

The Certification Process

Step One: Call Union Office (COPE 378 is at (604) 299-0378)

Contact a Union and get an organizer to work with you.

Step Two: Make an employee list

Put together an employee list so that all employees at the company can be contacted.

Step Three: Form an organizing committee

Work with coworkers who will keep the process confidential.

Step Four: Sign Union Cards

Sign up enough employees with Union Membership Application cards and a vote will be held. It's confidential who signed and who didn't - the employer will not get that information.

Step Five: Get as many coworkers as possible to sign cards

If you get 45% of the employees there will be a vote - but much more than 50% helps you win the vote.

Step Six: The Union applies for certification

The Union makes a legal application to the Labour Relations Board for certification. The Labour Relations Board posts a notice of the application at the place of business for all employees to see and a decision is made on whether it is an appropriate bargaining unit to be unionized.

Step Seven: The employees decide by secret ballot

A certification vote (by secret ballot) is usually held within 10 days and requires a strong group to stand together to win.



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What to expect during this process:

Occasionally employers overreact and try to find out who started the organizing drive or scare people. This is why employees and the Union keep things confidential.

In BC, employers know that you have a legal right to Unionize and it is the employees' choice to decide by secret ballot.

The Union will file Unfair Labour Practices charges at the Labour Relations Board if there are any violations of your rights by your employer.

Who bargains the contract?

Your coworkers work with a Union Representative to negotiate a contract with the employer. When the Union wins such a vote, employees elect a Bargaining Committee of coworkers and bargaining with the employer begins.

The employer cannot change any of the terms and conditions of employment for 60 days without your Union Bargaining Committee's approval.

Bargaining starts at that base line (your current terms of employment) and employees will usually only accept improvements from there.

Your Union Bargaining Committee gets proposals from the employees and meets with them periodically throughout the process for their input.

No settlement is finalized without an employee ratification vote to approve the contract.



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