

**MEMBERSHIP**

**GUIDE**

**IBEW LOCAL 37**



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
Fraternité internationale des ouvriers en électricité



## OUR MISSION

To work as a team to improve the lives of our members and their families.

## OUR VISION

We shall be at the leading edge of the labour movement, serving our members with energy, enthusiasm and innovation.

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### **We are first and foremost representatives of our members:**

We are committed to representing our members and positively impacting the quality of their lives.

### **We are guided by the history and traditions of the IBEW, its constitution, and the Code of Excellence:**

We will honour and respect the principles of the IBEW and our actions will be guided by the terms under which we are a local of the IBEW.

### **We balance individual needs with the collective interests of our members:**

We will earn the respect of our members by working for the collective good of all members.

### **We are professional and proactive in our deeds and actions:**

We will demonstrate our respect for members and provide leadership by our professional, proactive approach to issues and interactions.

### **We are financially responsible and accountable to our members:**

We will be open and transparent with respect to our goals and activities, and will be accountable to our members for how we conduct our business.



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# THIS IS YOUR UNION

It's my great pleasure to introduce you to Local 37's Membership Guide. Whether you're new to the IBEW, new to unions, or a long-time member, I'm sure you'll find it really helpful. This guide includes lots of good information about your union, its structure, history, and the many benefits of membership. Of course, if we've missed something, or you still have questions, just tell us. We'll get you what you need.

As part of the IBEW Local 37 family, you join more than 2500 members proudly working throughout New Brunswick in many different sectors and professions including utility, construction, maintenance, television, communications, engineering, administration, IT, among others.

Your union is here for you with the support, resources and expertise needed to protect your rights and help make your life better - the IBEW is always a powerful advocate to have on your side. We have a team of professionals dedicated to representing members just like you with workplace issues, developing and delivering programs to enrich your union experience, and helping make sure you get the most out of your membership.

I'm sure you've heard the phrase "strength in numbers". Well, that speaks directly to the value of a union in today's workplace. It's this strength that enables us to protect, enhance, and enjoy the many rights and privileges that have been successfully negotiated over the years (e.g., vacation, sick leave, benefits, top wage pack-

ages, etc.). By working and standing together, we can accomplish much more for each other, our families, and our communities than we ever could on our own.

Like any union though, we're only as strong as our members. So I invite you to get involved by learning as much as you can about Local 37. Read this guide, talk to fellow members, and attend union meetings and events in your area. And we're always looking for members to serve on committees, participate in union events, and take on leadership roles. I can guarantee that in addition to working with some fantastic people, you'll find it brings a lot of satisfaction. If you're interested, just let us know!

Remember, this is your union. Help keep it strong by sharing your voice, getting involved and staying informed!

Stay safe,



David Brown  
Business Manager



## TO ALL NEW MEMBERS OF THE IBEW

Greetings:

Welcome to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), the world's largest electrical union. The IBEW celebrates over 125 years of organizing and representing workers such as yourself in all branches of the electrical industry. You now belong to a proud labour organization with over 750,000 members.

In addition to the Local Union Officers who stand prepared to represent you, the International Union has a highly trained professional staff of International Representatives who assist the Local Union in organizing, education, research, negotiation, and other matters relative to labour relations in your branch of the industry.

Thank you for becoming a member. I, along with all of the officers and IBEW staff, wish you the very best of success and an enjoyable career as a member of the IBEW.

In solidarity,



Russ Shewchuk  
International Vice President





## **YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS? WE'VE GOT ANSWERS!**

Whether you're new to Local 37 or not, the last thing you need is a bunch of unanswered questions. So we're going to start out by answering the ones we get asked most often, but if we've missed any, just tell us. We'll get you the answer.

### **WHAT IS A UNION ANYWAY?**

If you've never been a part of a union, you may not know what one is, or how one works. Basically a union is an organized group of workers who come together to pool their resources (time, money, brain power, experience, creativity, etc.) to help themselves and their colleagues win things like respect on the job, better wages, enviable benefits, and the best working conditions possible.

## WHY DO I NEED A UNION?

A union helps level the playing field between you and your employer and, at the same time, gives you a voice in your workplace. With a union on your side, you'll never be alone. Suppose, for example, you have a specific problem with management. Would you rather deal with it alone, as you'd have to in a non-union workplace, or with the support of all of your fellow union members?

Sure, one person can be strong, but imagine the strength of all your supportive colleagues behind you.

