

CMAW OWNERS MANUAL

MAY 2021

MEMBERS DRIVE THE UNION

"Members drive the Union" is the thinking behind an owner's manual for you as a member of the Construction, Maintenance and Allied Workers Canada (CMAW).

CMAW was formed when the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters broke away from the carpenters international union based in Washington, DC, to form an independent Canadian union controlled by its members here in Canada. CMAW holds the certifications formerly held by the Provincial Council of Carpenters, and is dedicated to organizing in the non-union and other sectors to represent carpenters and other workers who want to enjoy the benefits of a truly Canadian union.

This booklet contains some basic information about how CMAW works - what we do, how we do it, how union dues are set, how policies are set, the structure of the Union and who to contact if you have a problem or to become more involved. For more detailed information about specific campaigns and events, policy papers, news, or to keep up to date on the day-to-day priorities of your union, visit the CMAW website at www.cmaw.ca

A glossary is provided at the back, as some of the terms in this booklet may be unfamiliar to newer Union members.

WHAT WE DO

MEMBERSHIP IN CMAW MEANS A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

Before we sign a collective agreement for our members, CMAW negotiates pay increases, job security, shorter work time, better pensions, health and welfare coverage, and lots more.

Members get professional representation, be it at the collective bargaining table, at grievance hearings, or for workers compensation claims.

Our Union education program includes training for Job Stewards, Union leadership seminars and Union orientation for members. We also provide skills upgrading training sessions for members in all specialties such as scaffolding, welding, rigging and courses related to safety, (ie. fall protection, confined space and monitoring, WHIMIS and other areas). In addition, CMAW has a major involvement in supporting apprentices as they work their way through their on-the-job training to become ticketed journeypersons.

The CMAW website is updated often with news and information about our Union's activities and special bulletins or other mailings that are sent to members as required. More and more, the Union is moving to electronic means of communicating with members, including circulating newsletters and other information by email.

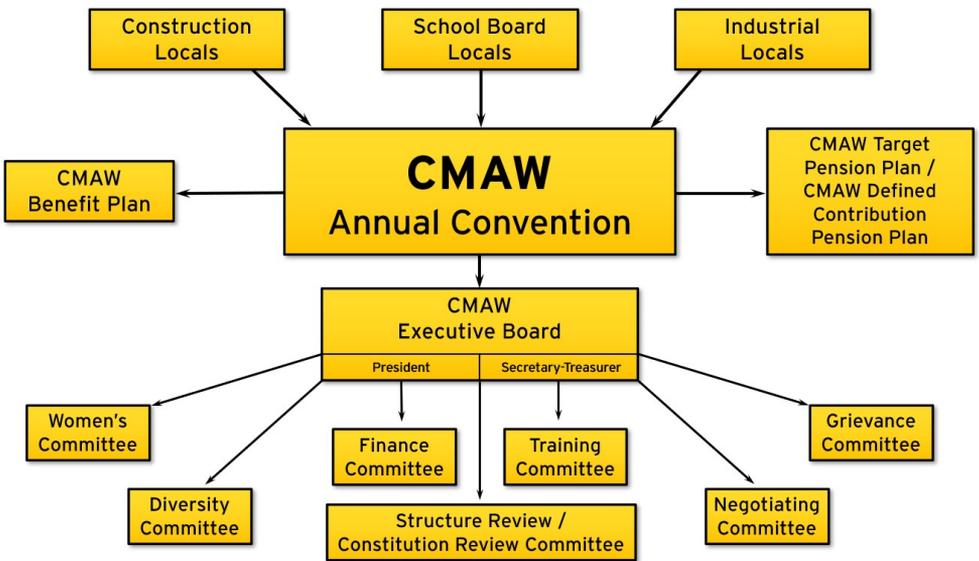
Our Union is affiliated with the Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU), the largest federation of independent labour unions in Canada. With over 20,000 members in every sector of the economy, the CCU is able to effectively lobby all levels of government on issues such as health care, pay equity, social services, and labour standards for workers. Through this affiliation we ensure the rights, economic status and health of our members are protected.

CMAW is also a member of the Bargaining Council of BC Building Trades Unions (BCBCBTU), which is an organization of all the building trade unions in BC who bargain master collective agreements with the contractors who are members of the Construction Labour Relations Association of BC.

CMAW Canada has joined forces with the Building and Woodworkers' International (BWI), which is a global union federation of democratic and free trade unions. Joining BWI creates new business opportunities with multi-national contractors and employers operating in Canada who have already established relationships with the global union.

A NEW KIND OF UNION IN CONSTRUCTION

CMAW members are carpenters, shipbuilders, scaffolders, lathers, cabinetmakers, display technicians, industrial workers, school board employees and many other specialized maintenance workers.



