

District Lodge 19

Committee Fundamentals



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The Committee is a Key Person in the IAM Because...

- **Enforcement of the contract depends on him or her.**
- **Members often judge the IAM by their Committee.**
- **The Committee can encourage members to take part in the Union.**
- **The Committee is the link between members, Union, and management.**

The Committee is a Key Person in the IAM Because...

- **The Committee represents the Union and keeps the Union leadership informed about the workplace.**
- **The Committee represents and speaks for the members with management.**
- **The Committee keeps the members and Union officers informed about management's attitude.**

A Committee-person's "Tool-Kit"

The Committee-persons "Tool-Kit" is neither a bag of hardware or a bag of tricks. It is a combination of knowledge and skill plus some documents and notes for quick reference. The following is a small sample of what a successful Committee-person should have knowledge of.

A Committee-persons "Tool-Kit"

- **Know the Collective Bargaining Agreement.**
- **Know the personalities that will be dealt with.**
- **Know the different jobs and the seniority of the membership.**

A Committee-persons "Tool-Kit"

- **Know company rules and practices.**
- **Know the basic rights of Workers Compensation as well as other laws that protect workers.**
- **Know the relevant safety laws and rules.**

Getting to Know Your Contract #1

Are there restrictions on the distribution of overtime & do employees have a right to refuse overtime?

Is seniority retained, or does it accrue, during a layoff or leave of absence?

A Committee-person isn't expected to know all the answers, but must be the type of person who enjoys finding them. Become known as someone who asks when you don't know, rather than someone who tries to bluff or hide from a problem.

Goals of an Effective Committee-person

- **Know your contract.**
- *Keep yourself informed about Union affairs.*
- **Attend Union meetings and Union affairs.**
- *Get your area to act as a Union– have them stick together.*

Goals of an Effective Committee-person

- **Act as a leader; do not let personal likes or dislikes prejudice your actions as a grievance representative.**
- ***Fight discrimination, whether it be overt or very discreet. Discourage prejudice of any kind.***
- **Keep accurate and up-to-date records.
Write it down.**

Goals of an Effective Committee-person

- *Do not promise if you cannot deliver.*
- **Investigate every grievance as if it were your own. Research every grievance as if it were going to arbitration but try to resolve it at the lowest possible level.**
- *Become active politically. Encourage members to exercise their right to vote, and to vote for labor friendly candidates.*

Goals of an Effective Committee-person

- **Fight the anti-union element. You can do this by being informed and being dedicated to the Union movement.**
- *Do not hesitate or stall. If you do not know, admit that you do not know, then try and get the answers.*
- **Keep your fellow employees informed. Give pertinent information when a member asks for it.**

Goals of an Effective Committee-person

- *Be proud of your position. You are a Union representative with the support of tens of thousands of Union members.*
- **Remember your goal is to be the best Committee-person you can be. Always strive for this goal. Excellence has no substitute.**

Nature of the Committee- person

- Leader
- Educator
- Communicator
- Political Activist

Committee-person as a Leader

What to Do:

- Work for the welfare of the group.
- Fight for what is right, not who is right.
- Act promptly and decisively.
- Establish friendly relations.
- Hold no grudges.
- Discourage factional bickering.
- Detect and stop rumors.

What You Need to Know:

- Long-range aims of the Union.
- The consequences of your actions.
- Actions speak louder than words.
- The other person also has a point.
- You can't win them all.
- Why people disagree.
- Where the rumor started and why.

The Committee-person as an Educator

What You Do:

- Keep members informed.
- Discuss & explain policies.
- Discuss union objectives.
- Explain legislative programs.
- Stress registering to vote.
- Explain labor legislation.

What You Need to Know:

- Informed members are loyal members.
- What your Union is doing.
- Union history.
- How laws are made and their impact on Unions.
- Responsibilities of citizenship.
- How labor laws operate.

The Committee-person as a Communicator

What to Do:

- Keep Members informed on Union policies & activities.
- Urge attendance and participation at Union meetings.
- Direct problems through proper channels.
- Use different methods of communication.

What You Need to Know:

- Union policies and activities.
- The union meeting is democracy in action.
- Who has responsibility of the area in question.
- Communication methods may differ according to message.

The Committee-person as a Political Activist

What to Do:

- Register and vote in all elections.
- Write letters to your representatives and encourage others.
- Work on campaigns of labor endorsed candidates.
- Promote the political action program of the IAM.
- MNPL

What You Need to Know:

- Our nation cannot remain democratic without the participation of the people.
- Who your representatives are and the current issues.
- Who has been endorsed and why.
- The political positions your union has taken.
- Why we have MNPL.

A Committee-persons Role in an Investigation

You must handle all cases as if the case will go to arbitration.

Remember, even if the case does not go the way you had hoped, you can challenge the results through the grievance procedure.

