



D6 Education Course Descriptions

You and Your Union

The theme of this course is: "What You Should Know about Your Union". Members will have an opportunity to learn more about the Steelworkers. Regardless of whether you're new to the union or you're a long-time member, this course will help you find out what the union is all about. The course looks at the structure of the union, why we pay dues and what services the United Steelworkers provides. The participants will meet the people who work on their behalf. There will be discussion about the different union committees, and how to get involved.

The course provides a comfortable atmosphere so that each person can walk away with a better understanding of the union.

This is a one day course.

Stewards in Action I

This course is designed for new stewards. It will help participants better understand the role stewards play in not only grievance handling, but also in "building solidarity" in the unit, local and the community.

The course covers:

- Where steward fits in the union structure
- How to do effective grievance investigation and use the Fact sheet
- Different types of grievances and wording of grievances
- Getting to know the collective agreement
- Timelines for grievance handling
- Communicating in the union and with management
- Mobilizing in the workplace

This is a three day course.

Stewards in Action II

This newly revised course builds upon the key concepts of Stewards in Action I with an emphasis on engaging and mobilizing members. Participants will learn practical techniques to build a union presence in the workplace and to get things done inside the local union's structure and with management. They will also apply good communication, investigation, and judgment skills to complex grievance situations. Other activities will address the steward's role in dealing with harassment and in meeting the test of the duty of fair representation.

This is a three day course.



Stewards in Action III - Grievances at Final Step and Beyond

This course helps build skills in defining issues to research, in how to actually do research on line, and in how to find and read relevant arbitration decisions to apply their legal principles to a current grievance file. Participants need to be prepared to do a considerable amount of research on a laptop in order to complete the course.

The course provides a framework for making sound decisions about advancing a grievance to arbitration or for choosing another path. These skills and tools are certainly useful when the grievance procedure (pre-arbitration) is exhausted, at the point where the steward or grievance committee or Local Union needs to decide "to go or not to go". The skills can also be used earlier in the grievance procedure in order to weigh the merits of a case and, where possible, present stronger arguments to the employer in support of the union's position.

Participants should bring a laptop to class if at all possible.

This course is best suited to experienced stewards and grievance committee members.

PREREQUISITE: Participants must have completed Stewards in Action I & II

This is a five day course.

Bargaining To Win

This course will assist members who serve on Bargaining Committees to understand the collective bargaining process. This course will prepare participants to work as part of the negotiating team. Participants will be better prepared for events in getting both themselves and the membership "ready and engaged" in the bargaining process. It will ensure participants are aware of the challenges they will face both within and outside of the committee while carrying out their responsibilities. Communication with the membership will be a key part of this training.

Sessions will include:

- Determining issues
- Communicating with the membership
- Negotiating skills
- Contract language
- How to cost a package

This is a three or five-day course.

* Dates for this course must be pre-approved by the education coordinator.



The Public Retirement System

A one-day course offered by the USW research department, covering the first two tiers that comprise the public portion of Canada's Retirement System: the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security, the course will cover the importance of the public retirement system at securing adequate retirement income and reducing seniors' poverty rates. We will help the participant understand the CPP/OAS design, main features, and estimated wage replacement rates.

Subjects Covered:

- The Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement
- Replacement rates and how much to expect from the public pension system
- CPP expansion
- Role of labour in creating the public pension system

This is a one day course.

Understanding Pensions

This course covers the third tier of Canada's retirement system: workplace pension plans and private savings. Public pensions in Canada are designed to replace only 25% of worker's pre-retirement income—where does the rest have to come from to make sure we have enough to maintain a decent lifestyle in retirement? This course will help the participants understand the pension system and various types of plans, including defined benefit, defined contribution, target benefits plans, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of various private savings mechanisms, including RRSPs and TFSAs. With an aim of educating participants on the role of the union, the individual and policy in ensuring retirement security, this course covers the major legislation and the interplay of the various types of retirement vehicles in Canada.