And as an independent Canadian union CMAW is also organizing workers in construction and other fields on an all-employee basis, where a number of different crafts or specialties are represented under a single, comprehensive collective agreement. An all-employee certification is particularly appropriate where a project might require workers from a few or more separate trades or specialties on the site at the same time.

In pursuit of these goals, CMAW has established links with our brothers in construction in Quebec -- Federation des Travailleurs du Quebec Construction (FTQ) -- to work on organizing on a national scale.

It's easy to see why workers want to join CMAW. That's why we're busy unionizing new workplaces all the time.

HOW WE DO IT

Of course none of this happens without a lot of work on the part of CMAW's elected officers and its full-time staff.

Decisions about what is to be done and how to do it are made democratically at the CMAW Convention, which is held every two (2) years. The CMAW Executive Board governs the Union between conventions. CMAW Local Unions also elect their officers and business agents democratically by its members.

CMAW Canada has its office in Burnaby and regional local offices throughout Western Canada. For a complete list of locals and contact numbers, go to the website www.cmaw.ca. CMAW Local Unions have regular membership meetings where financial reports are reviewed and other major decisions are made.

WE MANAGE OUR OWN BENEFITS

Construction work differs from many other lines of work in that the workers rarely work for one employer all the time. Except for shop workers, maintenance workers and some others, most construction carpenters work on a project basis for whichever contractor hires them for that job.

Because of this, our collective agreements provide that the portion of your wage and benefits package which cover health and welfare and pension are sent by your employer directly to your account at the agency which administers your benefits. These plans are administered by these organizations on your behalf, and benefits are paid to you from the plan as required.

Contact information including email addresses and phone numbers for various benefits and pension plans can be found in the CMAW web site, at www.cmaw.ca

CMAW STRUCTURE

Getting involved at the Local Union level is the best way to make sure that your Union - Construction Maintenance and Allied Workers Canada - takes positions you can support. CMAW is a bargaining council comprising 10 Local Unions covering about 200 different certifications, mainly in BC and Alberta. It is governed by an Executive council comprising of 14 members, elected by the membership. The President and the Secretary Treasurer are full-time employees of CMAW, and are elected every four years with their terms being staggered.

The Executive Board meets four times year or more if needed, and has established separate committees dealing with finance, negotiating, grievances, training and others to help it complete its work.

LOCAL UNIONS

The majority vote of members is how your Local Union elects officers, sets dues, decides bargaining priorities and decides who will participate in conventions, educational seminars and other Union events.

Want to get in on the action? Taking part in Union meetings is a good start.

YOUR LOCAL EXECUTIVE

Every Local Union of CMAW has an elected executive to run its day to day affairs. In most Local Unions business agents are elected from the membership as paid employees, who work part time or full time on behalf of the Local membership. Your Local Executive will usually include a:

President who co-ordinates all the work of the Local. He or she plans and chairs regular Union meetings, and sees that CMAW policies are carried out at the Local level as outlined in Local policies and by-laws.

Vice-President - the President's right-hand person. He or she chairs meetings when President is unable to attend.

Local Recording Secretary who takes minutes of local meetings, handles correspondence and maintains files.

Financial Officer (sometimes called the Financial Secretary or Treasurer) who collects all monies paid to the Local Union, including membership dues, fines and assessments and is responsible for properly accounting for all funds. He or she keeps a record of all the names and addresses of Local members.

IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM...

You can get the most out of your Union by knowing who to call if you have a question or a problem.

If, for example, you're having a dispute with your supervisor, think you're working too much overtime, or are being harassed by management - see your Job Steward first.

JOB STEWARD

NAME: _____

PHONE (home): _____

PHONE (cell): _____

EMAIL: _____

The Job Steward is your official representative at the worksite. He or she serves as a first point of contact for members with questions or concerns about the worksite. Your Job Steward can look into your concerns, tell you if you have a legitimate complaint, and will accompany you if you need to talk to your supervisor about it. It is very important that you enlist your Job Steward's help, especially if a concern ends up being taken to the higher stages of a grievance outlined in your collective agreement. He or she will act as a witness to any statements or commitments made and can also explain any part of the collective agreement to you.

LOCAL PRESIDENT / BUSINESS AGENT

NAME: _____

PHONE (HOME): _____

PHONE (WORK): _____

EMAIL: _____

The Local Union President is the chairperson of the Local Executive Board which administers the Local's day-to-day affairs.

DUES DOLLARS THAT MAKE SENSE

YOUR DUES WORK FOR YOU

Be it at the negotiating table, at the worksite, at the provincial legislature or on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, your Union dues make it possible for your Union to obtain a better standard of living for you.

Your Local Union decides by a vote of the members the amount of dues check-off which will be deducted from your pay each hour you work, to finance Local activities. Your working dues are set by the CMAW Executive Board to fund CMAW Canada's activities. Every penny of the dues you pay is tax-deductible.

