

A GUIDE FOR THE CHAIR

# A GUIDE FOR THE CHAIR



Your local  
membership  
meeting

***CUPE***

# EQUALITY STATEMENT

Union solidarity is based on the principle that union members are equal and deserve mutual respect at all levels. Any behavior that creates conflict prevents us from working together to strengthen our union.

As unionists, mutual respect, cooperation and understanding are our goals. We should neither condone nor tolerate behavior that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

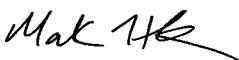
Discriminatory speech or conduct which is racist, sexist, transphobic or homophobic hurts and thereby divides us. So too, does discrimination on the basis of ability, age, class, religion, language and ethnic origin.

Sometimes discrimination takes the form of harassment. Harassment means using real or perceived power to abuse, devalue or humiliate. Harassment should not be treated as a joke. The uneasiness and resentment that it creates are not feelings that help us grow as a union.

Discrimination and harassment focus on characteristics that make us different; and they reduce our capacity to work together on shared concerns such as decent wages, safe working conditions, and justice in the workplace, society and in our union.

CUPE's policies and practices must reflect our commitment to equality. Members, staff and elected officers must be mindful that all union members deserve dignity, equality and respect.

---



MARK HANCOCK  
National President

---



CHARLES FLEURY  
National Secretary-Treasurer

# **A GUIDE FOR THE CHAIR**



# CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Before the meeting starts: The chair must ensure there is quorum, based on the quorum rule in your Local's by-laws. If there is no quorum, the meeting cannot proceed.

If members leave during the meeting, the chair will decide if quorum is lost. If it is, the chair stops the meeting.

Start the meeting on time.

**Say:** *I call this meeting of Local \_\_\_\_\_ to order.*

Recognize the Indigenous territory that you are meeting on. Find information by contacting your national servicing rep.

**Say:** *I wish to acknowledge that we are meeting on the territory / land of the \_\_\_\_\_ Nation/Peoples.*

Review basic rules for the meeting, such as:

- One member speaks at a time.
- The chair recognizes members before they may speak.
- The chair creates a list of speakers. In a discussion, members who have already spoken may need to wait for another turn to speak; the chair will give priority to first-time speakers.
- The chair may set time limits on how long members may speak, or how long a discussion continues.

Make sure the members at the meeting know the rules of order you are using. Some rules of order come from your local by-laws. Others come from the CUPE Constitution. The final source of guidance is *Bourinot's Rules of Order*.

# **ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS**

The Recording Secretary calls out the names of the local's officers.

Each officer says "here" when their name is called out.

President: \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

Vice-President: \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

Secretary-Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

Recording Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

Membership Officer (formerly "Sergeant-at-arms):

\_\_\_\_\_ (name)

Trustees: \_\_\_\_\_

(as many as 3 names)

If your local has other officers, such as chief steward, education officer, executive members-at-large, unit chairs, area vice-presidents, etc., write the positions here to use when roll calling officers:

---

---

---

Introduce your CUPE servicing representative and guests in attendance.

## **EQUALITY STATEMENT**

Read out loud the CUPE Equality Statement. It appears on the inside cover of this guide or Appendix D of the CUPE National Constitution. Members may stand.

Explain that the Equality Statement is part of the CUPE National Constitution. It sets a respectful tone for meetings and for debates that occur at our meetings.

# **NEW MEMBERS**

The secretary-treasurer reads the names of new members who have signed the membership card and paid the initiation fee.

***Say: Are there any names missing?***

If so, add those names to the list.

***Ask: Are there any objections to any of these workers who have applied, becoming members?***

Note: If there is an objection, members at the meeting vote whether to accept their membership.

***Say: Hearing no objection, would the new members please come to the front of the room, or stand, to take the oath of membership?***

The chair explains that it is a practice in labour and in CUPE to confirm new members' support for the union by taking an oath. All local members before them have taken this oath at their first union meeting.

See next page for the oath.

# OATH OF MEMBERSHIP

Read the oath out loud, pausing whenever you see //, so that new members can repeat.

