

A Survival Manual for Workers on Strike or Locked Out

This manual contains information about various community and social services in Vancouver, and the surrounding municipalities within our District, that can assist union members and their families who are on strike or locked out.

-2019-

For more information, please contact:

Vancouver and District Labour Council
170-111 Victoria Dr.
Vancouver, BC
V5L 4C4

Phone: 604-254-0703

E-Mail: office@vdlc.ca

Website: www.vdlc.ca

The Vancouver and District Labour Council acknowledges that its offices and district are on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish People.

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Assaulted Women

Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW)

2405 Pine Street

P.O. Box 46851

Vancouver, BC

V6J 5M4

PHONE: 604-255-6344 / 1-877-392-7583

E-MAIL: admin@wavaw.ca

WEBSITE: www.wavaw.ca

- 24-hour crisis and info line
- Hospital accompaniment
- Justice assistance
- Counselling
- Indigenous counselling
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women family counselling

Budgeting

Before being on strike, you may have needed to prepare formal budgets for your household spending. However, now you will probably need to control where every penny is being spent.

Start by listing all your monthly financial commitments. Put down your monthly income and divide it up according to your commitments.

If you do not have enough money to make ends meet, you may have to start cutting expenses. If you still cannot make ends meet, it's time to ask if you can make special financial arrangements in the following areas – utilities, telephone, taxes, car loans, credit cards, and any other monthly bills you might have.

The key is to talk to your creditors. The worst thing you can do is to hide, to miss payments, not to answer the phone and make promises you cannot keep.

Here are some suggestions for specific items:

Auto and Home Insurance – contact the insurance agents and discuss ways to spread out the premiums.

Car Loans – try to defer your loan payment or discuss with the loans officer the possibility of re-financing to reduce the size of payment.

Credit Cards – find out what the minimum payments are to keep your account current. Avoid using your credit cards. You may owe money already and it would worsen the situation if you increase your debt load at this time.

Department Store Accounts – contact the businesses involved and discuss your situation.

Home Mortgages – contact your lender and try to work out a new payment plan, before payment is due. Credit unions sometimes offer payment deferral in these instances.

Renters – contact your landlord before rent is due. Try to reduce or defer payment temporarily until you are back at work.

Property Taxes – call the taxation office in your municipality to find out if payment can be delayed and how much the penalties will be.

Utilities – contact the utility company (BC Hydro, Fortis, etc.). You may be able to pay part of the bill and spread payments out.

If you are having trouble meeting your financial commitments, seek debt counseling. You do not want to destroy your credit for the future.

It may be helpful to enlist the assistance of the following agencies:

Credit Canada

Vancouver (Call Centre Only)

Phone: 1-800-267-2272

www.creditcanada.com

Industry Canada. Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy

Phone: 1-877-376-9902

<http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/bsf-osb.nsf/eng/home>

SAMPLE LETTER TO A CREDITOR

Dear (Name of Creditor):

Due to (explain reason) I am experiencing financial difficulty and am asking you to accept a reduced payment for (give period of time). At that time, I hope to (have my other bills paid – be back at work – have found a part time job).

I would appreciate your consideration in this matter, as I am not able to meet the regular payments of _____. I request that you accept _____ per month during this emergency.

Please do not place my account in the hands of a collection agency. I wish to deal with you directly. Would you consider withholding interest on my account? I do not wish to go further in debt. I have been a customer of your organization for ___ years and have always paid my bills on time.

I will resume regular payments as soon as possible and will notify you immediately when I find out when this will be.

Sincerely,

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Credit Account Number:

SAMPLE LETTER TO A CREDITOR

TO: All Creditors

From: UNION _____ LOCAL # _____

Union/Local _____ members, who are workers employed by _____ are currently on strike/lockout. As you can imagine, the strike/lockout is causing financial hardship to all of our members.

At present, our members are making every effort to contact creditors to renegotiate monthly mortgage/rent and bill payments until the strike/lockout is settled. Once a settlement is reached and our members are back to work, they will make every effort to pay any overdue payments they might have incurred.

It is the Union's hope that, as the creditor of one of our members, you will understand the current difficult situation and allow them to negotiate a payment scheduled which is within their means and mutually acceptable.

We appreciate your assistance to our members at this time.

Yours sincerely,

Suggested signature:

President of Local
or Staff Representative

bc211

bc211 is a one-stop resource for community, social or government services.

Simply dial 2-1-1 to find out about programs, services and resources in your area. It's free, confidential, multilingual and answered by professional staff 24/7.

bc211 provides information about:

- Counselling
- Employment assistance
- Language classes
- Housing
- Legal help
- Recreation
- Home support
- Homeless shelters
- Youth services
- Resources for parents
- Support groups
- ... and much more!

You can also access bc211 in the following ways:

Website: www.bc211.ca

E-Mail: help@bc211.ca

TTY: 604-875-0885

Text: 604-836-6381

bc211 is provided in partnership with United Way.

