



WELCOME

TO THE COMPENSATION
EMPLOYEES' UNION

A GUIDE FOR NEW MEMBERS

MAY 2024

If you are a new member, or your personal email, home address, or cell number has changed, please email your contact info to us at officeadministration@ceu.bc.ca

Welcome to the Compensation Employees'
Union: A Guide for New Members

May 2024

Check for updates at <https://www.ceu.ca/document/ceu-new-member-guide/>

CONNECT WITH US



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CONTENTS

Welcome	4
What we do	5
Who we are	5
The union advantage	6
Your union needs you	8
Shop stewards	9
Union education	10
Collective agreement	11
Union democracy	12
Union structure	13
Your safety at work	14
The world around us	15



WELCOME



It is my enormous pleasure to welcome you into the Compensation Employees' Union. By joining our ranks, you become part of a small union with powerful associations within the greater labour movement.

CEU represents only WCB workers in B.C. This allows us to stay connected to the

issues that are specific to you in your workplace. Our executive board members remain staff members at WCB, while we maintain ties to the larger labour context (see our affiliations on page 12) so we can best represent our specific focus — our CEU members.

I look forward to meeting you in person.

— Laura Snow
PRESIDENT

OUR VALUES: equity, respect, compassion, and integrity.

OUR MISSION: improving the lives of WCB union members who help keep British Columbians safe at work.

OUR GOALS include defending your rights, advancing those rights in bargaining, and supporting you to flourish at WCB. Read all of our goals at ceu.ca/about/goals/

Learn more about your union leadership team, including their roles as workers at WCB and activists in the union, at ceu.ca/about/team/



WHAT WE DO

The Compensation Employees' Union acts as the exclusive bargaining agent of approximately 3,000 workers at Workers' Compensation Board offices across B.C. We bargain collectively with the public sector employer to renew the provincial collective agreement on behalf of our members every three to five years.

We represent our members on individual and policy workplace grievances, including matters such as discipline, performance management, job evaluation and classification, duty to accommodate, probationary release, and the interpretation of clauses affecting the entire membership. We also participate in job classification and employer hiring processes, ensuring these are done fairly.

WHO WE ARE

Our members are diverse and while most are located in the WCB main office in Richmond, about a third work in other parts of B.C. We are lawyers, nurses, cleaning staff, maintenance workers, electricians, adjudicators, clerical staff, prevention officers, statisticians, and IT support, to name just a few. We live in Terrace, Surrey, Prince George, Nelson, and many other places throughout B.C. We are workers ourselves.

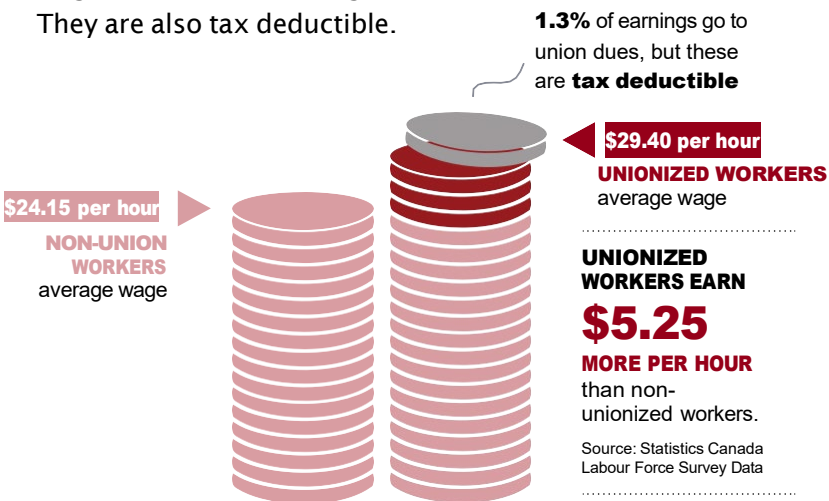


THE UNION ADVANTAGE

We owe our wages, benefits, safety, and rights in the workplace to the strength of unions, and the hard work of Compensation Employees' Union members across B.C.

CEU members pay dues to the union in return for a wide range of benefits and membership services — from skilled negotiators that help you get the best contract possible, to experienced stewards and labour relations specialists who help you navigate your day-to-day work concerns.

Because of the union advantage in average wages, union dues pay for themselves as a small percentage of the higher wages we are able to negotiate. They are also tax deductible.



