

**BUILDING
BARGAINING
POWER**
Online Learning Series

Strike Planning Handbook

Table of Contents

Introduction: Using this handbook	2
The bargaining cycle: Where strike planning fits in	3
Preventing a strike by preparing for a strike	4
What the law says about strikes	5
An overview of the bargaining process	6
Engaging members in strike action	7
Accommodating members during a strike	8
Roles and responsibilities of different players during a strike	9
Tips on strike committee and subcommittee operations	10
The 4 pillars of a successful strike	11
Pillar 1 – Administration	12
Strike Headquarters: Some things to think about.....	14
A word about confidentiality:	16
Pillar 2 – Finance	17
Some questions about strike pay	19
Creating a Member Assistance Fund	20
Sample letter to financial institutions.....	22
Sample letter from members to banks or companies	23
Pillar 3 – Communications	24
Communicating with members during a strike	28
Phone Tree Template	31
Getting the support of family and friends	32
Recording the strike	32
Clear language checklist	33
Pillar 4 – Picketing	34
Developing a picketing strategy.....	36
Sample recruitment poster for picket captains	40

A word about organizing picket captain training..... 41

Resources to review before *Strike Planning Session*..... 42

Introduction: Using this handbook

This handbook is for Strike Committees. It has been designed to be used primarily during the **Strike Preparation** workshop, ahead of the **Strike Planning Session**.

The audience for this Handbook is locals with the right to strike.

Ideally your local will have achieved the following by this stage:

- Adopted a strategic plan for bargaining;
- Adopted a member mobilization plan; and
- Engaged and mobilized members in the bargaining process.

This handbook covers the organizing of picket lines, but does not delve into the details of the picket captain role.

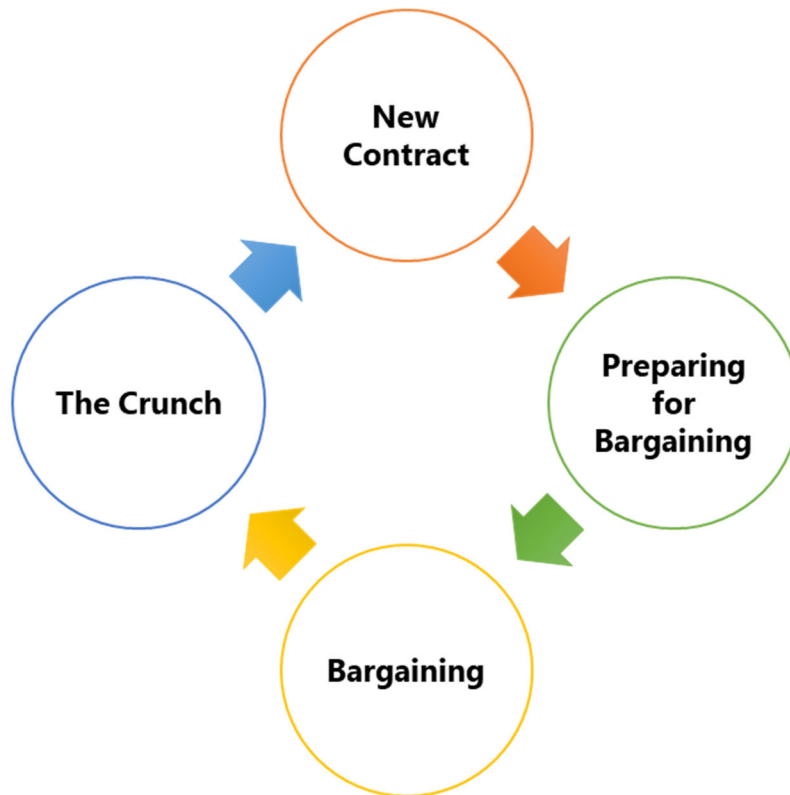
CUPE Education offers a separate workshop for picket captains called **Picket Captain Training**, which your local can set up following the completion of the **Strike Preparation** workshop and the **Strike Planning Session**.

The bargaining cycle: Where strike planning fits in

As the diagram below illustrates, we're in a continuous bargaining cycle. That means that a local and its members need to continually engage in work related to bargaining: before, during, and after what we traditionally think of as "bargaining" – the expiry of one agreement and the ratification of the next.

The first job for the Strike Committee may be to prepare the local for a successful strike vote. This will depend on your provincial legislation and/or the local's strategic plan and schedule for this round of bargaining.

In some cases, your local might be part of coordinated or central bargaining. There may be decisions in place about the timing of strike votes, strike preparation, etc.



Preventing a strike by preparing for a strike

One of the best ways to avoid a strike – or concessions – is to show your employer that your members will walk out, if necessary. Strong and visible membership support for the union’s bargaining proposals, and the bargaining committee, shows a credible strike position. Begin to build this support early in the process. Bluffing is not a good idea.

We call this **strike averting**. Why? If a strike is real for the employer, they may be more prepared to negotiate.

There are three types of strike averting actions:

1. Bargaining-related communications with the membership;
2. Actions that demonstrate members’ support for the bargaining committee and the union’s proposals; and
3. Actions outside the local to build external pressure on the employer.

The **Mobilizing for Bargaining** workshop provided you with an opportunity to develop ideas of strike averting actions and now it’s time to put those ideas into a plan.

Your plan will take into account actions your local has already taken to educate, engage, mobilize members, and build public support.

With the help of the **Strike Preparation** workshop and your assigned National Servicing and Communications representatives, your plan will take shape and position your local where it needs to be at the bargaining table.

