



STEWARD INFORMATION

GREETING AND ORIENTING NEW COPE LOCAL 397 MEMBERS

Think about how you felt when you showed up for your first day of work. Or how you feel when you walk into a room full of people you don't know. It can be stressful and uncomfortable.

As a Steward, you can help build Union loyalty and good relations in the workplace by taking the time to greet new Members on their first day or days on the job. By being a friendly face in the crowd of strangers, you can help them feel comfortable at work and with the Union. By providing them with basic information about COPE Local 397 and their workplace rights, you can build their interest in the Union.

WHEN YOU GREET NEW MEMBERS:

1. Provide them with:
 - information on where to find the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)
 - a list of Stewards and other Union leaders in the Local
 - a list of upcoming meeting dates and events they can take part in
 - inform them of our website (www.cope397.ca) and our Facebook (COPE Local 397) and that they are updated regularly
 - an application for membership to complete and return to you
2. Orient them to COPE Local 397's structure and function by using the speaking notes provided below. This orientation can be done in 15 minutes or 2 hours, depending on how much time and interest the new Member has.
3. Conclude by encouraging them to get ahold of you, their Steward, when they have questions about how things work in the workplace or in the Union.

SPEAKING NOTES FOR ORIENTING NEW MEMBERS:

Introduce yourself and your role:

Tell the member:

- your name
- that you are a Steward
- what your role is (to answer questions about the Union and the CBA, to provide information about Union activities such as collective bargaining or campaigns and to assist the Member in resolving any problems faced in the workplace)
- how they can contact you (telephone, e-mail, where your desk or workstation is).

Explain the Union's full name and how many Members belong to it:

COPE stands for Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union.

There are over 1700 Members.



Bargaining Units:

Ask if they know what the term ‘bargaining unit’ means. (The group of workers, recognized by law, who bargain together with the Employer and are covered by the same CBA.)

COPE Local 397 has 8 bargaining units (with 13 Collective Agreements), they are:

- SGI
- New Democratic Party (NDP) Caucus Office
- NDP Constituency Assistants
- NDP Saskatchewan Section (Provincial Office)
- RM of Alexander
- Calgary Unit
- U of R Faculty Association

Describe our growing diversity:

- More than half of COPE Local 397’s membership is female.
- As Saskatchewan’s population grows and changes, the workforce will increasingly be made up of Aboriginal people and young people.
- At SGI, the Union is working with the Employer to achieve a representative workforce. (A representative workforce means making sure that the groups we see in Saskatchewan society as a whole are present in the workplace in the same percentages.)

Describe COPE Local 397’s structure:

- As a Member you are at the heart of the Local.
- The eight bargaining units form Local 397.
- A nine member Executive Board directs the Local.
- Each bargaining unit and SGI branches have a Prairie Council member; along with the Executive they are the governing body of the Local.
- Nationally, the Locals across Canada form COPE/SEPB.
- COPE/SEPB separates Canada into 4 Regions; COPE Local 397 is in Region 3
- COPE Local 397 is a member of the District Labour Councils where we have members.
- COPE Local 397 is a member of the Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta Federations of Labour at the provincial level, which links us to the members of more than 35 other Unions.
- Through COPE National we are members of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) which represents 2.5 million workers in Canada.

Explain what a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) is:

- A CBA is a legal document setting out your rights at work and the benefits negotiated on your behalf.
- Both the Employer and the Union have agreed to all of the contents.

Explain how to have input into bargaining:

- You and other Members have input into what goes into your Collective Agreement.
- Prior to bargaining there is a call for proposals.
- On the website (www.cope397.ca) you can submit proposals at any time to be considered for the next round of bargaining.
- Your Bargaining Committee meets with Management to bargain. When a tentative agreement is reached, you and the other Members vote on whether to accept it or not.

Review key provisions of your specific agreement, such as:

- Employment status of the Member you're meeting with
- Hours of work
- Vacation
- Pay level
- Benefits such as sick leave, maternity leave, parental leave, adoption leave, extended health, etc.

Encourage the Member to read the Collective Agreement and to approach you with any questions, or if they think they are having a problem. Make sure they know where to find the CBA on the website.

Describe where the Member can get in touch with the Local:

- The Steward is the first point of contact with the Union.
- The Executive and/or Prairie Council members are also available to answer questions.
- Advise the location of the bulletin board where Union information is posted.
- The Local's website is www.cope397.ca
- The Local's Facebook page is [COPE Local 397](#)
- COPE Local 397's office is located at 109 – 2709 12th Avenue, Regina
- The office phone numbers are:
 - Union Representatives: Rhonda Derby (306) 352-9551 and Cory Szczepanski (306-359-6411)
 - Union Organizers: *Vacant* (306) 352-3244
 - Office Administrator: Patti Harris (306) 352-4238
 - Administrative Assistant: Tricia Klassen (306) 352-4240.
- The President, Kim Wilson phone number is (306) 352-4220.

Explain how the Member can get involved in the union:

- You're involved all the time, by being aware of your rights and making sure those rights are respected.
- The Local holds General Membership Meetings and you are entitled to attend. (Give the date, time and location of the next meeting)
- Your Unit/Sub-Unit may hold meetings that you can attend. (Give dates, times, and locations of any upcoming meetings.)

Address any other questions the Member might have about the Union or Collective Agreement:

Don't be afraid to admit if you don't know the answer and that you need to get back to them, once you've consulted with another Steward or a Union Representative.

Be prepared for some workers not to understand why we have Unions anymore (i.e. “unions are obsolete”):

Point out that we have Unions because:

- we can negotiate hours of work, pay rates etc.
- we are stronger together than alone
- Unions balance the power of Employers
- Employers still want to cut wages and increase workloads like they did 150 years ago when Unions first started
- to fight for social programs for all Canadians like Medicare, unemployment insurance, maternity leave, etc.

Some Members may not know why we have Collective Agreements:

You can point out that:

- non-unionized workers have to bargain wages and rights individually
- it is legal document that can be enforced
- it obliges the Employer to resolving Members complaints through problem solving and grievance processes

The Member may ask why they have to pay Union dues:

You can say that dues cover the costs of:

- bargaining collective agreements
- solving workplace problems, dealing with Members problems/grievances
- union communications and education
- democratic structures like meetings or committees where Members have their say
- lobbying
- campaigns with other Unions to improve conditions in workplaces and communities
- COPE Local 397 dues are currently 1.5% of monies earned. Point out that Union dues are tax-deductible and appear on their T4.