You need a union because without one, there's risk that you'll be treated unfairly, without respect, be paid less than a decent wage, and be without benefits for you and your family. You could be disciplined or fired unjustly, denied promotions unfairly, harassed by bosses and coworkers, or be forced to work overtime without proper compensation. Those are some pretty sound reasons as to why it's good to have a union on your side.







## HOW DID I BECOME A MEMBER OF THE IBEW?

When you started working at your current job, you began a relationship with the IBEW. Provincial labour laws recognize IBEW Local 37 as the exclusive **bargaining agent**\* for all non-management employees within your company. So, as an employee within one of our **bargaining units**, you're now a union member, an important part of the IBEW family.

## ISN'T IT UNPROFESSIONAL TO JOIN A UNION?

Academy Award winners Tom Hanks, Susan Sarandon and Matt Damon don't think so. Neither did world-renowned physicist

*\* Words in bold font are defined in the glossary (page 45)*

Albert Einstein. These are just a handful of the artists, scientists, journalists, educators, and others who have been at the top of their professions and have strongly supported their unions. Union member professionals also include teachers, doctors, lawyers, college professors, nurses, TV broadcasters, and librarians.

## **I HAVEN'T SIGNED A UNION CARD. SHOULD I?**

YES. And here's why.

If you haven't signed a card, you're not yet a full member of the union. Instead, you're known as a "Fee Payer". Although Fee Payers are automatically covered by the IBEW **collective agreement** for their particular group, they do not get to enjoy the privileges of a full membership. By signing a union card you're eligible to:

- Vote on contracts and other matters
- Vote for leaders
- Run for elected positions
- Serve in leadership positions
- Sit on committees and negotiating teams
- Address the Executive Board
- Make motions and vote at union meetings
- Attend union sponsored training
- Apply for union scholarships & bursaries
- Receive benevolent support
- Receive special union communications
- Attend IBEW conferences

## **WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN "A" MEMBER AND A "BA" MEMBER?**

In the IBEW, there are two types of membership – "A" and "BA", and Local 37 represents both.

"BA" members usually work for a single employer and have pensions and benefits negotiated as part of an IBEW collective agreement with the employer.

"A" membership is open to everyone, but it's typically maintained by members who work for contractors in the construction and/or maintenance side of the industry, as well as all IBEW international officers and representatives. They pay for, and participate in, the IBEW pension and death benefit funds.

All "BA" members are encouraged to switch to an "A" membership and take advantage of the additional pension and death benefits. And switching is easy – just contact the Local 37 office to find out how!

## **WHO REALLY RUNS THE UNION?**

Your union is a democratic organization run by members like you. Members elect other members to lead Local 37; vote on contracts, bylaws, and other important matters; and elect delegates to international conventions, who in turn elect international officers and vote on major issues affecting the union such as constitutional amendments. By working together, we can make the changes members want, share experiences and expertise, and deliver results that matter at work, home, and in our communities.

## **DOES JOINING A UNION MEAN I'LL GO ON STRIKE?**

We certainly hope not. The main goal of having a union in the workplace is to negotiate fair working conditions and rules for everyone. Neither management, nor the union want to get in a fight. And it's worth noting that over 98% of collective agreements in Canada are negotiated without a work stoppage.

The decision to go on **strike** is a very serious one and occurs only when workers feel they must take dramatic action to protect their rights, wages, and benefits. IBEW Local 37 has gone over 35 years without a strike. We attribute this to the healthy relationship and mutual respect we share with our employers. Members only go on strike if they vote overwhelmingly to do so. The decision about what to fight for, and how hard to fight, is always up to the union members.

## **DO UNIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHEN IT COMES TO JOB SECURITY?**

Unions protect workers from arbitrary employer actions relating to discipline and dismissals. For example, with a union you don't have to fear retaliation when you speak out about problems on the job. And through your collective agreement you can cut out favouritism, challenge unfair discipline, and make sure a fair approach is taken in the event of layoffs, promotions, transfers, and other decisions.

## WHAT MAKES ME DIFFERENT FROM NON-UNION EMPLOYEES?

The biggest difference that separates unionized employees from non-union employees is having a **collective agreement**. Unions negotiate meaningful contracts that give unionized workers legally binding guarantees covering wages, benefits, rights and protections that aren't available to other workers.