What the law says about strikes

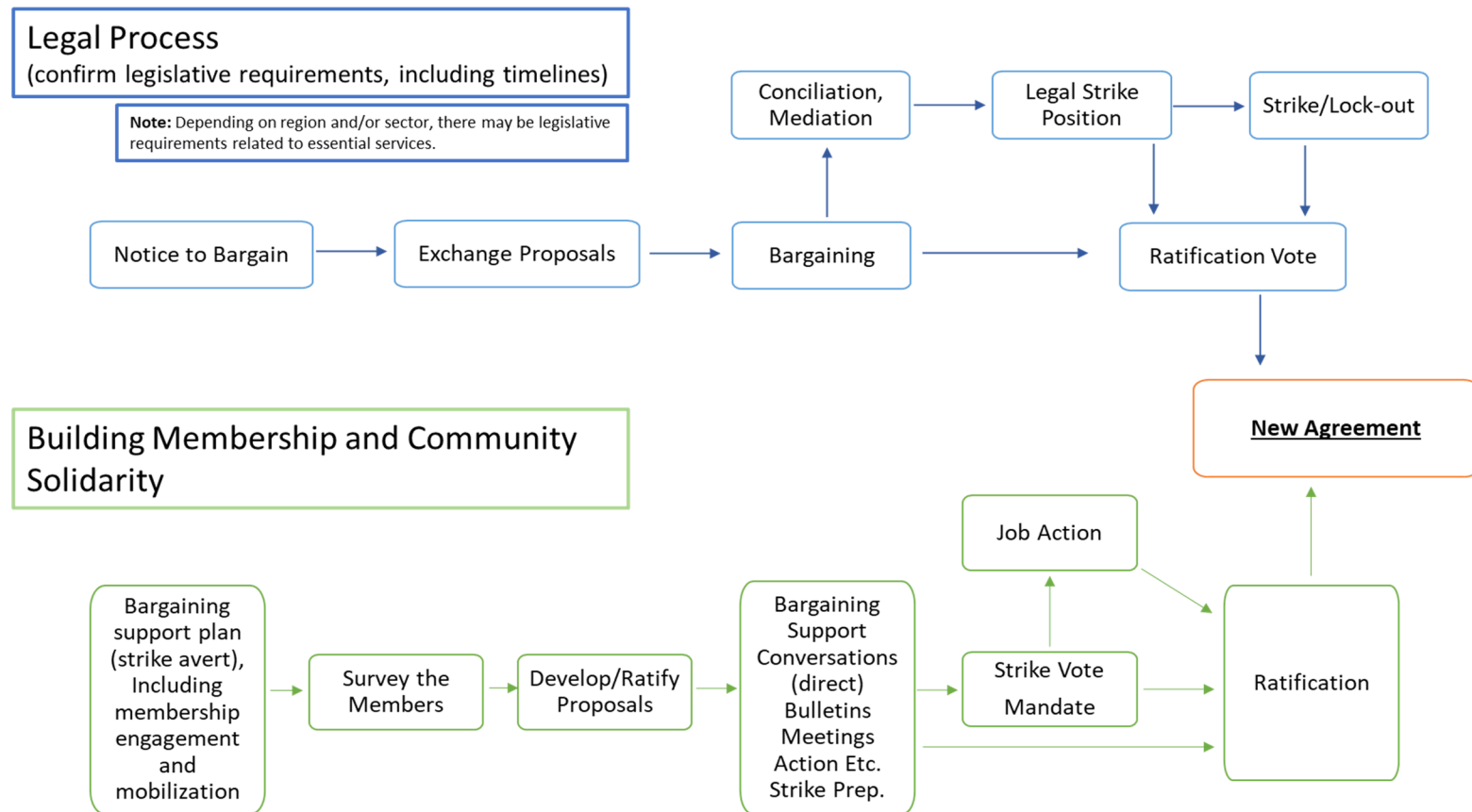
Each province (and the federal jurisdiction) has laws and regulations that outline the steps needed to be in a legal strike (or lock-out) position. Some provinces also have laws that limit picket line activity.

The **Strike Preparation** workshop will briefly review what you need to know about the laws and regulations in your jurisdiction. In addition, your National Servicing Representative will be able to answer specific legal questions that come up during the **Strike Planning Session**.

An overview of the bargaining process

It's important to involve members at every step of the bargaining process. The diagram below, provides an overview of these steps. The **blue boxes** represent the work the Bargaining Committee is doing. The **green boxes** correspond to work the Mobilizing and Strike Committees can be doing to build membership and community support.

For locals with the right to strike



Engaging members in strike action

A strike is an opportunity to recruit lots of members to help out. In fact, many CUPE activists first got active in our union during a strike.

A successful strike needs the right people in the following roles:

- Strike Committee;
- Picket captains;
- Members on the picket lines;
- Members to boost morale on the picket lines (food, music, photos, etc.);
- Accommodations for members who cannot picket;
- Members to equip and set up strike headquarters;
- Members to oversee all the financial aspects of the strike; and
- A strong Communications team – internal (bulletins, website, scrapbook) and external (media relations and spokespeople).

It's important to recruit members with the skills you're looking for and provide the training and support they need to take on the role.

Here are some tips for involving members in the strike:

- Start early.
- Start with existing activists – stewards, mobilizers, communicators.
- Call for volunteers for specific roles / tasks, and assign people to roles they want to play.
- Watch for talent and recruit for specific roles.
- Offer training.
- Thank people and recognize their contributions.

Accommodating members during a strike

A striking local will be stronger if all members are able to participate fully in the strike. Some members may not be able to perform all strike duties, such as walking on a picket line. In such cases, the Strike Committee has an obligation to look into modifying the member's strike duties, enabling them to earn strike pay.

Members have a responsibility to request accommodation from their Strike Committee.

Accommodation requests must be kept confidential and be handled in a manner that respects the dignity of the person.

