



Frequently Asked Questions

Why did the bargaining committee recommend the now rejected tentative agreement?

The Employer offered three non-monetary language changes that had not been achieved by the Health Care or Support tables. These changes would be unique to the Admin Professional bargaining unit. Following eight days of conciliation and bargaining, the committee felt that the Employer was not willing to offer any more funding at this table without job action. That agreement provided the same wage improvements achieved for the Health Care and Support Services members, and most significantly, would create a Pay Equity Committee which will evaluate all classifications within your bargaining unit compared to similar positions in other workplaces. Considering the already long delay and the new collective agreement set to expire in six months, they decided to recommend the tentative agreement.

If we don't reach an agreement, when could we be on strike?

Currently, the rough estimate is for the summer months, however, a strike date will depend on the mobilization of the membership and the outcome of a strike vote.

We must receive a strong strike mandate in order to authorize strike action. It is important to note that ratification votes and strike votes are calculated in different ways: ratification votes are based on the number of ballots cast, whereas strike votes are calculated based on the total number of members in the bargaining unit. So, it is imperative that we engage all members in the next steps. Strike votes will be held the week of June 5th.

What happens if a strike vote is not achieved?

All efforts are being made to ensure there is a strong turnout for a strike vote to prevent this. However, should a strike vote not be achieved, Council representatives would have to reconvene to decide next steps, which may include returning to the table with the Employer to see if an improved offer could be achieved.

Who will be required to stay at work?

The Health and Community Services Act requires negotiation between the Council of Unions and the Employer to allow an essential number of members to continue working during a work stoppage to protect the health and safety of Nova Scotians. This is called an 'Essential Services Agreement (ESA). This agreement must be completed prior to any job action taken.

The act defines essential health and community service as one that is necessary for the Employer to prevent or limit loss of life, serious harm, or damage to or deterioration of mental or physical health, or serious harm or damage or deterioration of property required for the performance of essential health or community service.

The Council of Unions and the Employer will negotiate to decide what number of members are needed to perform the duties that cannot be handled by management. If an agreement cannot be reached, the Nova Scotia Labour Board can intervene and implement a decision.

What should we do to get ready for a strike?

It is wise to do your best to stabilize your financial situation by talking to your banks, mortgage holders, and credit card companies. Let them know you may be heading into a strike. Most institutions have policies to assist their clients during times of financial hardship. Doing this sooner rather than later can take a load off your mind and make life during a strike run smoother.

What happens to health benefits during a strike?

Usually, Employers do not discontinue benefit plans during a strike. If they do, the CUPE strike fund will pay both shares of benefits premiums for all members participating in the strike so you can continue to have benefits.

What do we do if someone asks how to do my job in the event of a strike?

Unless it is your manager asking you how to do your job, you are not obligated to tell others how you do your work. For example, if an employee in another bargaining unit asks you how to do your job, politely decline and refer them to your manager. If your manager directs you to train or give out information about your work, you are obligated to do so.

Do I have to go on strike?

If your bargaining unit votes in favor of a strike and the union calls you to strike, all members of the bargaining unit are expected to take part. An effective strike takes hard work and solidarity.

Will we get paid if we do go on strike?

Yes. Pay given during a job action is called 'strike pay,' which may be handled differently between the Unions under the Council of Unions umbrella. CUPE members are entitled to \$300/week for 20 hours of strike duties, completely tax-free, which starts on day one of the strike.

How do we get strike pay?

Strike pay is given to members who perform strike duties during the length of the strike. These are duties assigned by your local strike committee to help put maximum pressure on the Employer to ensure that a new contract is reached as soon as possible.

Strike duties may include picketing, running strike headquarters, grabbing food or drinks for the picketers, chanting, making signs, lobbying politicians, talking to reporters, or any other duties that the local strike committee decides.

Are there accommodations for medical restrictions?

If a medical restriction prevents you from participating in 4-hour picket duty shifts, please contact your local strike committee to request an accommodation. The strike committee can approve alternate arrangements for strike duties on a case-by-case basis.

How long could we be on strike?

There is no concrete answer to this question. Job actions can be a single day or months. How long the strike lasts will depend on the members and how strong our message to the Employer is. The more members, the louder we are. The louder we are, the harder we are to ignore. More engagement means a shorter strike, so make sure to keep up to date and get involved!

Can we work another job while on strike?

Yes, but you will still be expected to complete your hours of picket duty as required to receive your strike pay.

What should we do about Employer communications as they relate to the union and the strike vote or a potential strike?

According to the Trade Union Act, the Employer is not allowed to intimidate or coerce a person to refrain from becoming or to cease to be a member of a trade union. This would extend to participating in a legal strike and all other legal activities of the union. The Employer is free to express themselves so long as they do not use coercion, intimidation, threats, or undue influence. If you receive any communication from the Employer that you are unsure of, or that makes you feel like you should not support union activities, please contact your local executive or strike committee.