



Union Leave/ Book-off policy

Definition

Union leave (Book-off) is the practice of reimbursing the employer for the appropriate wage and benefit costs applicable to a CUPE Local 391 member when the member is seconded from his or her regular duties by CUPE Local 391 for union business.

Intent

- That members should not be out of pocket in the course of attending to Union business; business being activities mandated by the bylaws of the Local and/ or consistent with the objectives of the Local, which include mobilization, education, outreach, organizing drives, or other campaigns or projects that have been duly approved by the membership or, where appropriate, the CUPE 391 Executive.
- That appropriate consideration is also given to ensuring the Local remains financially sound.
- That union leave is not meant to create a source of income for a member benefit the member inordinately.

Guidelines

There is an expectation that members will request book-off only when they are unable to otherwise fulfill their duties and book-off will be requested in good faith. Members should provide the reasons they are requesting book-off when making the request.

Book-off should specifically be used for activities that go above and beyond expected volunteer duties, and/ or where volunteer turn-out is insufficient to meet core union objectives.

Examples of activities considered part of volunteer work:

- Regularly occurring committee meetings
- General Meetings
- Annual General Meetings
- Rallies/demonstrations
- Events that promote the union in the library such as at WORD Vancouver
- Work to support the local that does not promise to take significant amounts of time (ie. More than 3 hours)

Passed by the Executive on June 13, 2017

Examples of activities appropriate for book-off:

- Duties mandated by the bylaws that require specific devoted time
- Bargaining Committee Meetings
- Working meetings exceeding 3 hours
- If the member holds a position with specific responsibilities and the meeting cannot be held on a time they are not working (i.e. Recording Secretary, Chair, etc...)
- When working in the office support position

Illustrative examples of situations where members obtain book-off can include but are not limited to:

Elected officials (duties mandated by bylaws):

- President: Permanently booked off at the Librarian I Step 5 rate. VPL charges the union monthly for the book off.
- Secretary Treasurer: Booked off only enough time to perform his or her duties as defined in the bylaws. As the cheques are confined to the union office for security reasons, and because normal bookkeeping duties are time consuming, the Secretary Treasurer can only perform them during the working day. The Secretary Treasurer performs other duties that are not on union leave time, such as correspondence with other members or the employer or suppliers.
- Recording Secretary: May take occasional union leave to perform management of union records, when unable to manage those duties on volunteer time. If his or her presence is required at an executive or general meeting and he or she cannot make the meeting on his or her own time, he or she may obtain union leave. All efforts are made to accommodate every member of the executive to attend a meeting on their free time.
- Members of the executive come together at the start of an executive term for a "Think Tank" day, to devise strategy and evaluate resources for the term, and assign duties to themselves or other committees.
- Trustees: Obtain union leave to gather a limited number of times a year to audit the finances and other records of the Local. They issue a report to CUPE National yearly and to the membership at the Annual General Meeting.

Office Support: A line item in the budget is approved by the membership yearly for members to provide office support, to relieve the President of any duties that need doing.

Bargaining Committee: As mandated by the bylaws, they meet to discuss, collect, and produce bargaining proposals, as well as bargain directly with the employer. When in caucus, bargaining committee members are booked off as their meetings last all day.

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Passed by the Executive on June 13, 2017

When bargaining with the employer, three members' book-off is paid for by the employer. Their mandate lasts as long as it takes for a new collective agreement to be settled and signed, and paper copies distributed to the members, and then the committee is disbanded. Thus the committee does not have a budget line every year, but in the years leading up to and during bargaining.

Grievance Committee: Members of the Grievance Committee who are working on active grievances may be allowed reasonable union leave to prepare them. When a Grievance Committee member is sitting with the member they are representing across the table from the employer, their time is paid for by the employer. The Chair of the committee is allowed reasonable union leave to enter the office and file paperwork related to grievances. Grievance Committee members have occasional meetings to discuss their active grievances. They do not book off for these meetings.

Classification Committee: Members of this committee may be allowed reasonable union leave to enter the office and review new job openings to determine if they harmonize with the current classifications, file paperwork, and communicate with the employer when conflicts arise during these reviews. They may also meet with members during classification reviews and obtain leave for this work.

OH&S Committee: As this committee is joint and mandated by provincial law and the collective agreement, members' time is paid by the employer when they meet with the representatives of the employer. The committee had asked for and obtained enough of a budget to have union leave for one caucus meeting per year.

Ad-hoc Committees: From time to time, the Executive may assign a committee, develop terms of reference for the committee including deliverables and duration, and seek the approval of the membership for a budget for the committee, such budget including sufficient union leave to complete the tasks assigned in the terms of reference. Once the task of the committee has been completed, such committee is then disbanded. The most recent example of such a committee has been the by-law review committee.

Members of other committees: Other committees, whose duties are not mandated by the bylaws of the Local, are asked to send in any requests well in advance of the projected date(s) for book off in writing, with clear reasoning, to the President, who will review them in consultation with the executive and with an eye to the needs of the Local. Such requests may be granted if they are to perform specific tasks, with clear deliverables, and with estimates of time and duration. Ongoing, regular meetings are not considered specific tasks and are not considered eligible for union leave.

Members who attend conventions, conferences or educationals on behalf of the local: it is understood that members who attend conventions, conferences and educationals do so at the pleasure of the local and have put their names forward for consideration among many. Full-time members who attend on a compressed day understand that

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they are donating their time that day. Conventions, conferences and educationals are considered privileges and members understand they only do not end up out of pocket.

Auxiliary and Part-time Members Performing Union Work:

Auxiliary and part-time members performing union work (such as sitting on the committees listed in the illustrative examples above, or attending convention, conferences and educationals,) may have the executive consider a book-off arrangement that provides them with hours commensurate with full-time members performing the same work.

Procedure for All Members Requesting Union Leave:

All members are asked to send in any requests well in advance of the projected date(s) for book off in writing, with clear reasoning, to the President, who will review them in consultation with the executive and with an eye to the needs of the Local. When they have received clearance to do so, they then proceed to the union web page, where they may find the Request for Union Leave form under Resources > Forms. It is a fillable PDF that can be emailed directly to the Supervisor of their unit, who fills in his or her name in the appropriate box, and then emails it in to the President, who completes it and emails it to HR.

Recourse

A member who has been denied Union Leave may appeal that decision to the Executive. A subcommittee of the executive, composed of three (3) members, and advised by the CUPE National Representative, will regularly review the union leave approved by the Local as well as the appeals of those members denied union leave, and issue decisions in favour or against those appeals and advise the executive as to further book off practices.