Sample strike duties, other than picketing:

- Making signs for picket lines.
- Helping Picket Captains fill out daily forms.
- Distributing material to picket lines.
- Assisting with carpooling.
- Creating a database of strike duties.
- Answering phones.
- Confirming the picket schedule.
- Developing a fundraising plan.
- Preparing, coordinating and/or delivering food and drinks to picket lines.

Roles and responsibilities of different players during a strike

Paving the way for a successful strike involves establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Different groups will play different roles and should be aware of each others' roles and responsibilities.

These are the different groups:

1. The Local Executive;
2. The Bargaining Committee;
3. The Mobilizing Committee (if separate from the Strike Committee);
4. The Strike Committee (and its subcommittees);
5. Picket Captains; and
6. Members.

The **Strike Committee** is responsible for planning the strike. Each local's strike committee will look different, but typical duties may include:

- Supporting the Mobilizing Committee in its strike averting efforts.
 - Developing actions to keep the strike in the news and put pressure on the employer to improve their offer.
- Recruiting members for strike-related subcommittees.
- Coordinating all strike-related activities:
 - Developing and implementing the Strike Plan.
 - Developing and implementing the picketing schedule and protocol.
 - Liaising with police.
 - Recruiting, providing training and supporting Picket captains.

The *Strike Planning Tool* will be an indispensable resource to help your team to further clarify roles and responsibilities and determine how communications will flow among all the different players, during a strike. It is available in the **Strike Planning Session**.

Tips on strike committee and subcommittee operations

- Start planning early:
 - Meetings should be held frequently in the early stages of a strike.
 - Try to keep the same members on the subcommittees during the strike.
- Call each subcommittee meeting with a clear purpose in mind:
 - Have committee members give progress reports.
 - This can be an opportunity to share ideas and explore solutions to problems.
- Maintain a system for accountability and support:
 - Make sure all tasks and deadlines are clear.
 - Keep a record of committee operations.
 - Make sure each person knows what everyone else is doing. Logbooks are helpful.
- Have each subcommittee report daily to the Strike Committee.

The 4 pillars of a successful strike

Organizing a successful strike means paying attention to these four pillars:

1. **Administration**
2. **Finance**
3. **Communications**
4. **Picketing**

The remaining sections of this handbook are broken down by pillar. In each pillar you will find a checklist of key tasks, as well as other relevant information about that pillar.

These checklists can be used to track your progress as you develop your workplan during the **Strike Planning Session** using the *Strike Planning Tool* workplans, which mirror these checklists.

A word about the checklists:

Keep in mind that most locals won't perform every single task on these lists. The actions your local undertakes and how you organize them will depend on:

- The size of your local;
- Where you are in the bargaining process;
- The level of coordination with other locals;
- The level of support of your members for the bargaining process; and
- The laws in your jurisdiction.

Pillar 1 – Administration

Goal: to ensure that the strike is well organized and well-resourced from beginning to end.

This pillar is concerned with all things related to setting up, organizing, and running strike headquarters.

Administration checklist

Task	✓
Confirm the local's budget.	
Determine all space requirements for strike headquarters.	
Review CUPE National's Strike Fund Regulations and Forms.	
Secure a location for strike headquarters.	
Make sure strike headquarters and picket lines are accessible to all members.	
Confirm strike duty options, other than picketing, for members who have requested accommodations.	
Decide on the hours of operation for strike headquarters.	
Determine staffing requirements for strike headquarters and assign people to roles.	
Schedule shifts for strike headquarters "staff".	
Acquire important supplies for strike headquarters.	
Assemble first aid kits for picket lines and strike headquarters.	
Set up hardware and service for phones, internet, and utilities.	

Administration checklist

Task	✓
<p>Make sure important forms and documents are printed and ready to stock at headquarters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Form F – <i>Daily Report</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Incident Report Forms <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of bargaining & strike bulletins <input type="checkbox"/> Information sheets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Strike Pay ⇒ Preparing yourself for a strike ⇒ Picket line guidelines ⇒ FAQ: Picket lines 	
Confirm the system / protocol for processing forms.	
Clarify the plan for how confidentiality will be protected.	

Strike Headquarters: Some things to think about

A strike headquarters is often a storefront or trailer. Here are some things to think about:

Location

- As close to the picket line(s) as possible, or centrally located.
- Free parking onsite or nearby.
- Available every day of the week, around the clock (24/7).
- Safe (well-travelled, well lit).
- Visible to a busy road so public can see signs, banners, etc.

Size

- Room large enough for large meetings.
- Smaller rooms for offices (cheque production, scheduling).

Facilities

- At least one toilet (depending on number of members).
- Internet access (Wi-Fi).
- Accessible (to members with disabilities and anyone else who may require an accommodation).
- Running drinking water.
- Storage area (First aid kits, documents, signs, etc.)

Timing

- Find a place as early as possible. It's better to pay a month or two's rent for a place you don't use than to go on strike without a strike headquarters.
- Setting up a strike headquarters tells the employer the union is serious.

Furniture and equipment

Make a list of what you need and ask members for donations. Get what you still need from charity shops or other unions. Here are some common items:

- Tables and chairs for meetings.
- Desks and chairs in office space.
- Room dividers (if you don't have offices).

- Borrowed couches and comfortable chairs.
- Lots of bulletin boards.
- Shelves.
- Computers.
- Printer.
- Copier (or access to copy services).
- Coffee maker.
- Small fridge.
- Locked filing cabinet (for storing sensitive information.)