A Committee-persons Role in an Investigation

Your main role is to make sure the member is treated as fairly as possible under circumstances that are heavily weighted against them. In general, the Committee-person should follow these guidelines at a hearing:

A Committee-persons Role in an Investigation

- **Speak to the member prior to the meeting. It doesn't matter if the meeting is formal or informal, make sure you and the member have talked ahead of time. In the event the meeting has started prior to your arrival, ask for a recess to get some understanding as to what happened.**
- **Get as much information as you can beforehand. Do not let the employer withhold information. Document any denials of information in writing.**

A Committee-persons Role in an Investigation

- You have a right to ask witnesses questions to determine the accuracy of their testimony. Your rights regarding clarifying information should not be restricted by management. If you are denied that right, make sure that such denial is entered on the record.
- It is perfectly proper for members to answer questions with, "Yes," "No," "I don't recall" or "I don't know." Once the member has answered a question, they are under no obligation to elaborate.

A Committee-persons Role in an Investigation

- At meetings, the Committee-person can stop the discussion at any time to speak privately with the member.
- Take notes during the meeting. The written record is important. It documents what was said, not what was allegedly said. Cases have been won on the basis of good notes.

Document,

Document,

Document

Getting to Know Your Contract #2

Are there restrictions on bargaining unit work being performed by non-bargaining unit personnel? Under what circumstances, if any, can non-bargaining unit personnel work?

What is the probationary period before one becomes a permanent employee?

How many days does an employee have in which to initiate a grievance?

Ten Key Points

INVESTIGATING GRIEVANCES

Be ready to take notes

Answer the 'Five Ws'

Keep information collected in sequence

Conduct thorough interviews

Ask questions for clarification

Get written statements

Determine facts vs. opinions

Note how facts may be supported

Research the contract

What is the remedy



A Proper Investigation has many Benefits...



- Shows the members the Union cares about their concerns.
- Improves Committee-person's credibility and image.
- Causes management to take a more serious view of the Committee-person's concerns.

A Proper Investigation has many Benefits...



- An important step in helping to satisfy member's right to representation.
- Allows the Committee-person to argue the points and management to know the Committee-person has the facts to help resolve the issue.
- Helps the Committee-person clarify what is or is not a contract violation.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

➤ **People** - Grievant, witnesses, etc. (Including management)



➤ **Company Records** - Payroll, production, seniority lists, company rules, etc.

➤ **Union Records** - contract, notes, grievance file

Committee Check List



- ✓ Have I obtained all facts from grievant, witnesses, and management?
- ✓ Do I have all other records and information I need?
- ✓ Have I checked the contract, laws, past practice, and policies?
- ✓ Have I thoroughly explained and gone over the case with grievant?

Committee Check List



- ✓ What points do I want to get across?
- ✓ What questions, if any, do I want to ask the supervisor?
- ✓ What questions might management ask?
- ✓ What kind of position will management take, and what might be their arguments?

Six Grounds for a Grievance

VIOLATION OF:



- **CONTRACT**
- **LAW**
- **PAST PRACTICE**
- **COMPANY RULES AND REGULATIONS**
- **MANAGEMENT'S RIGHTS**
- **DISCIPLINE UNJUST/EXCESSIVE**

GRIEVANCE HANDLING



- **Be a good listener. Even though you feel that the aggrieved worker is wrong, listen patiently to his or her complaint. Try to find out what the basis of their dissatisfaction really is. Show interest in the problem.**
- **Be armed with facts. Know your contract and how similar grievances were handled.**

GRIEVANCE HANDLING



- **Use a positive, friendly approach. Avoid aggressiveness or a defensive attitude.**
- **Easy does it. Pounding the table and shouting does not settle anything.**

GRIEVANCE HANDLING



- **Don't be afraid of pauses in the conversation. Give the person or group, as well as yourself, time to think over the arguments and suggestions that have been made.**
- **When you disagree with what the supervisor says, do so with dignity. Remember that you and the supervisor will have to work together and settle other issues in the future.**

GRIEVANCE HANDLING



- **Keep an open mind. You may not know all the facts. Be willing to admit you don't know all the answers.**
- **Don't get upset or make empty threats that you know you can't carry out. If you and the Carrier officer don't come to an agreement there are further steps to follow.**

GRIEVANCE HANDLING



- **Appeal to management's self-interest. It should be important to management to have grievances settled satisfactorily.**
- **Settle each grievance on its merits. Don't give up one grievance case in order to get a favorable decision on another. It is unfair to the member whose grievance is traded away.**

GRIEVANCE HANDLING



- **Stick to the point in your discussion with the supervisor. Don't get side-tracked on minor or unrelated matters.**
- **Remember that management has rights too and that both the workers and management must live up to the terms of the agreement.**

GRIEVANCE HANDLING



- **Keep the aggrieved worker constantly informed as to what is being done about his or her grievance.**
- **Permit management to correct their mistake without loss of face or dignity. Present the facts and give them time to consider your arguments.**

GRIEVANCE HANDLING



- **Don't gloat when a grievance is settled in your favor. Tell the supervisor you appreciate his or her efforts to be fair in the matter.**
- **Avoid personalities. It is not WHO is right, it is WHAT is right that counts.**

GRIEVANCE HANDLING



- After a resolution has been reached on a grievance between management and the IAM, check to see that the decision is carried out.

Getting to Know Your Contract #3

Do employees have bumping rights in the event of a layoff? What are the requirements?

What procedure is followed when a holiday falls on a (a) Saturday or Sunday or (b) during vacation time?

Is advance notice required before (a) layoff or (b) discharge? How much?

Writing a Grievance



1) Violation

**2) Brief
Description**

3) Remedy