Subjects Covered:

- Registered pension plans, workplace plans, personal savings
- Replacement rates and retirement planning
- Overview of the public pension system (CPP, OAS, GIS)
- Single and multi-employer defined benefit and defined contribution plans (SEPPs, EPPs, JSPPs, CAPs, Group RRSPs)
- Private savings: RRSPs, TFSAs; management fees
- Provincial pension legislation and the federal Income Tax Act
- Actuarial reports

This is a three day course



Health & Safety - Level I

This program intends to empower workers and their representatives with a general understanding of occupational health and safety including hazard awareness, principles for controlling exposure along with occupational health and safety law.

The Level I program consists of seven required modules each three hours in length. The core modules include:

- Staying Alive While Earning a Living
- The Body and the Workplace
- Cancer
- Toxic Substances
- Principles of Control
- Legislation (Ontario & Federal)
- The Myth of Worker Carelessness

This is a five day course.

Health & Safety - Level II: Committees (Ontario & Federal)

Participants explore and gain a better understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities as workers and joint committee members. Important to this discussion are the techniques and knowledge needed to perform workplace inspections along with incident and disease investigations. Essential research skills are also reviewed helping committee members to lead proactive initiatives aimed at eliminating or controlling worker exposure to toxins and other workplace hazards.

PREREQUISITE: Participants must have completed Health & Safety I.

NOTE: It would be beneficial for participants to have completed this course prior to taking Health & Safety - Level II: Law.

This is a five day course.



Health and Safety - Level II: Law (Ontario and Federal)

Building upon their existing base of legal knowledge, participants look closer at how occupational health and safety laws and regulations can be used to help safeguard worker health. Also important is a review of the inadequacies of the actual legislation and enforcement. Participants will formulate strategies to overcome these inadequacies and to lobby for legislative and other solutions.

PREREQUISITE: Participants must have completed Health & Safety Level I.

NOTE: It would be beneficial for participants to have completed Health & Safety - Level II: Committees prior to taking this course.

This is a five day course.

WSIB 1 & 2 – This is a five day course

WSIB - Level I: Rights and Obligations

This introductory course begins by exploring the history of the health & safety and compensation systems in Ontario and the development of legislation and the general principles of the system.

Participants learn:

- The basics of a disability prevention framework;
- How the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) determines whether an injury is compensable;
- About some workplace injuries and occupational illnesses; and
- Explore how to properly file a claim, including the applicable timelines.

Worker and employer obligations are covered as well as roles and responsibilities with respect to work reintegration. The WSIB work reintegration policies are discussed and the new direction that the Board is taking with respect to returning workers to their pre-injury job with the injury employer. Disability Prevention best practices and shared responsibilities are also discussed and ways in which unions should participate in work reintegration are explored. Leading research shows that a collaborative and cooperative approach to work reintegration following the hierarchy of jobs, beginning with a pre-injury job, leads to better outcomes for both workers and employers. Protections under other legislation are also discussed should a work reintegration plan not provide sufficient protection to a worker in a work reintegration plan.

Finally, participants discuss how to effectively implement the new skills that have been acquired through this course and what additional resources are available.



WSIB - Level II: Benefits and Services

This course explores the various benefits and services.

Participants learn:

- The significance of legislation (OHSA, WSIA), regulations and policy, including changes to the legislation and the effects these changes have had on benefits; and
- The benefits available under the WSIA, in the three different eras, including:
 - Temporary Partial (PT);
 - Temporary Total (TT) disability;
 - Future Economic Loss (FEL);
 - Non-economic Loss (NEL); and
 - Loss of Earnings (LOE) calculation, maximum and minimum levels and exclusion periods and offsets.

Participants also explore detailed examples of benefit calculations and parameters affecting the final numbers. The structure of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) and appeal system are described in relation to the New Service Delivery Module and the roles of each WSIB position. The adjudication process is described and participants follow the flow of a claim through the process. Problem resolution and the process for an appeal are presented.

Participants further learn about funding, including:

- which employers are covered;
- optional insurance;
- how the system is funded;
- how incentive programs; and
- experience rating work and when claim costs can be transferred.