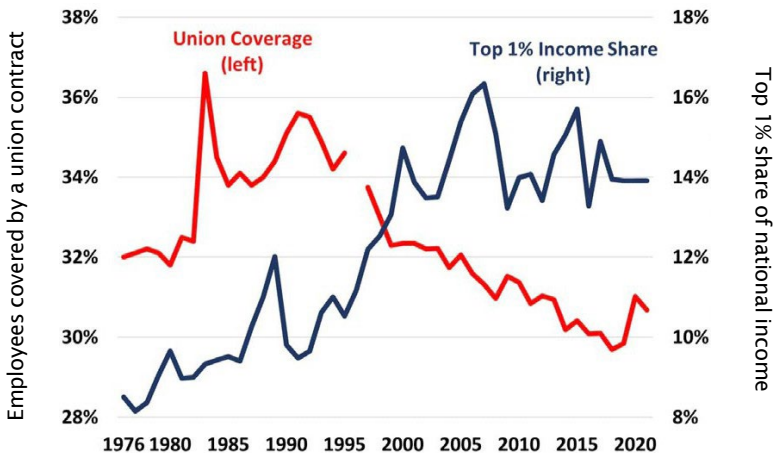
Unions don't just benefit union workers.

There is abundant international evidence that higher union density is associated with higher wages and better economic security for everyone — even non-union workers. Non-union workers benefit not only from higher prevailing wages, but also through better employment standards, better occupational health and safety regulations, and lower gender and racial pay gaps.

Another area where unions benefit the working class as a whole is their advocacy and lobbying at the level of policy and government. Unions are often the sole voice advocating on behalf of working people. They advocate for things like generous public programs and progressive taxes, and lobby against things like corporate handouts.

As this graph shows, the combination of the direct wage effect and the benefits for non-union workers means unions are crucial for reducing income inequality.

Union rates have gone down while income for the wealthiest Canadians has gone up.



Source: Centre for Future Work calculations from Statistics Canada and World Inequality Database data. 1996 data for union coverage unavailable.

YOUR UNION NEEDS YOU

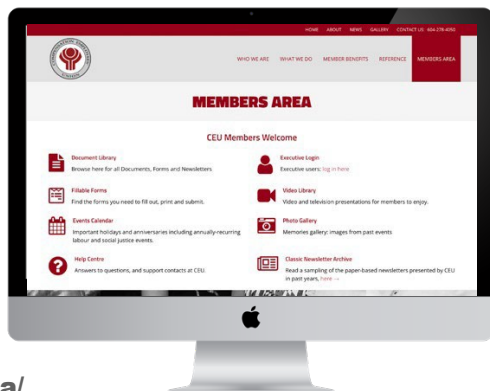
We are stronger together.

The CEU can only protect and improve upon your working conditions if we remain a vibrant democratic union with informed and engaged members.

To communicate with you directly about worksite elections, contract negotiations, union participation opportunities, and other decisions that impact your work, we need your personal email, home address, and cell number. Please take a moment now to send us your contact information.

If you are a new member, or your personal email, home address, or cell number has changed, please email us at officeadministration@ceu.bc.ca

Visit the **MEMBERS AREA** of the CEU website for your collective agreement, union news, photos and videos, and more. ceu.ca/members-area/





SHOP STEWARDS

CEU shop stewards are the backbone of our union.

Stewards are our coworkers who step forward to volunteer to be active in our union. Any CEU member in good standing is eligible to be elected as a steward — including you.

Stewards are a direct connection to the union. They are responsible for making sure the collective agreement is enforced at the worksite, and they represent members who may be being treated unfairly. They will also help if you want to know more about your rights or how to get involved in the union.

CEU currently has 60 elected shop stewards.

If you believe your rights or the collective agreement have been breached, or you are asked to attend a meeting with your employer that may be disciplinary, ask a shop steward to attend with you. Steward contact info is listed at ceu.ca.

GRIEVANCES: If your rights or the collective agreement have been violated, one way to address that is to file a grievance. If you need to file a grievance, a shop steward can advise you on whether you have grounds to file, and help you with the steps of the grievance.



UNION EDUCATION

Education is a cornerstone of the foundation for stewards and other union activists.