“I promise to support and obey the Constitution of this union, //  
to work to improve the economic and social conditions //  
of other members and other workers, //  
to defend and work to improve //  
the democratic rights and liberties of workers, //  
and that I will not purposely or knowingly harm //  
or assist in harming //  
another member of the union.”

**Say:** *Please join me in welcoming our new members to  
Local \_\_\_\_\_. (applause)*

The membership officer, steward, or someone on the executive, gives new members a copy of Welcome to your union meeting. They urge other members to help the new members participate in the meeting.

# **READ AND ADOPT MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING**

The Recording Secretary:

- asks if everyone has a copy of the minutes, if the minutes were available before the meeting
- projects the minutes on a screen
- makes a motion that the minutes be adopted

This motion needs a seconder.

**Say:** *The Recording Secretary has moved adoption of the minutes. Will someone second the motion?*

Someone seconds the motion.

**Ask:** *Is there any discussion on the motion? Are there any corrections, errors, or omissions in the minutes?*

Note: The motion to adopt minutes focuses on whether the minutes are accurate. If members wish to discuss an item from the minutes, they must do so under the next agenda item, “Matters Arising from Minutes of the Last Meeting”

If no members wish to correct the minutes, the chair proceeds with the vote.

**Ask:** *All in favour of the motion to adopt the minutes?  
All opposed?*

If someone asks for corrections, ask if anyone objects to the corrections.

If someone objects to the corrections, the chair conducts a vote (majority vote is required).

Once members at the meeting agree with the corrections, proceed with the vote.

**Say:** *The motion to adopt the minutes (as corrected) is carried. The minutes will stand adopted (as amended).*

# **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Once members have read and adopted minutes from the previous meeting, the chair invites members to discuss issues related to those adopted minutes.

**Ask:** *Are there any matters arising out of the minutes?*

If a member raises an issue already on the agenda, ask if they will agree to discuss it at the time set aside later in the meeting.

If the member does not agree, the chair allows discussion to happen now. The same is true if the member raises a matter not on today's agenda.

Members may move, second, discuss and vote on matters arising from the minutes. Record in the minutes all motions passed during this part of the agenda.

After a vote, move to the next agenda item.

# **FINANCIAL REPORT**

**Ask:** *Will the secretary-treasurer now make the financial report?*

The secretary-treasurer gives members a copy of the financial report or projects it on a screen. The report highlights money coming in and going out of the bank account and any problems members should be aware of.

After the report, the secretary-treasurer moves adoption of the report. The motion needs to be seconded.

**Say:** *The Secretary Treasurer moves adoption of the financial report. Will someone second the motion?*

**Ask:** *Is there any discussion on the motion?*

Members may now discuss details of the financial report.

After the discussion:

**Ask:** *All in favour of adopting the financial report? All opposed?*

**Say:** *The motion to adopt the financial report is carried/not carried.*

The chair may tell members that the motion adopts the financial report. However, the local's finances still require a formal audit by the local's trustees or an auditor. The audited reports will come to the membership at a future meeting.

# CORRESPONDENCE

The Recording Secretary gives members a copy of the Correspondence addressed to, or sent from, the local. It can be a letter, an email message, or other electronic messages.

**Before the general membership meeting:** The executive will discuss any correspondence the local needs to respond to. These might be requests for financial support, news of upcoming conventions, conferences, workshops, etc.

The executive brings a recommendation to the meeting for requests that the membership must approve.

If an issue requires a long discussion, the chair may suggest adding it to the agenda under unfinished business or new business.

**Ask:** *Will the Recording Secretary report to us about correspondence the local has received or sent out since the last meeting?*

**Note:** In some locals, the recording secretary hands out (or displays on a screen) a list of all correspondence since the last meeting.

If the Local Executive wants the members to discuss a recommendation on correspondence, follow the steps on the back of this page.

## **CORRESPONDENCE (CONT.)**

**Ask:** *You have heard the Executive's recommendation.  
Is there a motion to \_\_\_\_\_? (describe the request)  
Will someone second the motion?*

**Ask:** *Is there discussion on the motion?*

All in favour of (read the motion again)? All opposed?

**Say:** *The motion to (read the motion again) is carried/  
not carried.*

If there is no recommendation at this meeting, the Recording Secretary moves adoption of the correspondence report.