Picket Captain kits

- Picket Captain identifier (vest / button / hat).
- Picketing protocol.
- *Picket Captain Manual*.
- Picketing schedule.
- A notebook and pens, clipboard and paper, etc.
- Extra copies of Form F – *Daily Report*.
- Extra copies of leaflets to be given to people crossing the picket line / the public / service users.
- Extra copies of the latest bargaining bulletin.
- Extra copies of Information Sheets for picketers.
- Incident Report Forms.
- Picket signs.
- Loudspeaker.
- Speaker for playing music.
- Strike Swag (buttons, hats, lanyards.).
- Traffic cones.
- Contact list / phone tree.
- Cell phone with numbers for Picket Coordinator, National Representative, Strike Committee members, the media spokesperson, strike headquarters and police programmed into the Contact list.
- A camera / video camera to record problems as well as positive moments.

- Map of the area.
- First Aid kit.
- Flashlight with fresh batteries.
- Matches.
- Toilet paper.
- Garbage can and garbage bags / recycling / compost bins.
- Duct tape.

Information basics

- Membership contact list / phone tree.
- Contact list of allies.
- Emergency contacts: police, local picket liaisons, community numbers etc.
- Copies of union bulletins about bargaining, filed chronologically.
- Copies of strike training materials provided at union educational.
- Organizer calendars to track meetings.
- Picket team lists, and lists for other strike duty.
- Scrap book for photos, media coverage and stories.

A word about confidentiality:

At times, you will be handling sensitive information, including documents with personal details about members. A member may also disclose things to you about their personal situation, e.g. an accommodation request, concerns about childcare, finances, or details about their home life.

It's important to treat this information with the utmost confidentiality. The members must be confident that their personal circumstances will not be shared with anyone. Make sure you have a separate room available, where members can talk in private. Store sensitive documents in a locked filing cabinet. Ensure electronic documents are also secure. Computers and electronic files should be password protected. Have a backup drive or password-protected cloud for electronic files.

Also discuss any necessary limitations to confidentiality. For instance, certain situations may require confidentiality to be breached (e.g. if a member discloses that they plan to harm themselves or someone else).

Pillar 2 – Finance

Goal: to ensure that funds are dispersed efficiently and recorded accurately.

This pillar is concerned with strike pay and member assistance.

Finance checklist

Task	✓
Review CUPE National’s Strike Fund Regulations and Forms.	
Name a minimum of 2 finance coordinators.	
Open up a separate bank account for strike pay.	
Ensure there are appropriate signing authorities, confirmed at the bank.	
Order enough cheques for at least the first week of the strike.	
Establish measures to address the financial implications for members who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Casual, temporary, or part-time. <input type="checkbox"/> Lone parents and/or people in one-income households. <input type="checkbox"/> Other members who may experience increased financial hardship as a result of the strike. 	
If setting up a Member Assistance Fund is not possible, list the ways you will support members to help them get through the strike.	
Put Member Assistance Fund and criteria for accessing it in writing, if feasible for your local.	
Circulate information to members regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strike pay; <input type="checkbox"/> How to prepare for a strike; <input type="checkbox"/> How to access the Member Assistance Fund (if you have one); <input type="checkbox"/> A letter to provide to their financial institution; <input type="checkbox"/> Other. 	

Clarify the process for completing and submitting all forms.	
Confirm the process for processing Form F – <i>Daily Report</i> .	
Confirm the process for calculating and paying out strike pay.	
Confirm how benefits will be covered and communicate it to members.	
Confirm the process for distributing, collecting and processing Form E – <i>Strike Pay Application Tally Sheet</i> .	
Clarify the process for reconciling strike pay.	

Some questions about strike pay

We've created an Information Sheet to help Strike Committees and members navigate questions around strike pay. It can and should be shared directly with members well ahead of a possible strike.

Here are some additional questions and answers you may be asked:

1. What happens to members' regular pay?

Days worked up to the strike will be paid by the employer as it normally would. No additional pay shall be paid to members once the strike begins.

2. What happens to members on pregnancy / parental leave?

If a member is on pregnancy / parental leave or has scheduled the start of their leave before a strike begins, they are entitled to receive maternity and/or parental benefits, according to the collective agreement and the Employment Insurance Act.

This doesn't mean that they can't join their comrades on the picket line or participate in some of the strike action. Their solidarity and support will always be appreciated, even if it's bringing snacks and coffee to the picket line. How involved they want to be is up to them.

3. What happens if a member has a vacation scheduled, will they get paid?

Vacations scheduled before a strike, and which fall during a strike, may or may not be paid. Check with your assigned CUPE National Servicing Representative who can confirm what members can expect from your employer.

4. Is strike pay considered taxable income?

No. Strike pay is not taxed by Revenue Canada.

Creating a Member Assistance Fund

It's important for locals to keep the members informed – before and during bargaining – about the likelihood of job action. This helps individual members prepare themselves for the possibility of the loss of wages during a strike.

We've created an Information Sheet to help members prepare themselves in case of a strike. It should also be shared with members well in advance of job action. However, we know that not all members are in the same financial situation and putting money aside or not paying a certain bill may not be an option for them.

This is why some locals create a Member Assistance Fund (sometimes called a *hardship fund*) to help members make it through a strike. This depends on whether a local has the means to provide this kind of financial support – that's something each local has to evaluate on its own.

1. How do locals fund a member assistance fund?

If your local is part of a solidarity pact, the funds from the pact may be used for the Member Assistance Fund, in part or in whole. Some locals use “strike appeal” or “donation” funds, and sometimes locals seed the account with local funds. The amount of the fund and how it will be resourced is decided by the local.

2. Who manages the account / processes the applications?

The local needs to decide how this happens. It could be a duty of the Local Executive, the Strike Finance Committee or a special committee could be elected or appointed.

Whoever is managing the process needs to be trusted and practice strict confidentiality. Hold meetings in private locations. The members must be confident that their personal circumstances will not be shared with anyone.

3. What type of assistance can be offered?

If a member is unable to make minimal payments for essential services, the Member Assistance Fund can be used to make those payments to avoid shut-off or their cancellation. Essential services could include hydro, water, heat, telephone, car insurance, etc.