Crisis Centre

The Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC provides hotlines for persons in need of immediate emotional support, crisis intervention or suicide prevention. These services are available 24/7, in over 140 languages using a language service.

PHONE: 604-872-3311

TOLL FREE: 1-866-661-3311

TTY: 1-866-872-0113

SENIORS DISTRESS: 604-872-1234

1-800-SUICIDE: 1-800-784-2433

Emergency Material Aid

Greater Vancouver Food Bank

Head Office
1150 Raymur Avenue
Vancouver, BC
V6A 3T2

PHONE: 604.876.3601

WEBSITE: www.foodbank.bc.ca

Richmond Food Bank

5800 Cedarbridge Way
Richmond, BC
V6X 2A7

PHONE: 604.271.5609

WEBSITE: www.richmondfoodbank.org

Quest Food Exchange

2020 Dundas Street
Vancouver, BC
V5L 1J4

PHONE: 604.602.0186

WEBSITE: www.questoutreach.org

Government Financial Assistance

In some circumstances, you may be eligible for “Hardship Assistance” through the government of British Columbia.

Hardship Assistance is described as follows:

Hardship assistance is intended to meet the essential needs of persons or families who are not eligible for income assistance under the Employment and Assistance Act or disability assistance under the Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act, for a number of reasons specified by regulation.

Hardship assistance is not an entitlement, but may be provided at the discretion of the Minister according to legislative and regulatory criteria. It is provided on a temporary basis, for only one month at a time. Eligibility for hardship assistance must be re-established each month.

Clients are responsible for meeting the conditions under which hardship assistance is provided, including signing and complying with an Employment Plan, and agreeing to repay hardship assistance, when required.

For more information, visit www2.gov.bc.ca, or call 604 660-2421 Monday through Friday, 7:30am to 5pm Pacific Time.

For information regarding federal government programs and services:

Service Canada

PHONE: 1-800-622-6232

TTY: 1-800-465-7735

Health Care

Finding a physician in British Columbia:

College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia

300–669 Howe Street

Vancouver, BC

V6C 0B4

PHONE: 604-733-7758

TOLL FREE: 1-800-461-3008

WEBSITE: www.cpsbc.ca/

Community Health Centres:

Community Health Centres provide a variety of health-related services, including medical services, counselling, nutrition and family planning.

REACH Community Health Centre

1145 Commercial Drive

Vancouver, BC

V5L 3X3

PHONE: 604-251-3000

WEBSITE: <http://www.reachcentre.bc.ca/>

Human Rights

BC Human Rights Tribunal

(604) 775-2000 / 604 775-2021

Administers the Human Rights Code of British Columbia, which provides everyone with certain rights and freedoms from discrimination on particular grounds.

Canadian Human Rights Commission

1-888-214-1151 / TTY: 1-888-643-3304

Administers and enforces the Canadian Human Rights Act relating to federally regulated areas.

BC Civil Liberties Association

604.630.9754

Deals with such matters as the relationship of the individual to the state, and civil rights of accused persons.

Legal Assistance

Never ignore an official-looking paper – seek advice from a community legal clinic or a lawyer, so that you can take the right measures.

Legal Referral Service: **604.687.3221 / 1.800.663.1919**

If you need a lawyer for specific advice, the following service will provide you with the name of a lawyer who will give you one half-hour of legal advice for a fee of \$25 plus taxes.

Free Legal Answers **www.legalline.ca**

Established in 1993, this online resource has over 1,000 topics in 65 languages with live help as well.

Community Legal Assistance Society **604.685.3425 / 1.888.685.6222**

“CLAS respects the dignity of all in our community and works towards positive social change by providing legal assistance and advancing the law to address the critical needs of those who are disadvantaged or face discrimination.”



Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Sgt. Dave Smith
Police/ Labour Communications for B.C.
105 – 14200 Green Timbers Way,
Surrey, BC
V3T 6P3

Date: 2016-01-20

Re: Passive Leafleting and Organizing

Hello,

Thank-you for your inquiry. I can clarify your concerns on how organized labour unions can best interact with police during complaints about passive leafleting and organizing campaigns.

When the police become aware of a labour dispute, they are an impartial party but not necessarily a neutral party. Police understand that the "Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms" underscores the right of individuals to peacefully express their opinions, views, and to speak out on the issues. Protesting by labour groups and trade unions has long been recognized as a protected form of expression. The police will uphold this right and acknowledge that the police have a duty and responsibility to protect the right of Canadians to voice their opinions on the issues. At the same time, police will ensure public peace and safety for all parties, and respect for the rights of private property owners.

The police will strive at all times to balance the need to maintain civil order and the democratic right to hold demonstrations. Police officers will assess each situation on its' individual merits. The police will take into consideration the circumstances as they exist and a reasonable assessment based on relevant case law. This includes the Supreme Court of Canada decision in UFCW Local 1518 v. Kmart Canada, (1992) 2 S.C.R. 1083 (passive leafleting) and section 66 of BC's Labour Relations Code.

