**STRIKE VOTE FAQ’S**

**Why are we considering going on strike?**

We do not want to have to withdraw services and to disrupt lives and businesses in our community. Job action is our last resort. We have tried every other way to make the Employer understand what is needed for us to improve our working conditions. While we have made progress at the bargaining table, the employer has been unwilling to address some of our key issues, which is to jointly share in the cost savings that the MSP premium reductions have created. We see these reductions as a no-cost way to improve and enhance our benefit plans - this was a priority issue for bargaining.

**How do we get a strong strike mandate?**

The best and surest way to get a strong strike mandate is:

* to involve the largest number of members as possible,
* to make sure everyone has access to the same information, and
* to ensure all participate in the same discussion and debates.

This way we can all be confident about why we need a strike mandate vote and how it will help the bargaining process.

If you haven’t shared your personal email and cell phone number with CUPE 358, please make sure to do that, so we can keep you informed on bargaining and any potential strike action.

Importantly, a strike averting plan is in the works, and more information will be shared once it is available.

**Strike Vote**

A strike vote must be held before a strike is legal. The vote is done by secret ballot and all employees in the bargaining unit can participate in the vote. A successful strike vote authorizes the union’s bargaining committee to call a strike if no agreement is reached.

**Does a ‘yes’ vote mean that we’re going on strike?**

A strong strike mandate vote does not necessarily mean we will strike, but it does indicate to the Employer that we are ready to do so if necessary. A strike vote authorizes the bargaining committee to call for strike action which can include things like an overtime ban, rotating strikes or a full out strike.

**What happens after a successful strike mandate vote?**

If we achieve a successful strike vote it will send a strong message to the employer that all employees are not satisfied with how contract negotiations are going and that they should reconsider their bargaining position. We will take this strong mandate to the mediation dates we have set and we hope that will encourage them to revise their last offer and come back to the bargaining table with an offer that reflects our membership’s wishes, so we can finish negotiations.

If the employer still doesn’t change their bargaining position, then the bargaining committee and CUPE 358’s leadership will consider what the next type of action to take.

**How much is the strike pay?**

In total you will receive $175.00 per day (to a maximum of 5 days per week) when you fulfill the requirements of strike duty.

In accordance with Employment Standards, our employer must pay employees their earnings up to the date the strike commences, on their next normal pay day.

There are three sources of strike pay. CUPE National, CUPE BC, and Cupe Local 358 - and they start at different times.

A member who is entitled to strike benefits shall receive the following strike pay:

1. CUPE National strike pay begins on Day One of the strike. It is $60.00 per day, to a maximum of 5 days, for at least 20 hours (4 hours per day) of picketing, or other assigned duties per calendar week.
2. Cupe Local 358 strike pay begins on Day One of the strike. It is $115.00 per day for the first 2 days of the strike and $100.00 per day starting on Day 3.
3. CUPE BC strike pay begins on the 3rd calendar day of the strike. It is $15 per day up to a maximum of $75.00 per week.

All members, whether full-time or part-time, temporary, casual or the Bargaining Committee, receive the same rate of strike pay.

**What am I supposed to do during a strike?**

During a strike you would normally be expected to stop all work duties and participate instead in the strike. Participating in job action includes being on a picket line, helping at the strike headquarters, or other things that have been discussed and agreed to with the Strike Committee. If you are unable to participate, it is important to discuss your situation with the Strike Committee.

**Will I receive strike pay?**

Members in good standing who are on the active payroll of the Cowichan Valley Regional District and who hold a position within the bargaining unit when job action begins, are eligible for strike pay from the union.

Once a strike starts members will need to complete the ‘Strike Pay Application’ form and will participate in assigned picket or alternate duties.

**What happens to my benefits?**

The CUPE National Strike Fund pays for group life and group extended health premiums for the members entitled to strike pay for the whole period of the strike so those benefits will continue.

**What if I am on Maternity Leave?**

You will continue to receive your benefits from EI. If you prefer, you may cancel your EI benefits, sign up for picket duty and collect strike pay. You cannot collect both EI and strike pay.

**What if I am on another kind of leave (WCB, EI, sick leave, vacation?)**

If a member is on a leave when the strike commences (e.g. sick leave, vacation leave, WorkSafe, or other approved leave), the leave continues for its duration.