When it comes to mortgages, if a member can't make ends meet, a member of the Member Assistance Fund Committee can speak directly to their banking institution to help negotiate interest-only or deferred payments. If necessary, the Fund could provide only the minimal amount to keep the property out of receivership.

It normally takes at least three (3) completely missed months of mortgage payments to get into serious trouble (depending on the institution), so if a minimal amount is paid each month, that buys the member more time and the union time to negotiate a settlement to the strike.

Many institutions include a strike provision in their mortgage that allows the deferral of one or two months' payments. In our experience, credit unions are the most forgiving.

Rent is similar. Advise members to let their landlords know about the strike and to make, at least, partial rent payments to avoid eviction notices. The Fund can be used to pay the minimal amount to stop an eviction.

4. Can we offer loans and/or strike pay top-up?

Depending on your local's finances, you may or may not want to consider grants and loans to members. Some locals automatically redistribute donations to members as a top-up to strike pay, while others wait for members to apply to the Fund for help with groceries, gas, insurance, etc.

If you decide to give out loans, be careful to draw them up properly with stipulations around repayment after the members return to work. If a member doesn't pay the local back, the local will have to take the member to small claims court – not a pleasant venture – but one that happens.

5. Member Assistance Fund Committee responsibilities:

- Develop criteria for accessing the member assistance fund. Present to the membership for approval.
- Inform the membership about how to access the membership assistance fund.
- Process applications.
- Send a letter from the local to all banking institutions letting them know about the strike and requesting interest-only payments, or deferred payments on mortgages until the strike is over.
- Send a letter to each local grocery store requesting donations to the food bank and/or grocery vouchers. Follow up with a phone call.
- Send a letter to any major local industry / company requesting donations to the food bank. Follow up with a phone call.
- Send a letter to all CUPE locals and other unions in your community and/or region requesting donations to the food bank and/or the Member Assistance Fund.

6. When should the Member Assistance Fund take effect?

This is up to your local. Many locals do not make the Fund accessible until the local has been out on strike for a specified length of time (i.e., day 10 of the strike).

7. How will members know about and access the Fund?

Ideally, something should be drafted in writing and shared with members directly. Alternatively, make sure the Communications Committee and Picket Captains have

the information on hand to share with members in newsletters and to be able to answer any questions that arise.

Sample letter to financial institutions

Dear Sir/Madam:

(CUPE Member) is an employee of *(Employer name and a member of CUPE Local XXX)*. On *(date)* the Canadian Union of Public Employees was *(locked out by / commenced strike action against)* *(Employer name)*. *(CUPE Member)* is currently involved in picket action against *(Employer name)* and has had, consequently, their income disrupted.

I would ask that you consider these circumstances and offer your support to *(CUPE Member)* during this difficult time by jointly re-arranging the terms of any payment plans you may have in place with *(CUPE Member)* to the mutual satisfaction of the both of you.

Thank you,

Sample letter from members to banks or companies

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am an employee of (Employer name and a member of CUPE Local XXX). On (date) the Canadian Union of Public Employees was (locked out by / commenced strike action against) (Employer name). I am currently involved in picket action against (Employer name) and have had, consequently, my income disrupted.

This letter is a request for your patience in receiving payments of my debt owed to your organization (fill in the necessary information concerning your debt) until our strike has been resolved.

Please confirm that you can support my request. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at (phone number). I would be happy to discuss on the phone.

Sincerely,

Pillar 3 – Communications

Goal: *To ensure regular and consistent communication that builds membership and public support and communicates to the employer about what it will take to end the strike.*

This pillar is concerned with developing a communications strategy to coordinate messaging, a media strategy and communicating with members.

Find out what the role of the Communications Representative will be during your strike. Work with them and your staff representative, to develop a communications strategy.

Tip: Identify the communications skills that currently exist within the committee and among local activists. Also identify gaps that need to be taken into account. Your plan will be strongest if it builds on existing strengths.

General communications checklist	
Tasks	✓
Appoint communications coordinator(s) and assemble a communications team.	✓
Develop a communications protocol with the communications representative, that establishes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Who the union spokespeople are; and <input type="checkbox"/> How messages, media releases and bulletins are approved. 	✓
Develop key messages for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Members of the local. <input type="checkbox"/> The media. <input type="checkbox"/> The public. <input type="checkbox"/> Family members. <input type="checkbox"/> Service users / community. <input type="checkbox"/> Other employees. 	✓

General communications checklist

Tasks	✓
Make sure the messaging is consistent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> On picket signs. <input type="checkbox"/> Internally (on union website, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> In media. <input type="checkbox"/> During interviews. 	
Monitor media and social media activity.	
Work with the communications team to get key messages out.	
Provide guidelines (do's and don'ts) to members on social media use during the strike.	

Internal communications checklist

Tasks	✓
Update the membership contact list.	
Build an internal communications plan for members that covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> One-on-one conversations <input type="checkbox"/> Phone tree <input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Bulletins <input type="checkbox"/> Social media 	
Make sure all forms and information for members are designed with accessibility in mind: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use clear language; <input type="checkbox"/> Have information available in alternative formats; and <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for phone and face-to-face communication, not just email. 	
Take advantage of existing communications networks and tools. Organize one-on-one conversations between members.	
Create and test your phone tree.	

Internal communications checklist

Tasks	✓
<p>Sort out how communications will work among:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strike Committee and Bargaining Committee. <input type="checkbox"/> Strike Committee and Picket Captains. <input type="checkbox"/> Strike Committee and members. <input type="checkbox"/> Bargaining committee and members. <input type="checkbox"/> Picket Captains and members. <p>On a piece of flipchart paper, draw a diagram showing the lines of communication during a strike. Add names and positions.</p> <p>Post the finished diagram at Strike Headquarters.</p>	
Plan and organize meetings to keep members informed and involved.	
Recruit volunteers for communications related work.	
Decide how you will tell the story of the strike and make sure you have people in place to make it happen.	

