



ASSOCIATION of
MCGILL
UNIVERSITY
SUPPORT
EMPLOYEES

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AMUSE STEWARD MANUAL

A manual covering AMUSE
union stewarding from A to Z



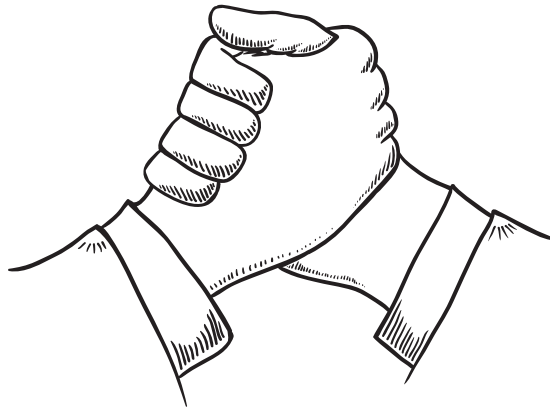
This manual will help:

- Define common terms regarding unions and union language
- Help to explain the role of a steward
- Answer frequently asked questions
- Give advice to help stewards support the members they're representing
- Act as a directory for resources and materials

FIRST OFF, WHAT IS A STEWARD?

And why are they the best?

A Steward is a designated union representative who acts as a liaison for other union members in their shared workplace. A Steward is someone who listens to their fellow members' problems, advocates for them and helps find solutions to any problems they may encounter. They sometimes act as a mediator between the employer and the member if there is an issue. They help promote solidarity among union members in the workplace, and make sure that members feel supported and connected to their union. **Stewarding doesn't take experience either!** They might have skills as a communicator, educator or organizer, but just like anyone else, they might not have the answers, but they have the empathy and initiative to help find them. Is this you?



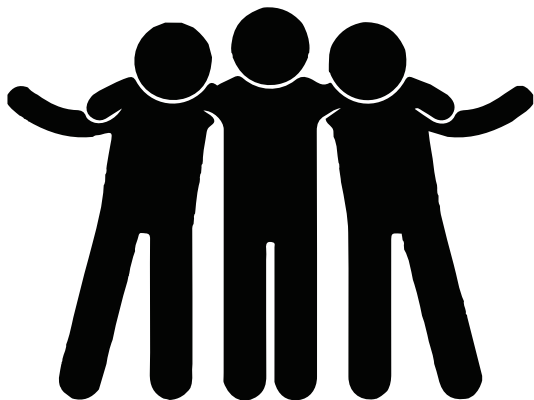
10 EASY STEPS TO BEING A STEWARD

BUILDING BETTER UNIONS THROUGH STRONG STEWARDSHIP

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- Get to know the membership you represent – be curious about what they have to say
 - Make yourself familiar and available
 - Meet with members to hear individual or group concerns or complaints – Ask the Executives and AMUSE staff for help with this!
 - Be proactive in identifying and solving problems, rather than waiting and reacting to problems
 - Talk informally to supervisors to address members' issues
 - Mobilize members when management breeches the collective agreement, their own policies, or the law
 - Provide representation for members pursuing grievances
 - Organize and participate in workplace actions
 - Work with and take direction from local executives and union staff
 - Engage members in union campaigns & committees

WHAT TYPE OF COMMITMENT IS IT TO BE A STEWARD TO AMUSE MEMBERS?

Stewards are not employed by the union, but “liberated.” A good way to think about stewarding is as a volunteer position that is compensated. We do require stewards to participate in a paid training on the union, labour organizing more generally, and an anti-oppression training in line with our social justice mandate, but after training is completed, stewards are able to be as involved at their discretion. If there are several months where you are unavailable, then a campaign that you are able to put a lot of energy towards, we’re happy to have your help!



WHAT RIGHTS DO I HAVE AS A STEWARD?

As a Steward, you still have the same responsibility to ensure you fulfill your duties as an employee. However, you also have the right to perform your duties as a union Steward, so long as they do not interrupt your own or another member's work. For AMUSE members, you can ask to speak to Casuals in a workplace – technically, we need supervisory permission. However, that can be obtained verbally and that permission cannot be withheld without valid reason. Feel free to ask when employees' breaks are if you encounter resistance from a supervisor.



STEWARD BYLAWS



First, what is a bylaw?

Bylaw: a rule made by a company or society to control the actions of its members. Union constitutions and by-laws are essentially the rules and regulations that govern the union. AMUSE's stewarding bylaws essentially create a standard for representation and communication.

www.amusemcgill.ca/bylaws

14.8. The Stewards shall:

- (a)** collaborate with the Labour Relations Officer and/or Communications and Outreach Officer and the committee for mobilization in the effort in addressing any concerns of members in their area regarding their working conditions;
- (b)** ensure that these concerns are addressed by the Executive Committee;
- (c)** together with the Labour Relations Officer and/or Grievance Committee, shall be charged with the investigation of any complaints, gathering of information, and the passing of recommendations to file grievances;
- (d)** act as a liaison between the employees and the Executive Committee;
- (e)** oversee the implementation of the policies set out by the governing bodies and items of the collective agreement that are relevant to the members of their Unit (see Article 2.2.) and department;
- (f)** meet members and inform them of the activities of the Local;
- (g)** establish first contact with new members from their workplace;
- (h)** be represented in the Board of Representatives by twelve (12) Chief Stewards.