## HOW ARE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS NEGOTIATED?

Your collective agreement has a specified duration and must be renegotiated each time it expires. The negotiation process is called **collective bargaining**. *(continued on next page)*

A close-up, high-angle photograph of a wooden gavel resting on a document. The document is white with the words "UNION CONTRACT" printed in large, bold, black capital letters. The gavel is made of dark wood and is positioned diagonally across the bottom right of the frame. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

But before negotiations even start, all members of the bargaining unit are invited to send in suggestions (proposals) for improvements to the terms and conditions of the collective agreement. The team, led by a full time union staff member and assisted by appointed representatives from the bargaining unit, meets with the employer's negotiating team to exchange proposals and work to reach a **tentative agreement**. This process involves a series of meetings and can be very quick or take years. During negotiations, all of the terms and conditions of an expired collective agreement remain in effect until a new agreement is reached.

If negotiations reach an impasse, either team can request the assistance of an **mediator** from the labour board. The mediator's role is to promote objectivity and compromise, and can only make suggestions on how to make a settlement. If **mediation** doesn't work, both teams will consider other options.

Eventually a tentative agreement will be reached and the members of the bargaining unit will participate in a **ratification vote**. If the majority votes to accept the agreement, it becomes the new collective agreement.

## WHAT DOES MY COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT COVER?

Collective agreement specifics will vary from one workplace or employer, to the next, but generally they include provisions for:

- Wages, hours and benefits
- Health and safety
- Non-discrimination
- Contract length
- **Discipline**
- Seniority
- Dues collection
- **Grievance** procedures
- **Arbitration**

## WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

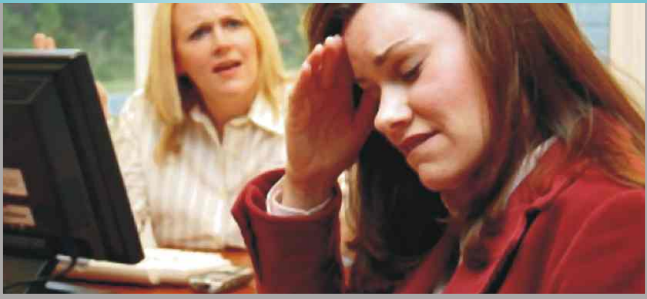
That's a big one to answer. For starters, you have the right to be treated fairly in the workplace. You have the right to be respected by your employer. And you have the right to be paid appropriately for the work you do.

Those rights are laid out in your collective agreement. Notice the biggest word on the cover of your agreement is "Collective". That's intentional because it's a deal worked out collectively between your union and your employer.

## WHAT DO I DO WHEN I THINK THE CONTRACT LANGUAGE IS BEING VIOLATED?

Language is a funny thing. Even after employees and managers agree to put certain words in a contract, we don't always agree on what that language means when a real-life situation comes up later. Sometimes it takes a third party to sort it out.

Your boss may ask you to do something that he/she believes is covered under the contract. You may not agree. What do you do? Check with your **shop steward**. If it's determined that the language of the contract is being violated, Local 37 will take the appropriate steps to make sure your rights are respected.



## **WHAT CAN I DO IF A CO-WORKER IS HARASSING OR BULLYING ME?**

Both your union and your employer won't tolerate bullying or any type of harassment in the workplace. If you feel you've been harassed, bullied or discriminated against, your Local 37 shop steward will guide you through the process to help you file a written complaint to your employer's human resources department.

Your contract allows you to speak up with confidence and know that you won't be punished for doing so. There's zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment. Your complaints will always be taken seriously. By speaking up, you might be saving other employees from similar grief.

If you've been accused of harassment, Local 37 will also represent you. And if one union member complains of being harassed by another member, the union has obligations to protect the legitimate interests of both parties while the complaint is being investigated and beyond.

Sometimes conflict can occur between members. If that happens, and representation is requested, Local 37 will assign a representative to each member.



## **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'M ASKED TO DO DANGEROUS OR UNSAFE WORK?**

You have the right to refuse a work assignment if you have reasonable grounds to believe you'll be exposed to danger to your health, safety or physical well-being, or would expose someone else to the same danger. You must inform your supervisor as soon as possible of your concerns and your refusal to work. It's also a good idea to tell a shop steward or other union representative in case you need representation related to your refusal to work.



## **IF I'M HAVING A PROBLEM, WHEN AND WHO SHOULD I CALL?**

The sooner you call, the sooner the matter can be dealt with. Local 37 will work with you to resolve the issue. Remember, we're always here for you!