External communications checklist

Tasks	✓
<p>Reach out to allies you've identified for support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Other unions in the workplace <input type="checkbox"/> Other CUPE locals <input type="checkbox"/> CUPE Division <input type="checkbox"/> Non-union workers <input type="checkbox"/> Community allies <input type="checkbox"/> Service users <input type="checkbox"/> Other 	
Oversee picket sign production.	

External communications checklist

Tasks	✓
Identify spokespeople / point people, with the local executive and bargaining committee, to communicate with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Media<input type="checkbox"/> Police<input type="checkbox"/> Employer<input type="checkbox"/> Members	
Arrange media training for spokespeople.	

Communicating with members during a strike

It's important to keep the members informed about what is happening. Without frequent communication from the Strike Committee, rumours will start – about secret deals, the union selling out, members drifting back to work, etc. When this happens, membership support weakens and morale falls.

What to communicate to members:

- News about bargaining starting up again.
- News about picket line incidents.
- News about donations and other forms of support.
- Response to media reports.
- Response to anything the employer has sent to / told members.
- Explanations about where we're at in the process – mediation, conciliation, etc.
- Information Sheets to answer frequently asked questions about the strike, strike pay, picket duty, etc.
- Requests for help.
- Training or education being offered during the strike.
- Invitations to social events.
- Recognition of people who have done something to help out.

How to get information out:

Strike bulletins:

- Must be regularly published for the picket lines.
- Handed out on picket lines, and/or on website.
- Encourage members to write in with questions and publish the answer.
- Use photos that show high morale and solidarity.

Website:

- Same information as bulletins.
- Updated daily.

Phone trees:

- Phone trees are a great way to share “breaking news” (for example, “We settled!” or “Mass picket at _____ location tomorrow morning at 9.”).

- More reliable than email.
- Members really appreciate a call from a real person.

Note: Picket Captains must have current phone numbers for everyone on their picket line. That way, when something comes up, the Picket Coordinator(s) can contact the Picket Captains who will then trigger the phone tree for their picket line.

Text messages:

- Everyone playing a role in the strike needs a cell phone. Text messaging groups are easy to create and allow you to send short messages to a large number of people quickly.
- Great for time-sensitive messages. For example, “Emergency picket captain meeting in one hour.” or “Story about the strike playing on Channel 12 news in 5 minutes.”
- Consider what kind of data plans people have (how much texting will cost) when deciding how to use text messaging.

Bulletin boards at strike headquarters:

- Use bulletin boards for announcements, notice of upcoming events, and samples of strike bulletins and information sheets.

Informal meetings:

- The Strike Committee can hold regular meetings with the members to listen to them, discuss strategy and answer questions.
- Make sure information shared at meetings goes out in other ways as well so that all members get all the information.

Social Media:

- Social media can tell the story of a well-organized strike and a united, informed and committed membership. It can also expose internal weaknesses.
- Create a “cyber squad” – a couple of people who will monitor social media posts and comments and create posts for the local.
- As part of the strike, you might want to set up two types of communication systems – one for internal communication with the members (closed page on FB) and one for sharing more widely (Facebook and Twitter).
- Post positive stories, post invitations for people to ask questions and post ways to show support.
- Assume the employer and the media will both see all that you do on the internet even if it’s on a private page or group.

Workshops:

- Members tend to be highly interested in the union when on strike. It's a good time to offer CUPE workshops to new and existing stewards, health and safety representatives, local executive members and trustees.
- It's also a good time to offer CUPE workshops on human rights issues such as Solidarity with Indigenous workers, Disability and ableism in the workplace, Challenging racism in the workplace, Challenging sexism in the workplace and Representing gender and sexually diverse members. and other important workplace issues such as harassment, bullying, accommodations and mental health awareness.
- In some locals, time spent in a CUPE workshop can be considered as "strike duty," if pre-approved by the Strike Committee and the National Representative.

Note: Talk to your National servicing representative about what kind of workshops could help build solidarity and union strength – during the strike and after.

Phone Tree Template

Phone trees are used to share breaking news. In this example, the Picket Captain calls A and B with the breaking news. A then calls picketers 1-4 and B calls picketers 5-8. In a matter of minutes, everybody who reports to that picket captain is aware of the news.

Picket Captain		Key Contacts (on their picket line)		Other picketers (same picket line)	
1.	A		1		
			2		
			3		
			4		
	B		1		
			2		
			3		
			4		
2.	A		1		
			2		
			3		
			4		
	B		1		
			2		
			3		
			4		
3.	A		1		
			2		
			3		
			4		
	B		1		
			2		
			3		
			4		

Getting the support of family and friends

Strikes can be won or lost on the support of family and friends.

Some people in the community will say and do things which undermine the relationship that strikers have with their spouses, neighbours, family and friends.

This kind of strike-breaking conduct can take place on radio talk shows, in letters to the editor, and even in children's classrooms. Some community groups and service clubs may support the employer by demanding that government legislate an end to the strike.

Keep in mind that people and groups are often motivated to do this for different reasons. Some people want to make the union look bad. Others may be misinformed or believe that they are standing up for the interests of service users, or a particular segment of the population that they represent.

This is why it's vitally important for the Strike Committee to make sure strikers' families and friends, and the whole community are well informed about the strike issues, including how the union's demands **benefit** the whole community.

When we do this, family, friends and community members will become allies. Invite them to get involved by doing things like:

- Joining us on the picket line.
- Backing us up on social and print media (letters to the editor).
- Providing childcare support.
- Planning social events / providing food.
- Phoning radio talk shows.
- Speaking to community groups.
- Educating their kids about the issues.

