the success of their articles by how many comments they receive online, and news readers often go straight to the comments section to see what others are saying about a particular issue. For this reason, political organizations and communications shops have begun to dedicate increasing resources to influencing the open discussions on comment boards. It is seen as an important way to influence public opinion, no matter what facts are reported.

Here are some guidelines for engaging on online comment boards effectively:

- *Don't go it alone.* Get a group of friends, colleagues or union activists together and form a comment board task force. Mobilize the task force quickly whenever an article appears that requires comments from progressive voices. The more folks commenting on one side of an issue will drown out the other side. If you do it alone, and comment frequently, others will quickly see you as a troll pushing an agenda. Conservatives have been very successful in organizing teams of volunteers to engage on online comment boards. We need to do the same!
- *Sign up early and be anonymous.* Most comment boards on online newspaper require you to sign up. You need to give your email address but your comments do not need to be posted with your real name. You can invent a pseudonym for commenting online.
- *Be respectful and courteous.* All comment boards have moderators who will weed out foul language and other insulting comments that do not conform to the newspapers policy. Even if an insulting comment gets through the filter, it is rarely seen as credible by the rest of the public. Be courteous, be respectful of other commenters, but don't shy away from taken on comments that are false, misleading or just plain disagreeable.





- *Use facts and be short.* If you have good facts to back up your argument, use them. But do not write a dissertation. People skim these comments and will not read comments that are longer than a couple of lines. It's better to post more than one comment on a thread than to write a long-winded essay. Remember, it's a conversation, not a speech.
- *Comment on comments.* In addition to posting comments on the article, it is also important to comment on other peoples comments. Many comment boards also allow you to like or dislike a comment. Click the comments that are agreeable to your position, especially those from the rest of your task force, and dislike the anti-union and anti-public service comments.
- *Mobilize quickly.* With the 24-hour news cycle, you can no longer wait until the next day to begin commenting online. Your comments need to begin immediately if you are going to influence the direction of the discussion and ultimately influence public opinion on the issue. As soon as the article appears online, it's time to get busy!

## HOW TO LOBBY AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

Want to know the best way to make sure that elected officials understand your position? Meet with them directly, and tell it to their face. But make sure you follow these tips to make sure that your meeting goes smoothly and that you make a real impact.

### 1. Define your issue and choose your target

Your issue must be one that can be addressed by the level of government you are lobbying. You should be able to articulate your issue in a few clear concise sentences. Some questions to consider:

*What specifically do you want done about the issue?*

*How does your issue affect the people that this politician represents?*

*How many other people and organizations support your lobbying efforts?*

### 2. Set up a meeting

Contact the elected official's office in the riding to set up a meeting date and time. When calling, identify yourself and who you represent and briefly state the reason for meeting with the elected official. Make sure you leave your telephone number with the elected official's office in the event of any change in the meeting time or date. In addition, get the name of the person you arranged the meeting with for the purpose of future contact with that office.

Once the meeting time and date have been set by telephone, confirm it by letter. The letter should contain the reason for the meeting, the time, the date and the location. You may also include the names of the other members who'll be attending the meeting with you.

If the meeting isn't taking place for some time, call a few days before the meeting to reconfirm.





### 3. Prepare for the meeting

Decide who will be going to the meeting. The elected official's office may ask how many and who will be at the meeting.

Hold a pre-meeting briefing session for all of those who will be meeting with the elected official to:

- review the purpose of the meeting;
- review the materials you will be using and the document(s) you will be leaving with the elected official;
- decide who the main spokesperson will be;
- make sure everyone knows where and when the meeting will take place and confirm they will be able to attend.

Get everyone together a few minutes before the actual meeting time at or near the meeting location. Briefly review the agenda, and set out the order in which you want to proceed, who is to be responsible for which section and how different issues are to be brought up.

### 4. Stick to the point

*Present your position clearly and request follow-up.* If the elected official is sincerely interested in discussing the issue and time is not a problem, take the time you need. On the other hand, don't be sidetracked onto other issues. The elected official may be trying to avoid the real reason for your meeting.

*Listen well.* Much of lobbying is listening, looking for indications of the elected official's views, and finding opportunities to provide good information.

*Keep your cool.* Be forceful in stating your position, but don't allow yourself to be trapped into a heated exchange that will gain nothing. Remember you are representing your fellow members and part of the message that you are trying to convey is that the members you represent are credible and responsible.