NOW THAT YOU'VE DECIDED STEWARDING IS FOR YOU!

FAQ

Some commonly asked questions about stewarding:

Q: I rarely come into contact with my coworkers, can I still be an effective steward?

A: Yes! There are many workplaces with one or two members and larger units with no stewards. We are happy to help facilitate a connection between you and another workplace. Especially if you are a student, you probably regularly come into contact with AMUSE members. You can ask professors to allow you to make announcements about the union before class, or talk to campus organizations you may be involved with about promoting union activity.

Q: Up to how many hours are available for stewards?

A: Available work varies depending on ongoing campaigns. If we are planning a Special General Assembly (SGM) for a strike or ratification vote during bargaining, we will need a lot of people power to get the word out. Typically, stewards do not work more than a few hours per week, but we are happy to discuss options for those who are interested in getting more involved. It's always good for us to check in with the Finance Committee to ensure we're within our budgetary amount for stewarding. Also for context, all of our exec and outreach coordinators work part time.

Q: What if I don't have the answer to a question a member has?

A: Don't sweat it, at all! You're going to build your knowledge as you go, and everyone is supposed to start somewhere. We believe that while stewards *can* be a bank of knowledge for fellow members, the most important part is that they have the willingness to help find answers.

Q: How should I explain union dues to a worker?

A: Union dues are a contribution held from the wages of a worker and help pay for the activities and protections of the union. A union is a non-profit organization that has no shareholders to enrich, and the amount chosen is only to the equivalent of what is necessary to ensure that members receive what they need. Services to union members require personnel, premises and equipment. In addition, a union must have the tools to cope without constraints with employers in case of conflict, particularly a solid strike fund. Finally, a fair democratic representation of members, an appropriate structure and a sound and transparent management of union funds and other assets require funds to maintain. All of that being said, a unionized workforce will statistically make more than a non-unionized workforce. Being unionized pays for itself!

COMMON QUESTIONS STEWARDS GET, AND HOW YOU CAN HELP!



Q: My supervisor keeps asking that I be put on stand-by to pick up shifts on short notice; this has been super inconvenient in the past—am I entitled to anything when put in a bind in this way?

A: You're entitled to many things!

- Per article 25.01, you're entitled to the minimum hourly rate for class B employees while just waiting on stand-by—\$15.53!
- Your supervisor should never call you into work from stand-by unless you can get to work within the normal amount of time (art. 25.01).
- You're never *required* to agree to be on stand-by and your supervisor must ensure that stand-by responsibilities are shared equitably in your team (art. 25.03)
- If you come into work from stand-by, you could get paid extra for that shift (art. 25.02)



Q: Are my days of sick leave/absence ever paid?

A: After working at McGill for 3 months, you're entitled to 2 days of paid absence in the year. See art. 27.05 for what counts as a legitimate "absence" and how much you can get paid

Q: How long can my breaks be during a shift?

A: Any shift over 4 hrs entitles you to a 15-minute break. Any shift over 5 hrs entitles you to a 30 min (unpaid) lunch break. Any shift over 7 hrs (excluding the lunch break) gets an extra 15 min break (arts. 21.01 and 21.02)

Q: My supervisor has made me work through lunch breaks in the past—is this normal or can I be compensated?

A: Although your supervisor can make you work during your normally scheduled lunch break, you can request to have your lunch time moved into later into your shift (art. 21.02). If your lunch break never gets rescheduled in that shift, your missed 30min lunch break will be paid" (art. 21.02)



COMMON QUESTIONS STEWARDS GET: THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS!



Q: "What's the process look like for bringing forward a grievance? Is it long and complicated?"

A: The short answer is that yes, it can be complicated and long. Normally a grievance will be solved between employer and the union, but in the case it doesn't, the grievance can go to *arbitration, which takes longer. But what matters is that you will always have support for potential grievances from AMUSE's Executives, Staff and Board members, regardless, but here are some actions you can take to ensure the Labour Relations of AMUSE has a good foundation for a complaint or a grievance:

1 - The when/what/why/where/who of the grievance or complaint: Ensure that you collect as much information as possible that is relevant to the complaint or grievance. What happened, when it happened, where it happened and who was involved.

2 - Some important info you can collect is anything supporting the grievance or complaint within emails, screenshots, photos from the workplace etc.

3 - Making sure this info is organized and easy to go through

4 - Keeping up to date on the progress of the complaint or grievance. Asking Labour Relations what info you can share with your colleagues.

5 - Ultimately, never feel like you're in this process alone. Always ask support from other union stewards, union Executives and AMUSE Staff. We're all in this together!

***ARBITRATION:** is a procedure in which a dispute is submitted, by agreement of the parties, to one or more arbitrators who make a binding decision on the dispute. In choosing arbitration, the parties opt for a private dispute resolution procedure instead of going to court.