Recording the strike

Strikes are always an important milestone in a local's history.

Develop a plan for recording the story of your local's strike.

Find members who have skills writing, interviewing, taking photos, or filming.

Encourage them to create a scrapbook, a video or a slideshow of strike highlights that you can use when you have the post-strike party.

Clear language checklist

CLEAR LANGUAGE CHECKLIST

AUDIENCE

- Who will read your writing?
- Why do you want them to read it?
- What do you want the reader to do?
- How do you want them to do it?

CONTENT

- Can your reader see why your information matters to them?
- Does your writing respond to: who, what, when, where and why?
- Does your writing contain all the information your reader needs?
- Did you stick to your topic?
- Did you avoid information overload?

ORGANIZATION

- Does the introduction explain why you are writing?
- Do the major points come first?
- Do the details flow logically from your main points?
- Do you use headings, subheadings? Did you highlight these?
- Do you use bulleted and numbered lists to guide the reader?
- Can readers find information quickly and easily?

tone

- Are you writing directly to the reader?
- Do you sound friendly, personal, and helpful?
- Do you use the active voice?

WORDS

- Do you use simple and familiar words and phrases?
- Do you use strong verbs?
- Did you remove unneeded words?
- Do you explain unfamiliar and technical words?
- Do you avoid jargon, idioms, acronyms and abbreviations?
- Do you use bias-free, gender-neutral and inclusive language?

SENTENCES

- Do you keep the subject and verb close together?
- Does each sentence have one idea only?
- Do you vary the sentence length?
- Do you keep sentences concise, no more than two typed lines?

PARAGRAPHS

- Is each paragraph short? Five typed lines are ideal.
- Is there one idea in each paragraph?
- Do all the sentences in the paragraph relate to each other?
- Are there spaces between your paragraphs?
- Do you use point form and lists where you can?

TEST

- Did you test your writing with people who represent your audience?
- Did you check for words and information you may have left out?
- Did you revise complicated words, complex sentences and long paragraphs?
- Did you use clear words and design?



CUPE education

Pillar 4 – Picketing

Goal: to ensure that picket lines are up, and staffed, and well-organized with high morale.

This pillar is concerned with the planning and coordination of safe and effective picket lines during the strike.

Picketing checklist	
Task	✓
Identify Picket Coordinator(s).	
Complete the <i>Picket Line Planning Tool</i> .	
Establish a plan to recruit picket captains.	
Plan and schedule training for all picket captains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Notify facilitators in advance if any members require an accommodation for the training; <input type="checkbox"/> Adapt the <i>Picket Captain Manual</i>; <input type="checkbox"/> Identify who will report on the Strike Plan at the training. 	
Assemble picket captain kits.	
Create and circulate the picket schedule, ensuring all shifts are covered for each picket line.	
Determine if flying squads / mobile picket lines required and develop a schedule if they are.	
Assign runners to re-supply picket lines.	
Plan for things that will boost picket line morale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Music <input type="checkbox"/> Other 	

Picketing checklist

Task	✓
Confirm the protocol (with Reps) for dealing with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> member-to-member conflict on the picket line; <input type="checkbox"/> the police; and <input type="checkbox"/> the media. 	
Establish picket line protocols / processes and review it with picketers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Daily signing in and out. <input type="checkbox"/> Change of schedule or location of picket lines. <input type="checkbox"/> Bringing children or pets to the picket line. <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with scabs. <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with contractors. <input type="checkbox"/> Transporting supplies to and from strike headquarters. 	
In close consultation with the members, come up with a plan for how you will support members, should they experience distress on the picket line: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Designate a safe place members can access. <input type="checkbox"/> Share list of community supports available, for members who may require outside help or assistance. 	
Establish and circulate an emergency plan.	
Ensure CPR and First Aid trained members are scheduled for each picket line, on each shift. Organize training if this is not possible.	
Make sure first aid kits are available for every picket line location and keep them stocked up.	

Developing a picketing strategy

The purpose of picket lines

1. To stop – or at least curtail – the employer’s operations, in order to cause them inconvenience; and
2. To communicate with the public – that there is a strike and what the issues are.

The Strike Committee will identify one or more people to be picket coordinators. Picket coordinators are the point people for the picket captains on duty. Often, there are multiple picket coordinators, one for each shift of picketing (but not always).

When deciding where and when to picket, the goal is that no one should be able to go to your workplace. The size of the pickets might vary from location to location and at different times, but your goal is to block access.

Many unions and locals have contract language that gives their members the right to refuse to cross picket lines. Even one person holding a picket sign is enough to stop most unionized truck drivers or trades workers from crossing your lines.

Ways that members might be triggered on the picket line

Picket lines have the potential to be triggering for members, especially those who have experienced past traumas, violence, or other bad experiences. Here are some possible ways people might be triggered:

- People who have experienced state or police violence, war, or torture, might be triggered by the sight of security or police officers.
- Women who have, or are currently, experiencing domestic violence, might be triggered by loud or aggressive behaviour.
- People from marginalized groups who have experienced discrimination or other forms of violence could also be triggered (LGBTQ2+, Indigenous, Racialized, people with disabilities).
- Picket lines can also cause distress for members experiencing mental health issues or who have a diagnosed mental illness.

Keeping picket lines safe and positive will help minimize potential triggers. When planning your picket lines, make sure they are in a safe location and have enough picketers to keep the lines safe. The more people on a picket line, the better atmosphere.

Playing music, singing, dancing, etc. can also help to keep spirits up.

Other unions

Meet with other unions in your workplace to see whether they plan to respect your picket line, work-to-rule, or at least not do your work. Talk to them about what's possible.