**Ask:** *The recording secretary has moved adoption of the  
Correspondence Report. Will someone second the motion?*

Is there discussion on the motion?

The motion to adopt the correspondence report is a formality. Members may discuss correspondence for clarification and information. Matters arising from the report that require action may be added to the agenda under new business.

When discussion ends, the chair will call for a vote to accept the report.

**Ask:** *All in favour of adopting the correspondence report?  
All opposed?*

**Say:** *Carried/not carried*

# **LOCAL EXECUTIVE REPORT**

**Before the general membership meeting:** The local executive talks about and will recommend a course of action on issues that require members' approval. Recommendations may be added as agenda items in any part of the agenda, or moved during the business of the executive report.

The President usually presents the executive report. If necessary, the vice-president or recording-secretary may do so. The person presenting this report must step aside as chair for this part of the meeting.

**Say:** *The next order of business is the executive report.*

The president/vice-president presents the report and moves adoption. This motion needs a seconder.

**Ask:** *The adoption of the executive report is moved.  
Will someone second the motion?*

Is there discussion on the motion?

All those in favour of adopting the executive report? Opposed?

**Say:** *The motion to adopt the executive report is carried/  
not carried.*

# **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Local committees that report to a membership meeting may include: the Bargaining Committee, Education Committee, and joint committees with the employer, such as Health and Safety, Pensions, and Labour / Management. These are often called standing committees because they exist over time. Ad hoc committees are temporary committees set up to deal with things like workload, by-laws, etc.

A committee report tells members what the committee is doing and what issues are active. It may recommend that members act on something coming out of the committee. Recommendations should be brief, clear and in writing.

**Ask:** *Will the chair of the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee make their report?*

After the committee reports, the chair asks for a motion to receive or adopt the report and for any recommendations. The table on the next page outlines the difference between adopting, and receiving a report, and how to deal with specific issues and recommendations.

**Ask:** *There is a motion to adopt/receive the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee report. Will someone second the motion?*

**Ask:** *Is there discussion on the motion?"*

**Ask:** *All those in favour of adopting/receiving the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee report? Opposed?*

**Say:** *The motion to adopt/receive the report of the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee is carried/not carried.*

## **ADOPT:**

If the members adopt a committee report, they approve the report and all its recommendations.

## **DIVIDE THE QUESTION:**

If the members want to deal with a single issue or recommendation on its own, or a few issues separately, someone may make a motion to divide the question. The members would then move, second, discuss and vote on each issue.

## **RECEIVE:**

If the members receive a committee report, the minutes will show that it was received.

# NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

## Before the meeting:

See CUPE National Constitution Appendix B for nomination and election rules. Your local by-laws may contain specific rules for your elections.

Elect a balloting or election committee, at least one month before opening nominations. The committee, made up of a Chief Returning Officer and Assistants, may also be appointed with membership approval. Its job is to hand out, collect and count the ballots, and to deal with any recounts or complaints.

Anyone who is a candidate for office, or a scrutineer for a candidate, cannot be on the election or balloting committee.

Plan to have someone who is not on the local executive conduct the nominations and elections. A retired local president or someone outside the local executive must assume this role. If the nomination and election do not involve the office of president, the president may conduct the election.

If your elections were held by referendum rather than at a meeting, you may now announce election results.

**Say:    *The next order of business is the nomination and election of officers.***

Introduce the person who will conduct the nominations and elections. They are now in charge of the meeting.

Before nominations begin, the person conducting the election describes the rules (see reverse for the rules).

## **ELECTION RULES**

1. If there is only one member nominated for a position, that person will be acclaimed to the position.
2. To be elected, a candidate must have a majority vote (more than 50%) of all unspoiled ballots.
3. The term of office is \_\_\_\_\_ years. (See your local by-laws.)
4. If elected to a position, the officer must attend executive and general membership meetings. CUPE Constitution Section B.2.5
5. Those elected must take the Oath of Office, as it appears in the CUPE Constitution, Article XI, Section 11.7 b), or as found in local by-laws, during this meeting.

The final section of this guide provides more details about conducting elections.

