



# SGEU Steward Roles & Responsibilities

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The steward is probably the most recognizable and one of the most important positions within the labour movement. You are the first person that members in your assigned area contact for information about the workplace, SGEU, collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and for help resolving workplace issues. Therefore, the steward is a vital link between the members, your local, SGEU and management.

To many members, the steward is "the Union" and their relationship with the steward will have significant influence on their view of SGEU. Through their actions, attitude and approach the steward will be the SGEU that our members remember. Therefore, it is critical that the image and reputation put forward by the steward is one worthy of their trust, confidence and respect.

Under the guidance of your chief steward, you will work collectively with other stewards, elected leaders, SGEU Labour Relations Officers, bargaining unit and sector officials. Our members will most often turn to you, the steward, when seeking advice. In order for their opinions to be valued, the Steward must be familiar with several documents including: the SGEU Constitution, local bylaws, their collective Bargaining agreement, workplace policies and practices and any relevant legislation. Above all, the Steward must be a fair and objective advocate for all members in their workplace.

## **QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE STEWARD:**

**Resolve Conflict:** You will be recognised as a good problem solver.

**Credible and Reliable:** You will be seen as an honest and credible person with a high degree of integrity and respects the privacy and confidentiality of each member.

**Assertive:** You will be assertive (not aggressive) and decisive, with the ability to deliver difficult (even if unpopular) news.

**Respected:** You will be recognized and respected for possessing a strong work ethic. The steward is positive, motivated, enthusiastic and an energized supporter (and promoter) of the Union

Diplomatic: You will demonstrate commitment to the principles of justice, equality, security, fairness and democracy.

Compassionate: The steward is compassionate and is able to develop a rapport with the members. You will make members feel comfortable and provide them with supportive encouragement.

Communication: The steward has well-developed communication skills including the ability and willingness to give your undivided attention. Is thorough and well organized and empowers members to help themselves by providing them with information and support.

### **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS:**

- As an SGEU steward, your key responsibilities include:
- Building solidarity and promoting harmonious relationships among the members and discourage factional bickering in the workplace.
- Serve as the protector of the rights of our members.
- Enforce the collective agreement and/or any applicable legislation by identifying violations, investigate complaints, and meet with management to solve problems or file grievances.
- Provide information on programs available to members through the union and employer, such as Workers' Compensation, Long-Term Disability, and Employee & Family Assistance Plans.
- Defending your union from harmful rumours by promoting and maintaining a positive, professional and proactive relationship within the union, and between our union and management.
- Investigating and responding to members concerns in a timely fashion.
- Gathering necessary research materials to support negotiating committee.
- Learning from your fellow members by asking for their advice because their knowledge, strengths and experiences may help you to help others.

### **UNION EXPECTATIONS:**

Your fellow members expect stewards to:

- Supporting and cooperating with your chief steward, local executive, SGEU leaders and their appointees.
- Getting to know SGEU, including understanding our history, structure, mission and role within the labour community.

- Encouraging members to attend meetings and (when asked) offer a brief report on the issues discussed at the meeting in such a way that those who didn't attend will recognize their importance.
- Maintaining open lines of communication with the Chief Steward, other Stewards, Officers, members and the SGEU Office.
- Reporting to the local executive the successes and challenges you have faced.
- Ensuring that all members are abiding by the rules set forth in the SGEU Constitution and your local bylaws.
- Attending and actively participate in union meetings.
- Attend training sessions offered by the Union.
- Promote union building activities such as: welcoming new members; recruiting volunteers to become actively involved in union affairs or; exploring opportunities for increased membership participation.
- Promote and support the "Union Label" by buying products that have been produced by Union members.

Standing in solidarity with SGEU, you will help us succeed in our efforts to enrich the lives of the working men and women. The back bone of the labour movement and the spearhead of every battle is the Steward.