Your first call or visit should be with a shop steward. Shop stewards are trained and experienced in dealing with the day-to-day affairs of the union in your workplace, including resolving disputes with local management, grievances, and other issues. To see the current list of shop stewards available in your workplace visit the Local 37 website or call the union office.

For whatever reason, sometimes members have issues or questions that can't be solved locally. If that's the case, please contact the Local 37 office so that you can be put in touch with one of our staff.



## **CAN I FILE A GRIEVANCE AT ANY TIME?**

Unfortunately, no. A grievance must be filed within a specific timeline described in your collective agreement – for example, within five working days of the incident. Please talk to a shop steward as soon as you think you might need to file a grievance.

## **IF I FACE EMPLOYER DISCIPLINE, WHAT DO I DO?**

If you're called to a disciplinary meeting with your employer, you have the right to have a shop steward or another Local 37 representative with you at the meeting. You also have the right to have access to your personal file.

## **IF I MENTION THE UNION OR THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT TO MY BOSS, WILL HE OR SHE GET ANGRY?**

The collective agreement outlines your rights as an employee. Reasonable people don't get angry when it comes to your basic rights. On the other hand, Local 37 is here for you to deal with people who do get angry and try to erode your rights.

## **WHEN I MOVE, OR HAVE A NAME CHANGE, WHO DO I TELL AT THE UNION?**

Due to the Privacy Act, your employer will not provide these changes to the union office, so please let us know of any necessary changes that need to be made to your contact information.



# MORE ABOUT YOUR UNION



The following section provides you with additional information we think will help you get to know your union even better.

## THE UNION ADVANTAGE

One of the best things about your job is that you're now part of a union family of employees who belong to IBEW Local 37. By working together, union members can negotiate with employers from a position of strength and cooperation to improve working conditions and the standard of living. Because of unions, workers today (unionized or not) enjoy things like paid vacation time, civic holidays, maternity leave, the eight-hour workday, the weekend, health and safety laws, among many other very important professional and social advancements.

Unions are the voice for the millions of working people and their families. They are committed to making a positive difference by doing things like lobbying government for health and safety laws to protect people from workplace injuries; campaigning for pay equity, retirement income, and fair treatment; and standing strong to protect the wages and benefits that they fought for decades to achieve.

Together, as a union, we've been able to accomplish much more for ourselves and our families than we ever could have on our own. Together, we can improve both the quality of services we provide, and the communities in which we live.

Without a union, employees are left to resolve issues and negotiate with their employer alone. With IBEW Local 37, members work together to support each other, improve working conditions through negotiations, and ensure everyone is treated with respect and dignity in a safe work environment.

Sound pretty good? It is.



## A UNION OF PROFESSIONALS

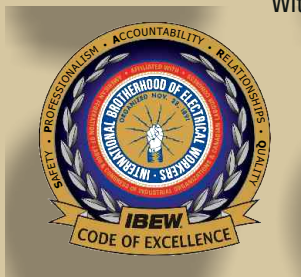
Unions come in all shapes and sizes. All have the best interests of their members at heart, but beyond that there are often significant differences in philosophy and approach.

At IBEW Local 37, we like to feel, and have been repeatedly told, that we're one of the most forward-thinking unions in the country, and beyond. It's a reputation we're proud of.

We're a union of professionals where all members are expected to strive for excellence when it comes to our quality of work, attitude on the job, building and maintaining relationships, working safely, and being active in our communities.

With the **IBEW Code of Excellence**

**Program**, Local 37 has pledged to employers and the public that it will promote and encourage members to perform high value, quality work in a safe, professional, and efficient manner. And if a member isn't





measuring up, we'll help them find ways to reach their highest potential.

We always strive to be at the leading edge of the labour movement. Today, Local 37 is one of the largest and most progressive IBEW locals in all of Canada. A lot of our success comes from the way we approach a challenge.

For instance, Local 37 believes that most workplaces have gotten past the old "us versus them" paradigm that was born back in the days when unions formed out of necessity to fight for basic rights against abusive bosses. Today, we're motivated by the understanding that we're in this together, and that the employer needs to be successful for us to benefit, so we look for solutions that are win-win.

We work hard at building positive working relationships with our employers, but this isn't to say we don't have our disagreements. When we do, we have processes in place to work them out in an environment of professional respect.

We fight hard for our members, but always at a professional, not personal level. Again, it's about win-win.



