



UNION-MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION COMMITTEES

Union-Management Consultation Committees (UMCs) provide another avenue to fight for our members. The purpose of union-management consultation is to facilitate communication on issues relevant to the workplace.

UMCs are an official forum where management and employee representatives meet to exchange information on policy, procedures, conditions of employment and other matters of interest to the parties. They provide a forum for:

- Union representatives to communicate their views on subjects of importance to the membership;
- Management to make known its plans regarding the subject under discussion, the reasons for taking such action and the expected results;
- Discussing such items as proposed changes in conditions and programs; physical working conditions; equipment, tools and uniforms; training programs; and
- Alleviating fears and prejudices created by workplace rumours.

The only topics of interest or concern not appropriate for discussion in UMCs are those that could lead to altering or changing the intent of a collective agreement.

UMCs do not limit management's authority, nor do they interfere with a union's rights as established by legislation or collective agreements. While consultation does not involve mutual decision-making or formal agreement, it does imply that management should take into account the views and suggestions advanced by union representatives.

Union-Management Consultation Committees are held at the National, Regional and Local levels. This is important to note. Take the example of a Local UMC meeting. Suppose management doesn't have requested information, resists providing it or shows a difference of opinion on a particular topic. In such a case, the Local should forward the matter to the next UMC level. Then, our union can ensure the problem is placed on the agenda for the next scheduled meeting at that level.

The request from one level must include complete background documentation as well as the minutes of the UMC meeting where it was initially discussed. Similarly, Regional UMC roadblocks can be addressed at the National UMC.

Each UMC should have two Co-Chairs – one from the union, the other from the employer. Official minutes, signed by the Co-Chairs, should be kept as a record of all discussions and decisions at these meetings. These minutes should be posted to ensure that the membership is kept fully aware and up-to-date.