



Al Biekša  
Georgi Bates  
Scott McRitchie  
Mike Duhra

President  
Vice President  
Financial Secretary  
Treasurer

## UNITED STEELWORKERS LOCAL 2009

#202-9292 200th Street, Langley, BC V1M 3A6

Fax: 604-513-1851 office@usw2009.ca www.usw2009.ca

---

### BARGAINING 101

#### Normal Bargaining

Meetings are scheduled between USW2009 bargaining team and Employer's bargaining team – we negotiate articles, provide clarification and answer questions.

#### Intensive bargaining

Same process as normal bargaining – but the timeline is condensed with consecutive all-day sessions to increase momentum towards a deal.

#### Mediation

Optional – both parties have to agree. (Section 74 BCLRC)

It involves an unbiased third party who helps the parties negotiate a settlement. In mediation, the mediator tries to guide the discussion in a way that optimizes the parties' needs.

#### Lockout

A work stoppage forced by the Employer. This is done to compel the employees to accept a collective agreement (i.e. – the Employer prevents us from coming to work).

#### Strike

A withdrawal of an employee group's services to an employer. This is a democratic pressure tactic members can use in a unionized environment to get a fair settlement. If a union hasn't held a strike vote and been authorized by the International, a strike cannot legally take place.

#### Strike Mandate

A strike mandate may not result in a strike. It is a bargaining chip that can be used to secure a better deal at the table. USW2009's bargaining team must receive direct explicit empowerment from the membership in order to be able to carry forth a strike. This means that without a strike mandate, there is very little strength behind each proposal put forth by the bargaining team. Strike mandates are arrived at through a secret ballot election run by the Union. The majority of those voting must be in favour of a strike mandate in order for the bargaining team to be empowered. The result and turnout of this secret ballot is given to the Bargaining Committee which decides which information they will release to whom and when. Strike preparedness sends a strong message to the employer about the unity and conviction of USW2009 members. It also sends an unequivocal message that the membership stands behind its Bargaining Team.

## **Ratification**

At the end of the negotiation process, members get to vote through a secret ballot to accept or reject the new agreement.

## **Strike Assistance**

The Strike Assistance Fund is in no way meant to replace your earnings. It is designed to cover some basics while a member is on strike. The Local Union will do its best to work on ensuring the assistance is as high as possible for our members.

Strike Assistance is \$260 /per week / per member effective February 1st 2021 There is an additional benefit of \$30 /week/member from District 3. The strike assistance rules put in place by the International includes a three (3) week waiting period. While this is definitely not great, it is something that is beyond the Local Union's control at the moment.

That being said, the fact is that while the wait is three weeks, the member will ultimately have two weeks that they do not receive strike assistance as strike assistance continues for one week when a member returns to work.

To receive strike assistance members must perform required picket duty as determined by the Local Union Officers.

Most employers allow benefit plans to continue through a strike if the union covers the cost. Regardless of coverage, it is to your advantage to purchase eyewear, visit the dentist, stock up on medications, and schedule other routine medical procedures covered by our benefits prior to a strike or lockout deadline.

## **Financial Preparations Before a Strike or Lockout**

It is never too early to begin thinking about prudent financial preparations for a potential strike or lockout. If a strike or lockout appears to be imminent, you should consider contacting your bank managers, mortgage officials, or other financial advisors and inform them of potential strike or lockout. You should be aware that some credit card companies and banks offer insurance in case of strike or lockout, and can also make alternative payment schedules. You will need to check with your own financial institutions.

## **Preparation**

The collective bargaining process requires careful and extensive preparation, and part of this preparation includes the formation of an Action Committee. While USW2009 continues to bargain in good faith with the Employer with the goal of reaching a fair and equitable collective agreement, our members need to begin preparing for the possibility of an impasse, which would put us in a legal strike or lockout position after serving the Employer 72-hour notice (assuming a strike vote had previously succeeded in the last 3 months- Section 60 BCLRC). No union enters negotiations with the intention of facing a strike (or lockout), but USW2009 would be remiss in its duty to represent its members and further their goals to the maximum extent provided by labour law if we did not plan for the possibility of a strike.