Your Local officers can advise you of the details of the dues which Local Union members have voted on and approved to support activities at the local level.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Each Local determines its own spending priorities. Local expenses can include the cost for time off work for officers to carry out Union duties, costs for sending delegates to Union courses, conventions and special meetings, and for grievance arbitrations, lawyers or other advisors. Some larger Locals also hire office staff and some even own and maintain office buildings.

Local Unions typically provide a financial report at each membership meeting, so members are able to see the detail of where their dues dollars are coming from, and what they're being spent on. At the end of each year the financial statements of the Local are tabled, giving members another opportunity to see how funds are being spent.

The CMAW Executive Board also sees regular financial reports from the Secretary Treasurer, and audited financial statements are presented to the bi-annual convention for discussion, debate and approval.

All Union funds are fully accounted for all the time, and at all levels.

WHY JOIN CMAW?

There are many good reasons. Here are just a few:

PART OF A TEAM

Workers band together in a Union to bargain collectively for better working conditions. Collective bargaining ends with a collective agreement -- a legally binding contract between the employer and employees. The collective agreement outlines working conditions, including benefits, wages, hours of work and much more.

JOB SECURITY

If you are a Union member, and you're fired without just cause, your Union can get your job back. If you're not unionized and you're fired for no good reason, there is nothing in the law that forces your employer to hire you back. You could file a wrongful dismissal suit, but the only remedy is money.

HIGHER PAY

Jobs covered by a union collective agreement pay an average of 32% more than jobs that are not.

BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS

From hours of work to health and safety to harassment protection, unionized workers have a better work environment. They have somewhere to turn if they need help.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Your collective agreement will spell out the steps to take if you have a grievance against your employer, or against a supervisor or co-worker. Unionized workers also have access to legal representation if necessary.

ACCESS TO MORE WORK

If you are a construction worker, CMAW is for you. As a member, you have access to excellent construction jobs ranging from the oil sands of Alberta, to the high-rise condominiums of Vancouver. We dispatch workers in every town in British Columbia, and we are gaining more work opportunities across Canada every day.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Arbitration - A final and binding means of settling workplace problems or grievances. Arbitration procedures are spelled out in the collective agreement.

Bargaining Unit - A group of workers in a craft, department, plant, firm, industry or occupation, determined by a labour relations board or similar body as appropriate for representation by a union for purposes of collective bargaining.

Business representative - A union employee who negotiates contracts, handles disputes and guides local union officers and members.

Caucus - A group of union members with something in common, normally equity-seeking groups -- such as, women, Aboriginal workers, or workers with disabilities -- who meet to pursue common goals. Meetings often take place before annual or biennial conventions of national or international unions.

Certification - The process by which a union becomes the exclusive bargaining agent for a group of employees on the basis of having received signed membership cards in sufficient numbers to satisfy the requirements of the labour relations board, typically 50 per cent.

Collective agreement - A contract (agreement and contract are used interchangeably) between one or more unions - acting as a bargaining agent - and the employer, covering wages, hours, working conditions, fringe benefits, rights of workers and unions, and procedures to be followed in settling disputes and grievances.

Collective bargaining - A method of determining wages, hours and other conditions of employment through direct negotiations between the union and employer. Normally the result of collective bargaining is a written contract which covers all employees in the bargaining unit, called a collective agreement.

Confederation of Canadian Unions - A federation of labour unions that is dedicated to the establishment of a democratic, independent Canadian labour movement. The CCU works to establish a just standard of income, working hours, and conditions for all who work.

Employee Family Assistance Plan - An employee-benefits program that normally covers the costs of professional counseling and treatment for employees who suffer from workplace and home- related stresses, disorders and addictions.

Financial report - A report about the state of the Union's finances that has been compiled and reviewed, according to standard accounting practice, by a Chartered Accountant.

Grievance - formal complaint that alleges a violation of language in the collective agreement.

Grievance procedure - A procedure for settling disputes that is normally spelled out in the collective bargaining agreement.

Job Steward - A member in the workplace elected to represent a specific group of members and to deal with grievance matters and other employment-related issues.

Labour Relations Board - An organization which has statutory responsibility to resolve grievances in labour relations between unions and employers, and to generally facilitate good labour/ management practices in unionized workplaces. Each province has a labour board for workplaces which have a provincial certification, and there is a national labour relations board which regulates federally-certified workplaces.

Local activist - A member who is actively involved in the union at the local level.

Local Executive - A group elected to administer the affairs of the local on behalf of its membership.

Local Union - The basic unit of union organization. Trade unions are usually divided into a number of local administrations. These Locals have their own by-laws and elect their own officers; they are usually responsible for the negotiation and day-to-day administration of the collective agreements covering their members.

National convention - A meeting attended by union delegates, most of whom are elected to attend by members of their Local. The national convention is sometimes referred to as the "supreme governing body" of the union. Delegates set the union's priorities by adopting policies and resolutions.

Union dues - Payments by union members for the financial support of their union.



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