The union provides free educational opportunities to assist member activists in learning the essentials of being a steward, leadership skills, occupational health and safety, basic labour law, how to chair a meeting, and much more.

Your union provides a paid leave of absence from work to participate in most courses in the leadership stream and courses are delivered at area offices throughout B.C.

In addition, the union will periodically offer “lunch and learn” information sessions for members. If there is a topic you’d like to see covered, don’t hesitate to reach out and suggest it. For upcoming opportunities, watch for the CEU newsletter to arrive in your email inbox, or visit ceu.ca/events/

BURSARY PROGRAM: The CEU is proud to offer an annual bursary program in support of our members and their close relatives entering their first year of post-secondary education. Bursaries total \$10,000 per year or more, with a deadline in early April. Visit ceu.ca/services/bursary/ for information.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

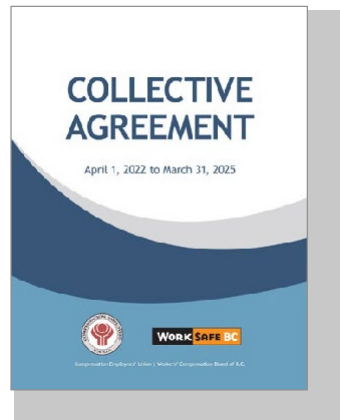
We all deserve to be treated fairly and by the rules.

Your collective agreement is the employment contract between your employer and you and your co-workers.

CEU members work hard and demand good wages and benefits for that work. That's why it's important to read and understand your collective agreement.

View or download your collective agreement in the members area of the CEU website at

ceu.ca/members-area/.



BARGAINING: The CEU bargaining committee is elected to represent members in negotiations with the employer. Any member can be nominated to sit on the bargaining committee. Its priorities are set by you — a bargaining survey will be sent to you by email so the committee knows your priorities for the next round of collective bargaining.

UNION DEMOCRACY

Your union is a democratic organization. You can vote for:

- Shop stewards at your worksite;
- Executive members, including president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and five directors; and
- Four members at large elected to join the executive board on the bargaining committee.



You will also be asked to vote on your bargained collective agreement (ratification vote) and on any decision to strike.

AFFILIATIONS: CEU is affiliated with other unions and labour organizations, including BCGEU, the BC Federation of Labour, and the Canadian Labour Congress. CEU activists play a role in these organizations, bringing democratic representation on behalf of all CEU members.



BCGEU is one of BC's largest unions. It gives WCB appeal representation to our members.



BC's labour umbrella organization, represents over 50 affiliated unions



CLC is Canada's largest labour organization.

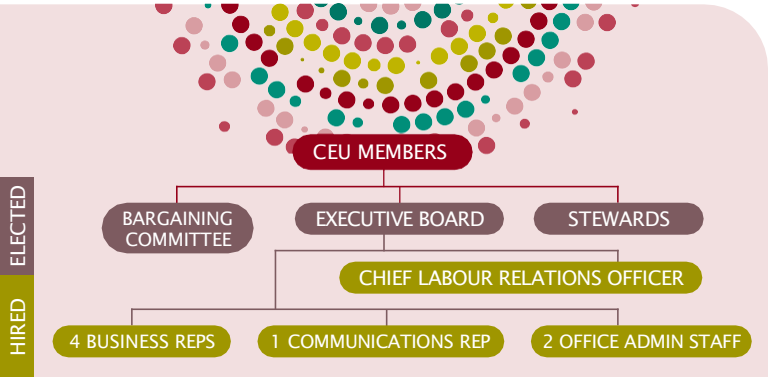
Learn about all CEU affiliations at ceu.ca/about/affiliations/



UNION STRUCTURE

The union is led by an executive board comprised of 10 elected CEU members. The president works full time for CEU through a union leave. The other nine executive members (four table officers and five directors) are volunteers, but maintain their WCB pay when performing union work such as committee work (joint committees with the employer such as JOHSC, bargaining, etc.), conference attendance or presentations, and more.

The CEU leases an office in Richmond and employs eight staff members, including a chief labour relations officer, four business representatives, one communications representative, and two office administrators. These employees provide specialized knowledge on labour relations, communications, and labour education. They support the work of the elected board and stewards.



YOU HAVE THE
RIGHT
TO REFUSE
UNSAFE WORK

YOUR SAFETY AT WORK

As WCB union members, we are committed to keeping British Columbians safe at work — we know that every year, too many become ill or are injured or killed on the job.

