

# Chief Steward

## Roles & Responsibilities

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You are a workplace leader who represents SGEU, coordinates Stewards, and enforces the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). You work collectively with stewards, elected leaders, and SGEU staff in your workplace, bargaining unit, and sector. You also deal with management on behalf of the union. As Chief Steward, you fulfill the duties of a Steward, but also work with other Stewards in your zone to do the following:



### Communication

- Encourage Stewards to approach you with questions about processes, contract interpretation, and reports of workplace conflicts and issues.
- Advise Stewards and other members about union activities and advise bargaining unit and sector leaders about workplace developments.
- Ensure new member orientations are occurring as needed.
- Ensure you have a strong relationship with the assigned SGEU Labour Relations Officer.
- Inform Stewards and members about changes in or interpretation of the CBA or as well as relevant arbitration decisions.
- Be accessible to Stewards by telephone or in person.

### Conflict Resolution

- Assist in resolving conflicts between members and Stewards or between members and the employer.
- Be knowledgeable about both workplace and union harassment policies and procedures.
- Encourage Stewards to talk to you when they encounter harassment in the union or in the workplace, and work with Stewards and/or the SGEU Labour Relations Officer to resolve the problem.

- Hold regular meetings of all Stewards. Topics should include current workplace issues, barriers facing equity-group Stewards, discrimination/harassment of Stewards in the union and the workplace, and strategies to address issues.
- Work to dispel, not encourage, rumors.

### **Grievance Co-ordination**

- Assign complaints and grievances to Stewards in your zone, taking into account:
  - Stewards' specialized knowledge
  - The chance for new Stewards to gain experience
  - The need to prevent Steward burn-out.
- Respect members' right to work with the Steward of their choice. Assist Stewards, as needed, in writing and investigating grievances properly, and in judging whether a complaint is a grievance.
- In communications with the SGEU Labour Relations Officer, keep track of filed grievances and ensure the necessary tasks are completed.
- Inform Stewards that all grievances are to be fully investigated in order to identify any violations of the collective agreement and/or any other statutes or laws, before being filed. Educate Stewards on the internal appeal processes.
- Ensure contract enforcement by:
  - Not agreeing to any deal that violates the provisions in the CBA or any other rights defined in a statute.
  - Challenging violations of the CBA and other rights defined in a statute.

### **Leadership**

- Promote maximum involvement by members in union activities, especially within the collective bargaining process.
- Delegate duties to Stewards (and to panel reps where relevant)
- Call and chair regular Steward meetings to share information, identify best practices, and review grievances and other workplace issues.
- Chair other meetings when necessary, such as membership or union-management committee meetings.

### **Recruitment**

- Actively recruit new Stewards with the goal of achieving a representative Steward body in SGEU.

## **Mentoring & Training**

- Ensure you are familiar with your CBA, related legislation, workplace policies and procedures, SGEU policies, the Steward Manual, and union resource people.
- Complete training as set out in SGEU policy.
- Orient new Stewards, and support them to meet the expectations set out in the Steward job description.

## **Mentoring Arrangements for New Stewards**

- Encourage Stewards to take appropriate training, such as ULD 10, ULD 11, ULD 20, ULD 30, and conflict resolution training.
- Update Stewards about education opportunities.
- Encourage Stewards to set appropriate limits to prevent stress and burn-out.

## **Administrative Duties**

- Ensure elections are held for positions of Stewards and reps for your workplace OH & S committee.
- Ensure that Stewards are registered with SGEU membership records after each election.
- Ensure distribution and posting of union information within your zone.