## **IBEW HISTORY**

### **The Largest Electrical Union in the World**

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has been around as long as the commercial use of electricity itself. It's the largest electrical union in the world, with a story that begins in the United States around 1890 when dangerous work, low wages, and long hours were the norm in the electrical industry. In many places, one out of every two electrical workers hired was killed on the job - the need to unionize was very strong.





It was November 28th, 1891 when ten men, representing 286 electrical workers, formed the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. They had one objective: to make life better for themselves, their families, and those around them. Eight years later, the national union became international when the first Canadian IBEW local was established in Ottawa on December 20th, 1899.

Today the IBEW represents more than 750,000 members working in various sectors including utility, construction, maintenance, manufacturing, communications, railroads, shipyards, mining, government, and many more.

Local 37 is young in comparison to its national and international unions, but its predecessors, Locals 1733 and 2309, have a long, proud history in New Brunswick. IBEW Local 1733 was issued a charter on September 1, 1951 and IBEW Local 2309 was issued its charter in 1971. In 1988, the two locals co-purchased our current headquarters at 138 Neill Street on the northside of Fredericton where they shared office space and staff. The two locals officially merged on April 3, 2000 to form Local Union 37.

We're very proud of our history that was built on a firm commitment to organize and represent workers in order to make their lives better. Our membership and longevity are proof of that commitment.



## HEALTH AND SAFETY FIRST

The IBEW was founded to ensure the safety of workers, and over 125 years later, it remains a cornerstone of our union.

We have a long history of fighting for health and safety rights for our members. We're proud to have a part in shaping provincial legislation that includes regulations for employers to maintain safe working conditions; protection against violence, harassment and discrimination; and rights and responsibilities with respect to safety equipment and training.

Joint Health and Safety Committees are in place at many work locations and offer union members an opportunity to help reduce the incidence of workplace injury and disease. They can also make recommendations on how to stay safe at work, encourage compliance with regulations, and address any health and safety complaints or issues. This important work makes changes that benefit present and future members.

If you ever have any health or safety concerns in your workplace, please tell someone immediately. And if you're not sure whom to tell, contact the Local 37 office and we'll be ready to help you.



## IBEW STRUCTURE

The IBEW is structured to be an efficient, productive organization that's driven by the membership. Along with the rules governing **local unions**, the structure of our union can be found in the IBEW Constitution, Bylaws and Policies. Members of the IBEW are the only ones who can make amendments.


## INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

### The Constitution

The IBEW Constitution is the supreme law of our international union. It describes the purpose for which our union was founded as well as its philosophy and structure. The Constitution also establishes the rights, duties, and privileges of the members, local union, and the International Office. If you haven't yet received a copy of the IBEW Constitution, please let us know and we'll send you one.

### International Convention

The International Convention is the highest governing body of the IBEW. Held every five years, members elect delegates to represent their local union at the Convention. It's where all international officers are nominated and elected. This includes the International President, International Secretary Treasurer, 11 International Vice Presidents, and nine International Executive Council (IEC) Members. The Convention is also the time at which elected delegates determine the basic laws of the IBEW by their votes on proposed resolutions and constitutional amendments.

A portrait of Kenneth Cooper, International President of IBEW, is shown on the left. He is a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a grey tie. To his right is the official seal of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). The seal is circular with a blue outer ring containing the text "INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS" and "AFFILIATED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LABOR & CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS & CANADIAN UNIONS". Inside the ring, it says "ORGANIZED NOV. 28, 1891". The center of the seal features a yellow background with a blue fist holding a lightning bolt, with several other lightning bolts radiating from the fist.

Kenneth Cooper  
International President,  
IBEW

## **International President (IP)**

The International President is entrusted with the administration of the IBEW and is responsible for serving the best interests of the members and the labour movement. The IP may delegate the powers of the office to an International Vice President, assistant, or International Representative.

## **International Secretary-Treasurer**

The International Secretary-Treasurer is responsible for handling the financial affairs of the IBEW. This includes being responsible for investing IBEW and pension funds.

## **International Vice Presidents (IVPs)**

The 11 IVPs are elected by the local unions in their respective districts at the International Convention (Canada is the 1st District). They work under the instruction and authority of the International President and are responsible for the affairs within their district. Each IVP supervises a staff of International Representatives.

## **International Executive Council (IEC)**

The IEC consists of nine elected members: one from each of the eight IEC districts and a chairman, elected at large. Meeting quarterly, the IEC deals with the IBEW pension fund, judicial matters, and other responsibilities.