Once elections are over, the elected officers stand up. The person who conducted the election reads the oath of office, pausing to give time to repeat the oath.

### **OATH OF OFFICE**

I, \_\_\_\_\_(name), //  
promise to perform the duties of my office, //  
as set out in the Constitution and laws of the Canadian Union of Public  
Employees, //  
faithfully and to the best of my ability //  
for my term of office. //  
As an officer of the Union //  
I will always promote the harmony and dignity of its sessions //  
by counsel and example. //  
I also promise to turn over all property of the union //  
to my successor //  
at the end of my term.

# **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Unfinished business relates to items the local has dealt with under New Business at a previous meeting, or earlier in this meeting (but not completed).

The recording-secretary keeps a list of unfinished business from the minutes of previous meetings and committee reports.

**Ask:** *Is there any unfinished business?*

The recording-secretary, or any member, may identify unfinished business for discussion. However, the issue requires a motion and seconder.

**Ask:** *Does anyone wish to make a motion on any of the items?*

If someone makes a motion:

**Ask:** *Will someone second the motion?*

Is there any discussion on the motion?

Following discussion:

**Ask:** *All those in favour of the motion to \_\_\_\_\_? All opposed?*

**Say:** *The motion to \_\_\_\_\_ is carried/not carried.*

# **NEW BUSINESS**

The executive and members of the local can add items to the agenda under New Business. This can occur at the start of the meeting under Adopt the Agenda.

Some matters, such as spending for expensive items, changes to dues, changes to by-laws, changing a local's charter, and other major decisions, require a notice of motion. See your local by-laws and the back of this page for details.

The recording-secretary records decisions made during this part of the meeting in the minutes.

## **NOTICE OF MOTION**

Notice of motion officially announces a motion that the next meeting will deal with. It alerts members to a big issue they will have to debate and vote upon.

Members will receive a notice of motion

1. Verbally, at a membership meeting with quorum, at least 7 days before the meeting when the vote will occur, or
2. In writing, 60 days before the meeting when the vote will occur.

Notice of motion does not require a seconder. However, the motion itself requires a mover and a seconder at the meeting where members debate and vote on it.

Record the notice of motion in the minutes of the meeting when the notice was given. The minutes of that first meeting should also include the text of the motion to be considered in the future.

Once members receive a notice of motion, the item must appear on the agenda of the next meeting. The meeting notice must include the text, details and any reasons for launching the motion that the meeting will consider.

# **GOOD OF THE UNION**

Good of the Union tells members about events, concerns, or suggestions for the local and its members. Motions are only required if something is to occur. Otherwise, most Good of the Union items are only discussed.

This is a good time to discuss how the local could work better or differently, or to let members know how they may support members who are ill or in distress.

**Ask:** *Is there anything to discuss for the good and welfare of the union?*

*Does anyone know of a member who may need the support of the union?*

# **ADJOURNMENT**

**Ask:** *Do I have a motion to adjourn?*

**Say:** *This meeting of local \_\_\_\_\_ is adjourned.*

The chair usually adjourns the meeting when all business has ended.

**Note:** A motion to adjourn the meeting is in order at any time during the meeting.

It requires a mover, a seconder, and a majority vote. It is not debatable.

# **RULES OF ORDER**

The Parliamentary Procedure Handbook provides details about the rules that apply to meetings. Here are some common rules the chair needs to know.

## **THE CHAIR SPEAKS TO A MOTION**

If you want to speak to a motion, step down from the chair until the meeting votes on the motion. The vice-president or recording secretary takes over chairing when the chair wants to speak. When the vote has ended, you may resume as chair.

## **DEALING WITH AN AMENDMENT TO A MOTION**

**Ask:** *It is moved that we \_\_\_\_\_ (state the motion).*  
*Is there any discussion?*

If a member moves an amendment and someone seconds it:

**Ask:** *An amendment has been made which states  
\_\_\_\_\_ (state the amendment).*  
*Is there any discussion on the amendment?"*  
*Are you ready to vote on the amendment?"*

If the amendment is defeated, proceed to deal with the main motion, as usual.

If the amendment is carried.

**Ask:** *Is there any discussion on the main motion  
as amended?*

Read the motion as amended.