*Answer questions.* Reply to the elected official's questions if you have the answers. If you don't have the information, tell the elected official you'll get back to him or her with the answer. Don't try to bluff or give answers that you're not sure of. It will only weaken your case and decrease your credibility. Make sure you follow-up with the information requested.

*Don't make idle threats.* For example, if the elected official is not supportive, don't threaten to throw him or her out at the next election. A better tactic is to remind the elected official that you represent union members who are voters in his or her riding who are concerned about the elected official's position on this issue. The best tactic is to have others show their support too through telephone calls, letters and visits.







## 5. Demand action

If the elected official signals support for the union's position, ask him/her to:

- discuss your position with other members of his or her caucus.
- raise questions with members of government on the issue.
- put a motion forward for discussion in the legislature.
- agree to submit signed petitions you have gathered on your issue.
- generate support from elected officials in the other parties to put pressure on the government to act on your behalf.
- write to the elected official responsible outlining his or her concern about the issue.
- make a public statement on the issue supporting your position.
- consult with you on any further developments around the issue.

## 6. Follow-up

Send a follow-up letter to the elected official thanking him or her for meeting with you.

You can also use this opportunity to restate your position on the issue as well as to confirm what action the elected official has agreed to take. If the elected official did not indicate support at the meeting, request his or her support again or that he/she reconsider his or her position.

Monitor the elected official's performance on the issue. When the elected official carries out the actions promised, thank the elected official for his or her support. If the elected official hasn't followed through, a polite reminder by telephone or by letter will let the elected official know you're watching what he/she is doing (or not doing).

Remember: Keep the rest of the activists and union members involved in your campaign informed about your lobbying efforts by putting together a short report outlining your activities.

## LOBBYING REPORT

Thank you very much for taking the time to meet with your MP or Senator!

- Please fill out this form after each meeting with a political representative.
- Please save this form as a Word document.
- Save a copy for your own file and send your lobbying report by email to the REVP's office.
- The subject of your email should be "Lobbying Report" followed by the name of the MP or Senator visited.





Name of the political representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Political party: \_\_\_\_\_

Riding: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Those who participated on behalf of the PSAC or an ally organization

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Local: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of the political representative

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

What was the goal of your meeting with the MP/Senator?

\_\_\_\_\_

What issues were discussed with the MP/Senator? (Please list the issues)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

What were the key statements made by the MP/Senator?

Were you able to get any commitments from the MP/Senator?

Yes? No? Details? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did he/she agree to have his/her photo taken with you for our website?

Yes? No? Details? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\* If not, did he/she state why?

Finally, please list any follow-up tasks: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reported completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information: \_\_\_\_\_





# Information about the Greater Labour Movement





## **PUBLIC SERVICES INTERNATIONAL**

The PSAC is connected to the international labour movement through its affiliation with Public Services International (PSI). Public Services International serves as a link to other public service unions around the world.

## **CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS**

In terms of the Canadian labour movement, the PSAC is affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). The Canadian Labour Congress represents the interests of more than three million workers in every imaginable occupation from coast to coast to coast.

The CLC is the umbrella organization for dozens of affiliated Canadian and international unions, as well as provincial federations of labour and regional labour councils. PSAC locals may also affiliate with provincial and territorial federations of labour and many are affiliated to district labour councils across the country.

## **FEDERATIONS OF LABOUR**

In the Atlantic Region, the voice of the labour movement is represented by the four provincial federations of labour of the four provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick), to which the PSAC is affiliated. The federations' primary goal is to speak on behalf of and provide resources to its affiliated unions. The federations of labour put forward the interests of union members across the province to government, employers and the general public.

## **DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCILS**

A district labour council is a community based central labour organization representing trade union members at the local level. District labour councils are affiliated with the CLC. Their goal is to ensure that our communities and our elected representatives at all levels of government respond to the needs of the people. The district labour councils speak out on issues affecting people in their workplace and their communities and collaborate to deliver programs and actions consistent with the policies and programs of the CLC.