Workplace health and safety is a key priority for CEU. If you have a concern, report it to your supervisor or manager. If it isn't appropriately addressed, contact your worker representatives on your local Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) or your Worker Health and Safety Rep (WHSR).



CEU wreath at the Bentall memorial

For information about your OHS committee, contact your local rep or the CEU OH&S Co-Chair at OHS@ceu.bc.ca.

REFUSE UNSAFE WORK: If you believe that performing a job or task puts you or someone else at excessive or unwarranted risk, you must refuse. Immediately notify your supervisor or employer, who will then take the appropriate steps to determine if the work is unsafe, and remedy the situation. You have the responsibility to continue to refuse until the hazard has been controlled.



THE WORLD AROUND US

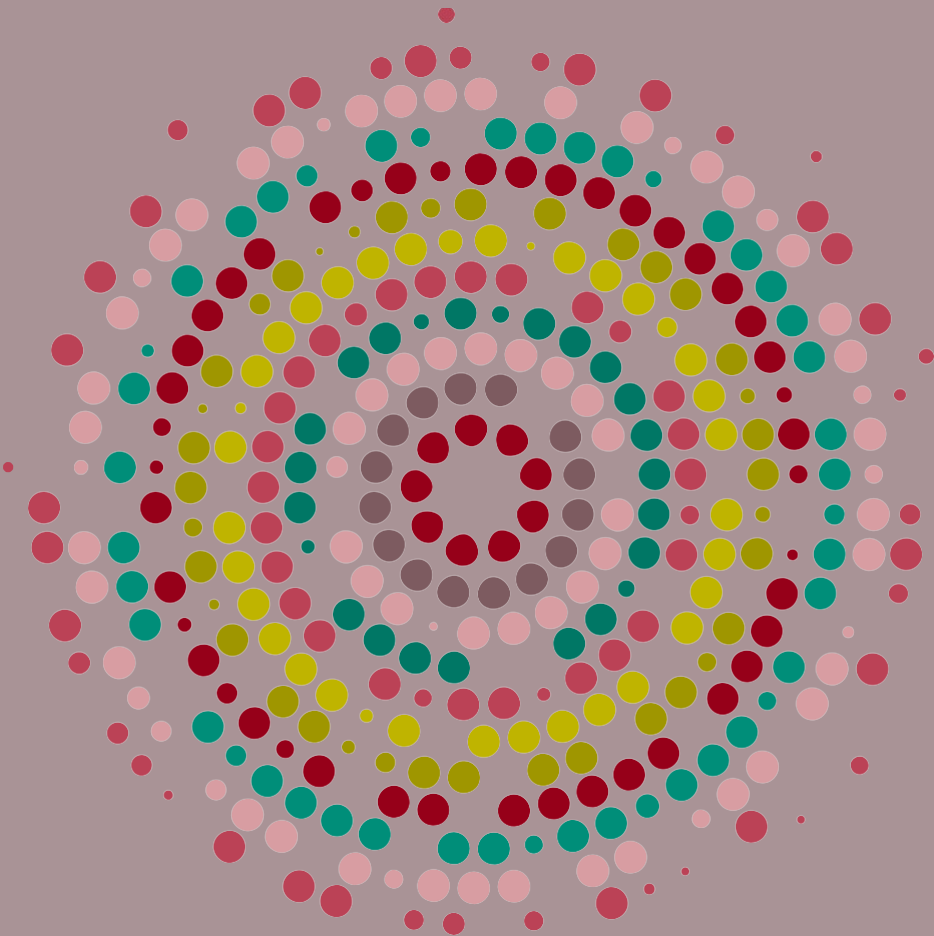
CEU is working to make life better for all working people, in communities across B.C. and around the world.

Through the unions strategic partnerships, members build alliances with other organizations to advance our rights and realize the shared goals of working people. We work in coalitions to promote environmental justice, fight climate change, and advocate for good, family supporting jobs in all sectors.

We also work with other unions and human rights organizations around the world. How workers are treated in one part of the world has an impact on workers everywhere.

As a union, we understand that advancing the rights of all people is essential to our collective progress. And we are deeply committed to our part in advancing the rights of Indigenous peoples and participating in reconciliation.





EQUITY, RESPECT, COMPASSION, AND INTEGRITY



www.ceu.ca