

## Your Rights At Work

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Unions organize working people to work together to achieve common goals in the workplace and society. Through the union, we can negotiate with management about pay, benefits and conditions where we work, under the protection of the law. In the United States, the basic law is the National Labor Relations Act. In Canada, provincial and federal labour laws protect those rights. This process of working collectively to improve wages and working conditions is called collective bargaining and leads to an agreement called a "contract" between the workers and management.



## Your Right to Fair Treatment on the Job

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Everyone wants to have smooth working relationships on the job. But problems arise in every workplace. Without a union, workers must try to resolve these problems by themselves, dealing directly with a supervisor or manager who has complete authority over the solution. Management has no obligation to provide due process or have an independent third party make the final decision.

A BCTGM union contract typically includes a formal "grievance procedure" to protect you from being treated unfairly or fired without good reason. It also protects you from discrimination or favoritism in work assignments, promotion, layoffs, and in the way other issues are handled.

If management violates the contract in any way, members can file a complaint through the union that is processed through the objective "grievance procedure." If you think management may have violated your rights as spelled out in the contract, tell your BCTGM steward. Your steward is a member like you who has volunteered or been elected to represent you in the workplace.

The steward and other local union leaders can answer your questions and help you figure out the best way to solve workplace problems. Sometimes that process involves discussions with management. Sometimes it requires getting the support of other workers for a fair solution. If no resolution



is reached and the grievance procedure is followed through to the end, a final decision is made by an impartial arbitrator who is chosen and paid by both parties and dependent on neither.

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