

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SHOP STEWARD**

The Shop Steward has a very important job within the Local Union Structure – to help strengthen the Union by providing leadership at the worksite. This involves 6 key functions:

- 1. Sign-up non-members at your worksite.** The Local office will provide you with a list of non-members at your worksite. This may include new workers or people who have been around for a while and have not joined the Union. Your job as the Steward is to introduce new members to the Union by making sure they receive a copy of the contract, provide information about the Local Union's practices and benefits, and answer any questions they may have. For other non-members, you should determine why they have not joined and attempt to address their concerns.
- 2. Act as an information source for Members at the worksite.** The Steward relays information from and about the Local to the membership by regularly attending Union meetings, distributing leaflets/information, updating the Union bulletin board, and regularly talking to members about Union issues. The Steward may also hold worksite meetings to discuss important issues.
- 3. Act as an information source for Local officers.** The Steward relays information from and about the membership to the Union by bringing member issues to the attention of the Officers, Branch President, Committee members, or staff representative. As the representative for your worksite, you are the members' voice within the Union's leadership structure – your active participation allows the members' voice to be heard.
- 4. Represent members.** You should be prepared to advise members about their rights when they face discipline or the threat of disciplinary action at the worksite. This advice can either be informal or as the employee's representative in an investigatory or disciplinary conference with the supervisor.
- 5. Act as the contract watchdog.** If a member comes to you with a problem, or if you observe management violating the contract, you are responsible for initially investigating the issue. You should be ready to discuss the issue with those affected to determine what the Union can do to address the problem. Once you have assessed the situation, you can provide advice as to the best problem-solving channel – a discussion with the supervisor, an appeal, or a grievance. At any point, you should feel free to contact your Local staff representative who will help you with the next steps.
- 6. Participate in mobilization activities.** If the Union is planning a mobilization activity, or calls for the members to take action, you will receive information from the Local office to distribute at the worksite and will help get the members involved.

**If you are interested in being a Shop Steward for your worksite, or would like additional information, see your Staff Representative or contact the Local office at 1-800-882-1032.**