Participants also learn how to make a case plan for a successful outcome and different types of evidence to use. Communicating effectively, both verbally and in writing with the many professionals involved and workers and witnesses are discussed. The organization of a Board file is presented and participants explore how to effectively review a file, make a case plan to proceed to move a claim forward and use this knowledge to review a case file.

PREREQUISITE: Participants must have completed WSIB - Level I.



WSIB - Level III: Appeals and Dispute Resolution

This level is designed to build on the knowledge of the previous two levels and provide the necessary skills necessary to enable you to represent workers in various dispute resolution schemes.

Participants will be provided with an in-depth analysis of different dispute resolution strategies including Mediation, the Appeals Resolution model and at the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal (WSIAT) level.

PREREQUISITE: Participants must have completed WSIB - Level I and WSIB - Level II.

This is a five day course.

Leadership for Action

Effective leadership in our locals/units is essential for our union to continue to achieve our goals. Today's union leader must be able to inform and involve our members and our communities. They must be able to give our members a sense of their own power by building resistance.

This course will:

- Help participants develop personal leadership skills
- Help participants assess personal strengths and challenges as leaders
- Improve communications with our membership
- Build leadership and activism inside and outside of the workplace
- Help participants understand how campaigns build involvement
- Apply strategic planning and problem solving to our locals/units
- Develop ways to support and sustain leadership in the locals/units

This is a five day course.

Financial Officers

This is a workshop for local financial officers, trustees and other members interested in the financial operations of the union. Participants will practise the skills they need as a financial officer. This includes keeping a monthly ledger, allocating funds, cheque-writing and the proper notations on the cheque stub, per capita tax reporting, and the actual auditing of the books.

Trustees will gain an understanding of what a complete set of books should look like by actually doing the books themselves. They'll look at how to budget in a way that helps their local achieve its objectives to serve the needs of the membership.



Session will include:

- Duties of the financial officers
- Financial officers guidance information
- Completing expense vouchers
- Financial secretaries cash book
- Calculate income tax, CPP/QPP and EI
- How financial officers work with Executive Members and others to build the Local Union

This is a five day course.

Confidence with Conflict - Dealing With Workplace and Union Disputes

Confidence with Conflict focuses on building strategies and skills useful for creating positive outcomes in the workplace and in the union. This course deals with most conflict as normal, natural and sometimes even necessary for growth and development for individuals and the union. Conflicts left unresolved can lead to not only personal difficulties but also difficulties for the union when trying to build support for a workplace or community campaign. Conflict can divide a workplace. However, conflict can also unite a workplace.

Through this course, participants should be able to:

- Identify sources of conflict
- Identify and understand union policies in dealing with conflict
- Understand conflict management methods
- Improve their own communication skills
- Map out and implement an action plan for your local
- Understand and deal with harassment and discrimination

This is a three day course.

Human Rights Are Workers' Rights

All union activists by definition are human rights activists. When we combat racism or sexism, accommodate an injured worker or speak out against homophobia, we are helping to build understanding and respect in the union. We are helping to build the solidarity we need to take on the struggles in the workplace, at the bargaining table and in our legislatures.



Through this course, activists should be able to engage in the following areas:

- Action plan: map out and implement a human rights action plan for your local
- Collective bargaining: write human rights proposals, develop a human rights checklist and strategies for collective action
- Committees: apply specific leadership skills to create, maintain and participate in their local human rights committee
- Law and policies: use human rights law and union policies to prevent and deal with harassment and discrimination in their workplace and their local
- Global solidarity: understand the implications of globalization and respond to it by connecting their local to social and political alliances with local and global partners

This is a five day course.

Building Respectful Workplaces - Joint Workplace Committees

This course is designed to give joint workplace committees the skills to informally and effectively deal with complaints and conflicts, particularly those of harassment and discrimination. Through this course, participants should be able to effectively intervene in complaints and conflicts in the workplace.

Materials will cover:

- A survey of conflict and its sources, particularly discrimination and harassment issues for joint committees
- The role of joint committees in a unionized workplace
- Identification and development of interview skills, protocols and guidelines
- Simple and effective assessment and resolution tools
- Relevant legislation and policies dealing specifically with discrimination and harassment

NOTE: This joint course is negotiated with employers. For more information, please contact your Staff Representative or your District Education Coordinator.