## **International Representatives**

The daily administration of the IBEW is the responsibility of the International Representatives. They provide guidance pertaining to administrative, financial, and legal matters; jurisdictional issues; collective bargaining; organizing; research and training; and other needs to local unions.

## **LOCAL UNIONS**

Being part of a large international union, like the IBEW, means every local benefits from the considerable resources of such a major organization. And its structure provides an additional benefit that many other local unions don't have - independence. Each IBEW local has complete autonomy, which means most decisions are made locally by local members. For example, members of Local 37 elect their own officers, make their own bylaws and policies (approved by the International President), and determine their union dues.

### **IBEW Local 37**

Local 37 has the autonomy and resources to do what's important for the membership. This allows us to define an approved structure that will support taking care of our business and responsibilities as effectively and efficiently as possible.

# IBEW LOCAL 37 STRUCTURE



## Members

Members are the highest decision making body of the union. They elect our leaders, run for leadership positions, and approve bylaws and policies.

## Executive Board

The Local 37 membership elects the Executive Board (E-Board), which is made up of 15 elected officers. This includes four table officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary) and 11 member representatives (six Unit Chairs and five Members-at-Large). The E-Board meets regularly and works in partnership with the Business Manager to lead our union in the direction that best serves the membership. E-Board members serve a four-year term.

## **Business Manager**

The members also elect a Business Manager to a four-year term. The Business Manager is the principal officer of the union and is responsible for representing Local 37 when dealing with employers, enforcing all of the terms of the collective agreements, appointing and removing all shop stewards, being politically active, building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders, and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the union. All office staff, assistants, and shop stewards work under the direction of the Business Manager.

## **Units**

IBEW Local 37 is divided into 6 geographic Units:

1. Central (Fredericton region)
2. Southern A (Saint John / St. Stephen)
3. Southern B (Point Lepreau)
4. Eastern (Moncton region)
5. Western (Grand Falls / Woodstock)
6. Northern (Bathurst, Miramichi, Tracadie)

Every four years, each Unit elects a chairperson who also serves as an E-Board Member. Units hold regular meetings (monthly) that provide members an opportunity to discuss workplace concerns, get updates on negotiations, ask questions, and meet other members. For a complete schedule, check the Local 37 website, or contact the office.

## **Committees**

Local 37 has a number of standing and adhoc committees that meet throughout the year to carry out their assigned tasks and make

recommendations to the E-Board. The types of committees are listed below. The President, in consultation with the Business Manager, appoints all members and ensures committees function efficiently and effectively.

- High Level Labour Management
- High Level Safety
- Health, Wellness & Benefits
- Joint Benefits Advisory Committee
- Women's Committee
- Joint Health & Safety
- Canadian Council of Professionals
- Canadian Nuclear Workers Council
- Bylaws & Policies
- Finance / Audit
- Political Action
- Apprentice Advisory
- NextGen

### **Local 37 Membership Team**

By being a member of the IBEW, you have the support of a team of professionals with expertise in many areas. We have the resources and trained staff to do the job of representing you in negotiations, safety, grievances, arbitrations, workers compensation, labour legislations, and all other areas of labour relations. With technical knowledge and innovative thinking, the Local 37 team is well positioned to respond to the challenges of changing times, technology, and workplaces.



# UNION DUES

Every member pays a small portion of their wages to the IBEW. Union dues make it possible for Local 37 to pay for the valuable services it provides to all members including:

- Contract negotiations
- Training and education for members
- Grievance support
- Education and awareness
- Arbitration
- Organizing campaigns

Think of union dues as an investment. Members contribute a small percentage of their earnings to a fund, much like you do with insurance premiums. When you need assistance, the resources you need will be there.

Local 37's monthly dues are approved by members and are calculated using the following formula for both "A" and "BA" memberships:

**1.3 x your hourly pay rate + \$23 (International Dues)**

For example, if you earn \$20 per hour, your dues would be calculated as:

**$1.3 \times \$20 = \$26 + \$23 = \$49/\text{month}$  or  $\$22.62$  bi-weekly**

"A" members also pay an additional \$23 monthly premium to the IBEW Pension Fund.

Dues can be claimed as tax credit, reducing the amount of income tax you pay! All of the dues money paid by Canadian members stays in Canada, and the vast majority stays with the local union - ensuring members get the greatest benefit possible.

# THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Having a collective agreement is the biggest difference between a unionized employee and non-unionized employee. Your collective agreement is a legally binding contract that sets the ground rules for your job on things such as working conditions, pension and benefits, your rights if you receive a lay-off notice, and what you can expect to be paid.

IBEW Local 37 has worked hard to negotiate meaningful contracts that give members guarantees that cover wages and benefits, and rights and protections that aren't available to non-union workers.





## **Here are some of the major advantages of being unionized and having a contract:**

- Respect and fairness on the job
- Better wage increases
- Retirement benefits
- Better schedules
- More job security
- More flexibility for work and family needs
- Safe and healthy work environment
- A real say in your job
- On more equal footing with your employer
- A better economic future
- Provisions for staffing and overtime
- Support for continuing education and training
- Fair and equal treatment
- Vacations and family leave
- Equitable promotion and transfer
- Workable grievance system

## SHOP STEWARDS

Local 37 looks out for more than just negotiating your wages and benefits. Your union is always standing ready to lend support and help resolve any issues you might encounter in the workplace. The types of issues can vary from work location to work location, and nobody knows them better than your local union representatives – what we call **shop stewards**. Every bargaining unit has shop stewards in the workplace appointed by the Business Manager. They are trained to support fellow union members by helping them understand their contract and rights in the workplace.

Whether it has to do with how you were hired, workplace safety, or a manager who consistently expects you not to claim overtime you're entitled to, shop stewards are responsible for making sure the collective agreement is respected and adhered to in your location. They'll do their best to resolve any problems that arise between workers and management at the local level.

Members are encouraged to contact a shop steward first, and as soon as possible, if they:

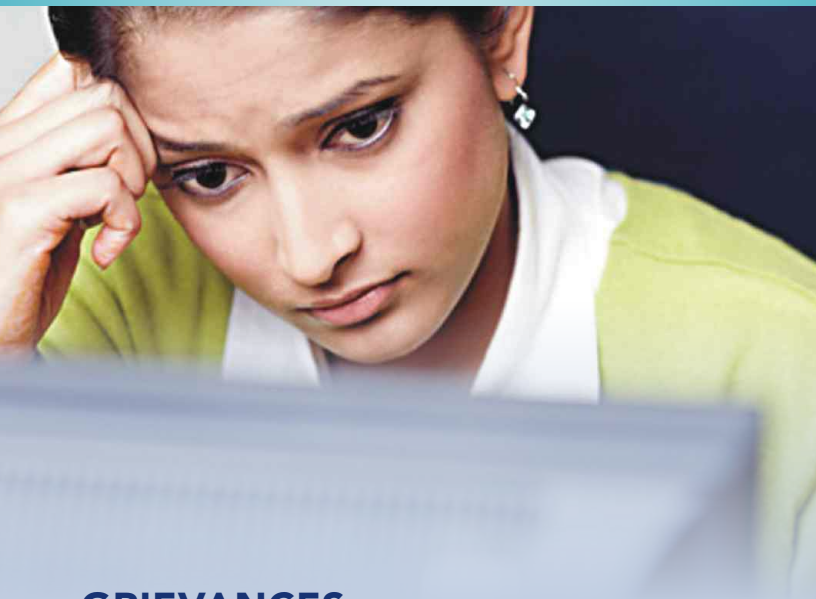
- Have questions about the contract
- Believe their employer violated their contract
- Have concerns about working conditions in the workplace
- Feel bullied, harassed, or discriminated against
- Suspect they might be disciplined or terminated



Your steward, often in consultation with one of Local 37's full time union representatives, will help you determine if a **grievance** should be filed. A grievance is basically a formal complaint against an employer for violating the contract, work rules, or labour laws.

In addition to representing members in the workplace, shop stewards have other duties that include, educating members about the union and the labour movement, encouraging members to attend meetings, helping organize new members, and acting as the liaison between union officers and the bargaining unit members.

For the latest list of shop stewards, sorted by bargaining unit and work location, go to the Local 37 website or contact the office directly. If you're interested in becoming a shop steward, just let us know and we'll send you an application form.



## GRIEVANCES

Without a union contract, employees can take complaints to management, but management has the final say on whether to make improvements or correct a problem. With a union contract, you now have grievance procedure in place to help resolve the issue.

A grievance procedure is a method for solving employee complaints. It can also involve opposition to changes in the workplace, or a violation of the law. Your collective agreement outlines the complete grievance procedure and it's a shop steward's responsibility to provide guidance through the sometimes-complicated process. Before taking any action on your own, always contact a shop steward first.