I recommend that union organizers notify their local police force or this office before engaging in passive leafleting on or near private property. This will open the communication lines with the police. I can be reached at the below noted telephone number.

Respectfully
Sgt. Dave Smith, Sgt.
Royal Canadian Mounted Police
604 828-3573

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law: Guarantee the rights and freedoms.

Rights and freedoms in Canada

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

Fundamental Freedoms

Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:
(b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
(c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
(d) freedom of association.

Freedom of association

Freedom of association is guaranteed under section 2(d). This right provides individuals the right to establish, belong to and maintain to any sort of organization. Generally, this is used in the **labour** context where employees are given the right to associate with certain **unions** or other similar group to represent their interests in labour disputes or negotiations.

BC Labour Relations Code

66 No action or proceeding may be brought for
(a) petty trespass to land to which a member of the public ordinarily has access,
(b) interference with contractual relations, or
(c) interference with the trade, business or employment of another person resulting in a reduction in trade or business, impairment of business opportunity or other economic loss arising out of strikes, lockouts or picketing permitted under this Code or attempts to persuade employees to join a trade union made at or near but outside entrances and exits to an employer's workplace.

Canada Labour Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. L-2)

Unfair Practices

Marginal note: Employer interference in trade union

94 (1) No employer or person acting on behalf of an employer shall
(a) participate in or interfere with the formation or administration of a trade union or the representation of employees by a trade union; or

United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1518 (U.F.C.W.) v. KMart Canada Ltd.

[1999] 2 The Supreme Court of Canada's decision S.C.R. 1083 - Passive Leafletting [1999] S.C.J. No. 44 File No.: 26209.

The importance of work for individuals has been consistently recognized and stressed. A person's employment [page1085] is an essential component of his or her sense of identity, self-worth and emotional well-being. As well, the vulnerability of individual employees, particularly retail workers, and their inherent inequality in their relationship with management has been recognized. It follows that workers, particularly those who are vulnerable, must be able to speak freely on matters that relate to their working conditions. The fundamental freedom to speak about matters that relate to working conditions is explicitly recognized in s. 64 of the Labour Relations Code, which provides that a trade union and its members are free to communicate information to the public with regard to a labour dispute, except in a manner which may constitute picketing. The distribution and circulation of leaflets has for centuries been recognized as an effective and economical method of both providing information and assisting rational persuasion.

Renting

Rent is one of the largest single monthly payments you make. While on strike, landlords will usually not defer or reduce your rent.

If you cannot pay your rent, your landlord could:

- Sue you for back rent
- Give you notice to move
- Apply to the courts for an eviction

Explain your situation to your landlord *before* problems occur.

Residential Tenancy Branch

(604) 660-1020

Deals with landlord and tenant matters under the BC Tenancy Act, including protecting tenants from arbitrary evictions.

Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre

(604) 255-0546 / 1-800-665-1185

Promotes the legal protection of residential tenants by providing information, education, support and research on residential tenancy matters.

Substance Abuse

There are many treatment and detox centres, halfway houses and support groups offering assistance in this field. Find out what your union has available through programs such as employee and family assistance plans.

Call 2-1-1 for information on other services available near you.

There are also supervised consumption sites aimed at reducing harm associated with substance use, such as Insite and Powell Street Getaway. More information can be found on the Vancouver Coastal Health website at www.vch.ca

Workers Helping Workers

Workers need to stick together in these tough times. We share a common vision for a fair and equal society. Strike action is an example of how working people are prepared to fight for their rights and dignity.

The Vancouver and District Labour Council, and its Solidarity in Action Committee, are here to help.

We provide assistance during difficult negotiations, strikes, lockouts or poor treatment of both union and non-union workers. Support includes:

- Letters to employer encouraging fair treatment
- Letters to unions expressing solidarity
- Inviting unions to speak at VDLC meetings and request support
- Passing motions regarding the dispute, and educating others about the issues and how to offer support
- Getting the word out through email distribution and social media
- Providing multi-union picket line solidarity through out call-out system
- Speaking at rallies and events

Labour Councils are local organizations of the 2.5 million member Canadian Labour Congress.

The VDLC represents nearly 100 local unions in our District, and roughly 60,000 unionized workers. We bring workers together on issues of common cause and interest.

We invite you to get involved in the VDLC. Our meetings are held at 7:00PM on the third Tuesday of each month (except August) at the Maritime Labour Centre (1880 Triumph Street, Vancouver).

You can attend as an observer, or get appointed as a delegate by your affiliate union. We also welcome you to check out our committees, and participate in our education program.

For more information:

**Vancouver and District Labour Council
170-111 Victoria Dr.
Vancouver, BC
V5L 4C4**

WEBSITE: www.vdvc.ca

E-MAIL: office@vdvc.ca

The Vancouver and District Labour Council acknowledges and thanks Labour Community Services of Metropolitan Toronto, a partnership of Toronto and York Region Labour Council, and United Way, whose original document “A Survival Manual for Workers on Strike or Locked Out” this document is based upon, and borrowed from.