**Say:** *If there is no further discussion, we will now vote on  
the main motion, as amended.*

Read the motion as amended. Proceed with the vote.

**Say:** *The motion to \_\_\_\_\_ (Read the motion as  
amended) is carried/not carried.*

## **POINTS OF ORDER AND POINTS OF INFORMATION**

A member may interrupt a speaker to make:

- a point of order (based on the chair not following correct rules of the meeting) or
- a point of information (to ask a question about the topic being discussed or the meeting process).

## **RULES OF ORDER (CONT.)**

The member calls out “point of order” or “point of information,” and the chair interrupts the current speaker to recognize the member:

**Ask:    *What is your point of order/information?***

On a point of information, the chair answers a question or asks another member, who may have the information, to respond.

On a point of order, the chair listens to the point, and will either agree or disagree.

**If the chair agrees, say: *The point is well taken.***

Then, the chair states what the correction will be.

Or, if the chair disagrees with the point.

**Say: *The point is not well taken.*** The chair says why they disagree. Then, the chair returns to the main item on the agenda and to the member who was interrupted.

If a member disagrees with the chair’s ruling, they may interrupt the speaker once again, to challenge the chair. The member states their challenge, the chair restates their reasons for the decision, and the members vote to uphold the chair’s decision, or to overturn it. The meeting then proceeds.

### **MOTIONS THAT GO TO A VOTE WITHOUT DISCUSSION**

- Adjourn
- Recess
- Lay on the table (postpone discussion of a motion)
- Call the question (close debate on a motion and move to a vote)
- Limit debate

### **MOTIONS THAT CANNOT BE AMENDED**

- Adjourn
- Lay on the table
- Take the motion from the table after it has been tabled
- Call the question

# HOW TO CONDUCT AN ELECTION

The person conducting the election announces

- all positions up for election,
- the length of each term, and
- the number of people to be elected for each position.

Begin with the highest-ranking position, which is president of the local.

Elect one position at a time. Count the ballots for one position before moving to nominations and elections for the next position.

## STEPS FOR AN ELECTION PROCESS

For each position:

1. Ask for nominations for the position.

**Say:** *I call for nominations for the position of  
(name of the position).*

*(name of person) has been nominated.*

2. When there are no more nominations, call three more times for nominations before closing nominations.

**Say:** *I call a second time for further nominations.  
I call a third and final time for nominations.*

3. Declare nominations ended.

**Say:** *Nominations are now closed for the position of  
(name of position).*

4. State the names of all nominees, from the first to last person nominated.

5. Now, in reverse order of nomination, from the last person nominated to the first, ask each person whether they will stand for election, or decline.

**Ask:** *(name of person), do you stand for election,  
or decline?*

6. Ask the local's balloting committee to hand out the ballots. Describe how to complete the ballot.

7. Order that the doors be closed (or tiled). No one may enter the room during the vote, once the doors are closed.

## **HOW TO CONDUCT AN ELECTION (CONT.)**

8. Make sure everyone has received a ballot.  
**Ask:** *Has everyone received a ballot?*
9. After the vote, ask the local's balloting committee to collect the ballots.
10. Make sure all the ballots are collected.  
**Ask:** *Have all the ballots been collected?*
11. Ask if any candidates have scrutineers to observe the count.  
If so, the scrutineers will leave the room with the counting group.
12. Until the doors (open the doors). People may now enter the room.
13. Wait for the ballots to be counted by the counting group.
14. The counting group hands all the ballots to the person conducting the election, along with a written breakdown of the voting results.
15. Verify that the person elected has received more than 50% of the votes, not including spoiled ballots.
16. Announce who is elected.

**Say:** *(name of person) is elected to the position of (name of position).*

The person conducting the election does not have to announce the number of votes each candidate received, although some locals may choose to do so.

17. Ask for a motion to destroy the ballots.  
**Ask:** *May I have a motion to destroy the ballots?*  
**Will someone second the motion?**  
**Is there any discussion on the motion?**  
**After discussion:**  
**Ask:** *All those in favour of the motion to destroy the ballots? All opposed?*  
**Say:** *The motion to destroy the ballots is carried/not carried.*