Remind them that they might be in the same position in the future and that you will reciprocate when it's their turn to walk out. Talk about how what you're bargaining could be important in their next round of bargaining.

Meet with the unions that represent workers who come to your workplace, for example waste removal, taxis, transit, postal workers, etc. Stopping these workers from crossing your picket line will put a lot of pressure on your employer.

The police

We have a legal right to belong to a union and a legal right to strike and picket. The police are there to enforce criminal law (i.e. assault) and provincial law (i.e. traffic / highway laws). Your Servicing Representative will be able to advise you if there are laws in your province that restrict picketing. If people break them, the police can tell them to stop and they can arrest people who don't.

As long as no one breaks the law, the police have no direct authority in the actual labour dispute. They will want to limit picket line violence and have the ability to restrict picketing when the picketing causes a safety risk on a public road. In some provinces, the police may also enforce injunctions. But they should play a neutral role, protecting everyone involved, including picketers.

Many police detachments have a person who is a "strike liaison." Your Servicing Representative, along with representation from your local, should meet with the police when you develop your local's picketing plan. This is where the ground rules get worked out.

Good practices

- Picket captains introduce themselves to duty officers.
- Police talk to picket captains before taking action against individual picketers.
- Picket captains have a witness present when speaking to police, when possible and feasible.
- Ask picketers to refrain from using abusive language with the police.
- Record all police activity (or lack of activity in protecting picketers).
- Picket captains should report concerns to the Picketing Coordinator on the Strike Committee. Or fill out an *Incident Report Form*.
- If needed, remind police that it's legal to strike and that their role is to stay neutral and protect everyone involved.

Scab Protocol: What's a scab?

A scab is a worker who engages in any strike-breaking activity or works for the employer during a legal labour dispute. Scabbing is the *worst* form of anti-union activity. A scab is a worker who fails to respect the local's picket lines and the democratic decision made by the membership through the strike vote.

Our objective is to prevent people from crossing the line and to maintain the pressure and inconvenience on the employer and we can be strategic in doing so. This process is *especially important* during a lockout, because if one of our members is seen scabbing during a lockout, it may be argued that the employer has ended the lockout.

During a strike or lockout, the local may have in place:

- A reporting process by which picket captains record suspected scabbing.
- Capturing photos and videos from the picket line to act as a deterrent and to confirm the identity of suspected scabs.
- A way to figure out why someone is crossing the picket line. It may be possible to address that reason so that they stop crossing.
- Publication of confirmed scabbing in bulletins and on our website.

Meeting with the employer about the Picket Plan

Once the strike date is set and the Picket Plan is ready, some locals might choose to meet with the employer to negotiate some guidelines.

For the **union**, the goals of the meeting are:

- Agreement to continue benefits during the strike.
- A way to handle picket line disputes before either side calls the police.
- Agreement that the employer will not use private security guards.
- Agreement that managers will not act as picket line “monitors.”
- Agreement that managers or other employees will not do the work of the striking members.

The **employer** will usually ask for:

- The names and cell phone numbers of picket captains.
- The location and hours of picket lines.
- How many people will be picketing on each line.
- Agreement about who will be able to cross the picket line.
- Limits on the amount of time picketers can hold cars up.

Tips

Focus on how the strike will be conducted. There is no requirement to negotiate the number or location of picket lines, nor the number of picketers on any given picket line. This is not a meeting to talk about the bargaining issues that led to the strike. It's too late for that.

Don't give away the local's strategy or plans during the meeting.

Make sure the National Servicing Representative is involved in any written agreements with the employer.

Sample recruitment poster for picket captains

The union is recruiting picket captains!

Are you ...

- ✓ A union supporter?
- ✓ Well organized?
- ✓ Respected by your coworkers?
- ✓ A good listener and a good communicator?
- ✓ Comfortable leading and making decisions?
- ✓ A problem solver?
- ✓ Calm under pressure?



Your job will be to help implement the union's strike plan, lead a group of members on a picket line and be the liaison between the members on your line and the Strike Committee.

The union will provide the plan, **training**, and all the supplies you need.

Please contact Suzie Unionizer for more information or to sign up for the job!

A word about organizing picket captain training

It's up to you – the Strike Committee – to plan training for your newly recruited picket captains (see the *Picketing Checklist* for specific tasks related to this).

CUPE Education is offering online picket captain training that you can customize to your local's unique needs and situation. You will need to have your local's Strike Plan ready in order to make that happen.

Other information you might consider preparing for your picket captains, ahead of training:

- Information about where things are at in bargaining.
- Background on strategic goals for bargaining, or mobilizing that has already happened.
- Key messages for this round of bargaining.
- The Strike Plan.
- Contact information for Strike Committee members and the Picket Coordinator(s).

Resources to review before *Strike Planning Session*

1. *Strike_Planning_Tool_EN*
2. *Picket_Captain_Manual_EN*
3. In the document entitled *Forms_Strike_Financial_Support_EN*:
 - Quick reference chart how to access NDF (National Defence Fund) and NSF (National Strike Fund) financial support
 - Strike Averting Campaign Request Form
 - Strike Support Campaign Request Form
 - Strike Campaign Evaluation Report
4. In the document entitled *Regulations_Strike_Fund_and_Forms_EN*:
 - National Strike Fund Regulations
 - Form A – *Notice of Strike Mandate*
 - Form B – *Notification of Strike Commencement*
 - Form C – *Strike Pay Estimate – 1st Week*
 - Form D – *Strike Fund Report No. _____*
 - Form E – *Strike Pay Application Tally Sheet*
 - Form F – *Daily Report – Picket Captain's or Strike Benefits Committee Chairperson*
 - Form G – *Strike Duty Report and Cheque Distribution*
 - Form H – *Strike Terminated or Averted*
 - Form J – *Final Strike Report*

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