COMMON UNION TERMS

Unit A: part time and temporary employees at McGill – Unit A covers a vast array of positions at McGill

Unit B : McGill Floor Fellows. McGill upper-year students who live in the halls and are a support resource for students. They work to ensure that residents have the smoothest transition possible into McGill residences.

Collective Agreement (CA) :

A collective agreement is a legally binding contract that outlines the workers' rights, including minimum wages, working conditions, job security, and benefits. The collective agreement will also have an expiry date before which the employer and the union must re-negotiate a new collective agreement. If a new agreement is not reached before the previous one expires, its terms remain in force until a new agreement is signed.

Bargaining/Negotiations:

Collective bargaining is a process of negotiation between employers and a group of employees aimed at agreements to regulate working salaries, working conditions, benefits, and other aspects of workers' compensation and rights for workers.

Grievance: A grievance is when the Collective Agreements' articles/rules have been violated. There are three kinds of grievances: a union grievance, a group grievance, and an individual grievance. A grievance is different from a complaint in that it is specifically a violation of the CA (not provincial or national law)—a complaint is a breaking of the law. Sometimes, both the CA and the law are broken at once.

Labour Code: A labour code, (also called a code of labour laws) is a codification of labour laws in legislative form.

UNION CONTACT LIST:

Executive and AMUSE staff Positions & how to reach them:

President: president@amusepsac.org

Labour Relations Officer: laboure@amusepsac.org

Internal Affairs Officer: internale@amusepsac.org

Comms and Outreach Officer: communications@amusepsac.org

Treasurer: treasurer@amusepsac.org

VP Floor Fellows: floorfellows@amusepsac.org

AMUSE staff: outreach02@amusemcgill.ca or outreach@amusepsac.org

RESOURCE TOOLKIT

Unit A Collective Agreement:

<https://www.amusemcgill.ca/unit-a-collective-agreement>

Unit B/Floor Fellows Collective Agreement:

<https://www.amusemcgill.ca/unit-b-collective-agreement>

CNESST (Quebec labour rights and obligations. CNESST ensures that it is respected by workers and employers in Quebec):

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en>

Resource to help understand tenant/worker/legal rights in Quebec

<https://educaloi.qc.ca/en/>



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WWW.AMUSEMCGILL.CA

MORE UNION LANGUAGE

Strike: a refusal to work organized by a body of employees as a form of protest, typically in an attempt to gain a concession or concessions from their employer.

Union busting: Union busting is a range of activities undertaken to prevent the formation of unions or their attempts to grow their membership in a workplace. Union busting tactics can refer to both legal and illegal activities, and can range anywhere from subtle to violent.

Local: A "local" is a local branch of a usually national or just a larger union.

Scab: They are people hired to replace striking workers. They are often termed scabs by those in favour of the strike because their actions can negatively impact the effects of a strike.

Strike Fund: an amount of money reserved by a union to make payments to striking works should a strike occur.

Union Dues: a contribution withheld from the wages of a worker to go towards the activities of a the union.

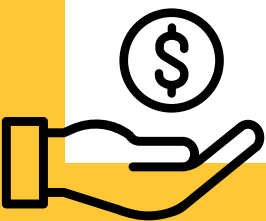


STEWARD LIBERATIONS: HOW YOU'RE PAID!

- To get compensated for your work as a steward, you'll have to submit a timesheet **every month**: a simple excel doc breaking down how many hours you spent stewarding.

AMUSE -- Liberation Timesheet				
NAME: John Smith				
POSITION: Unit B Steward				
MONTH: From Monday (date): 05-07-2021 To Sunday (date): 01-08-2021				
Week	TIME STARTED	TIME ENDED	HRS WORKED	TASK
Week 1 05-07-2021	12:00	13:00	1.00	Monday: mobilization committee meeting
			0.00	
			0.00	
			0.00	
Week 2 12-07-2021	11:00	14:00	3.00	Wednesday: research for safety event; meeting with outreach coordinator
	16:00	16:30	0.50	Friday: finance committee meeting
			0.00	
			0.00	
Week 3 26-07-2021	14:30	15:00	0.50	Friday: solidarity committee meeting preparation
			0.00	
			0.00	
			0.00	
Week 4 DD-MM-YYYY			0.00	
			0.00	
			0.00	
			0.00	
Week 5 DD-MM-YYYY			0.00	
			0.00	
			0.00	
			0.00	
TOTAL HOURS			5.00	
HOURLY RATE			\$18.00	
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE			\$90.00	

- You can find timesheets on the AMUSE website under 'Get Involved' (<https://www.amusemcgill.ca/timesheets>).
- Once brought on board, stewards also complete the standard tax documents for employees: the T4, T4A and RL1 (to be sent to you by the treasurer)
- Timesheets should be sent to the treasurer **monthly** by email at treasurer@amusepsac.org - you will get an email reminder, however make sure to try your best to submit on time!



THE TIMELINE AND HISTORY OF AMUSE