Duty to Accommodate

This is an essential course in applying human rights to support individual members and build solidarity in the union.

A key feature for participants is the creation of an action plan for their individual workplaces by the end of the course. In addition, participants will learn the most important aspects of accommodation.



Topics include:

- Understanding equality and diversity
- Implications of specific human rights legislation
- The duty of the employer to accommodate, and the rights of an individual and union to request accommodation
- Disability rights and other common areas of accommodation
- Role of the Human Rights Committee in assisting the individual and the local executive/membership
- Barrier Reviews
- Collective agreement language on accommodation

This is a five day course.

Preventing and Dealing with Harassment in the Workplace (Atlantic Provinces)

Over 50,000 workers and front-line managers have participated in the USW workplace training sessions.

This session will help participants:

- Define harassment;
- Understand the effects of harassment on the company and the union;
- Understand union and company policies;
- Understand relevant laws, particularly the prohibited grounds of discrimination and harassment.

NOTE: This course is negotiated with employers. For more information, please contact your Staff Representative or your District Education Coordinator.

This is a two-hour course.

Preventing and Dealing with Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Violence in the Workplace: Bill 132

Preventing and Dealing with Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Violence in the Workplace is a three-hour workshop that delivers training to eliminate the effects of harassment, sexual harassment and violence between individuals at work.

The three-hour workshop is highly interactive, combining an overview of Bill 132 and the prohibited grounds of harassment and discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code



(OHRC), specific union policy, and specific company policies and procedures. There will be facilitated group discussions on harassment, sexual harassment and violence, and group work on scenarios to integrate knowledge of the law, policies and procedures.

NOTE: This course is negotiated with employers in Ontario. For more information, please contact your Staff Representative or your District Education Coordinator.

This is a three hour course.

Women of Steel: Developing Leadership

This course is for women interested in getting more active in the union. Sessions will include:

- Communication skills
- Assertiveness and confidence-building techniques
- Understanding how the union works
- Leadership and public speaking skills

- Strategic planning

This is a five day course.

USW Women's Committees: Leading Together

This course is designed to prepare women to start or strengthen local and regional women's committees. The course includes:

- Defining the role and mandate of women's committees
- How to involve women and build solidarity in the workplace
- Discussion of challenges facing women inside and outside of the workplace
- Action planning

This is a three day course.

Unionism on Turtle Island

Unionism on Turtle Island is a five-day course aimed at non-Indigenous Steelworkers (but open to all members) where you will:

- Learn more about our shared history as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians
- See how union struggles and Indigenous struggles connect



- Discuss how individual members, locals, and our union as a whole can practise reconciliation
- Learn from a local elder and ask any questions you might have about Indigenous cultures
- Help make your local more effective in bargaining for and representing Indigenous members

Promoting Mental Health in the Workplace and in the Union

This course examines mental health as a crucial issue both in our workplaces and in our roles as members and activists in the union. At the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Identify negative attitudes towards mental health and the implications of stigma, both in the workplace and in the union
- Learn, understand and apply a legal framework related to mental disability
- Learn about the employer's duty to accommodate and how to create an accommodation plan for mental disability
- Assess risk factors in the workplace using an adaptation of the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace
- Determine the difference between mental health and mental illness
- Assess your own level of mental health and make a personal plan to maintain and improve mental health
- Consider the balance between mental health and union activism
- Draft a model Letter of Agreement related to mental health in the workplace

This workshop is important to all members concerned about mental health, and particularly activists who serve on joint health and safety committees and human rights committees.

Co-investigations: Principles and Application for Joint Investigations

This course is ideal for union members who sit on joint committees related to human rights and workplace harassment, sexual harassment and violence. Joint committees are sometimes asked to co-investigate complaints. The course covers key topics such as effective collaboration with a co-investigator, ensuring neutrality in an investigation, understanding the co-investigation process, effective methods of interviewing parties to the complaint, collecting and analyzing evidence, writing investigation reports, and ensuring the legitimacy of findings.