## HELPFUL LINKS

<http://psacatlantic.ca/> – PSAC Atlantic website

<http://www.psacunion.ca> – PSAC National website

<http://aec-cea.ca> – Alliance Executive Committee Blog

<http://canadianlabour.ca> – Canadian Labour Congress

<http://www.world-psi.org> – Public Services International

<http://www.nfl.nf.ca/> – Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour

<http://www.nbfl-ftnb.ca/> – New Brunswick Federation of Labour

<http://www.nslabour.ca/> – Nova Scotia Federation of Labour

<http://www.peifl.ca/> – Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca> – Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

<http://psacunion.ca/apsar> – Association of Public Service Alliance Retirees

<http://rabble.ca> – online news

<http://www.ndp.ca> – Federal New Democratic Party

<http://www.agrunion.com> – Agriculture Union

<http://ceiu-seic.ca> – Canada Employment and Immigration Union

<http://www.ciu-sdi.ca> – Customs and Immigration Union

<http://www.uew-ste.ca> – Union of Environment Workers

<http://www.gsu-ssg.ca> – Government Services Union

<http://www.une-sen.org> – Union of National Employees

<http://www.nhu-sns.ca> – National Health Union

<http://www.nru-srn-en.com> – Natural Resources Union

<http://ucte.com> – Union of Canadian Transportation Employees

<http://www.unde-uedn.com> – Union of National Defense

<http://upce.ca/en> - Union of Postal Communications Employees

<http://www.usge-sesg.com> – Union of Solicitor General Employees

<http://www.ute-sei.org> – Union of Taxation Employees

<http://www.uvae-seac.ca> – Union of Veterans Affairs Employees

<http://parl.gc.ca> – Parliament of Canada



## **PSAC GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

AEC – Alliance Executive Committee

AGM – Annual General Meeting

AU – Agriculture Union

APSAR – Association of Public Service Alliance Retirees

ASD – Alternative Service Delivery

CCOHS – Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

CCPA – Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

CEIU – Canada Employment & Immigration Union

CFIA – Canadian Food Inspection Agency

CFIB – Canadian Federation of Independent Business

CHRA – Canadian Human Rights Act

CHRC – Canadian Human Rights Commission

CIU – Customs and Immigration Union

CLC – Canada Labour Code

CLC – Canadian Labour Congress

CRA – Canada Revenue Agency

DCL – Directly Chartered Local

DLC – District Labour Council

DI– Disability Insurance

EI – Employment Insurance

EAP – Employee Assistant Program

FAA – Financial Administration Act

GLBT – Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Persons

GSU – Government Services Union

H & S – Health and Safety

HRC – Human Rights Committee

ILO – International Labour Organization

IWD – International Women’s Day

JLP – Joint Learning Program

JOSH – Joint Occupational Safety and Health





LTD – Long Term disability  
LOS – Loss of salary  
LWOP – Leave without pay  
MCS – Multiple Chemical Sensitivity  
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding  
MP – Member of Parliament  
MLA – Member of the Legislative Assembly  
NAFTA – North American Free Trade Agreement  
NAPC – National Aboriginal Peoples' Circle  
NBFL – New Brunswick Federation of Labour  
NBoD – National Board of Directors  
NCR – National Capital Region  
NDP – New Democratic Party  
NEU – Nunavut Employees Union  
NEVP – National Executive Vice-President  
NHU – National Health Union  
NJC – National Joint Council  
NLFL – Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour  
NRU – Natural Resources Union  
NSFL – Nova Scotia Federation of Labour  
NVP – National Vice-President  
PEIFL – Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour  
PSC – Public Service Commission  
PSAC – Public Service Alliance of Canada  
PSAC ID – membership identification number  
PSEA – Public Service Employment Act  
PSI – Public Services International  
PSLRA – Public Service Labour Relations Act  
PSLREB – Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board  
PSSA – Public Service Superannuation Act  
PSMIP – Public Service Management Insurance Plan





REVP – Regional Executive Vice-President  
RO – Regional Office  
RVP – Regional Vice-President  
RWC – Regional Women’s Committee  
SJF – Social Justice Fund  
TB – Treasury Board  
TOR – Terms of Reference  
UCTE – Union of Canadian Transportation Employees  
UEW – Union of Environment Workers  
UMCC – Union Management Consultation Committee  
UNDE – Union of National Defense Employees  
UNE – Union of National Employees  
UNW – Union of Northern Workers  
UPCE – Union of Postal Communications Employees  
USGE – Union of Solicitor General Employees  
UTE – Union of Taxation Employees  
UVAE – Union of Veterans Affairs Employees  
WFA – Work Force Adjustment  
WTO – World Trade Organization  
WAAA – We Are ALL Affected  
YEU – Yukon Employees Union