## TRAINING AND EDUCATION

There's more to life than work. And there's more to your union than helping you on the job. Local 37 is highly committed to offering members a diverse and valuable complement of training and education resources. After all, the best-trained and best-qualified employees are your employer's most valued assets.

We're very proud of the Local 37 Training Trust Fund (TTF). The TTF gives members the chance to acquire skills that will help them both on the job and in their personal life. The focus is on leadership as well as the "soft skills" that involve personal development and interactions with other people. Training and learning opportunities are provided at no cost for eligible members through one-day workshops, an annual conference, and online courses.

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The TTF also operates the Learning Reimbursement Program that provides financial assistance for individual members to support their training and development activities to a maximum of \$2,000 per person per fiscal year (depending on available funding).

Activities must be pre-approved and may include courses offered by universities and other learning institutions, workshops and conferences, e-learning, and self-study. To learn more about the TTF's programs, please visit the Local 37 TTF website ([www.ibew37.com/trainingtrust](http://www.ibew37.com/trainingtrust)), or contact the union office directly.

Don't forget to ask what kind of training opportunities your employer offers. If there's specific training that you're interested in, let it be known, as your employer must give your request proper consideration. If you're not accepted, you may be eligible for assistance from the reimbursement program.

Local 37 also provides training opportunities for local officers, stewards, committee members and other leaders through the International Office of the IBEW and its affiliates.





## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The IBEW Local 37 Health, Wellness, and Benefits Committee (HWBC) supports and encourages the health and wellness of its members. Its mandate is to help protect and maintain the interests of the members with respect to health, wellness, and benefits. The HWBC recognizes that health and wellness can mean many things to many people, so it works to develop and promote programs that cover a broad range of topics and interests intended to promote healthier lifestyles and workplace well-being. Any program the HWBC supports or manages must help promote healthy, active, and sustainable lifestyle choices.

To learn more about the HWBC and the programs available, visit the Local 37 website.





## GETTING INVOLVED

The IBEW is a strong united force that protects your rights in the workplace. To stay strong, Local 37 needs the support and involvement of members like you. Members bring new ideas that help the union better respond to the needs and wants of the entire membership. The more active the members, the more effective the union.

You can think of your union as a health club. By only paying fees to a gym, you won't get into shape. You pay to get access to the equipment or tools needed to improve your health, but your health won't actually improve until you make use of that equipment. To see results, you must play an active part in the process.

And you don't have to run for an elected position or be a shop steward to get involved. There are lots of other ways you can support your union, including:

- Attend union meetings
- Read your contract
- Vote on your contract and other important issues
- Vote in union elections
- Volunteer for a committee
- Champion a union event
- Attend union conferences and training

- Support your co-workers
- Support your union leaders
- Share your ideas for what to negotiate in your contract
- Participate in union activities, campaigns, and rallies
- Stay informed
- Read union publications
- Become familiar with your union bylaws and policies

One of the best places to start getting involved is by attending your local monthly membership meeting (Unit Meeting). A complete schedule of meetings can be found on the Local 37 website. You can also contact the union office anytime to find out the details of your next meeting.

## KEEPING YOU IN THE KNOW

Local 37 works really hard at trying to keep members informed about what's happening in the workplace, union, and community; and about issues and interests that are important to the membership. An informed membership is an empowered membership.

All work locations should have a bulletin board for union-only information (let us know if you don't). Check them periodically and ask your shop stewards about activities when you have a chance to chat.

Local 37 also regularly sends notices and updates via email and regular post. Please make sure we have your preferred contact information on file by contacting the union office. You can also visit our website, join our Facebook group, "Like" our Facebook page, and follow us on Twitter.



/ibew37



@ibew37



/ibew37

# **MORE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP**

## **SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES**

As a member of the IBEW, you and your family can apply for the following scholarships and bursaries:

- IBEW Local 37 Bursary - five awarded annually (\$500 each)
- IBEW 1st District Scholarship - ten awarded annually (\$2,000)

## **UNION PRIDE**

IBEW Local 37 sells union-made, branded clothing, mugs, pins, flags, bags, and a host of other items to help members show their union pride. If you're interested, stop by the office to have a look, or visit our website to see what's in stock.

## **MEMBER DISCOUNTS**

The IBEW offers negotiated discounts to members on home and auto insurance, prescriptions, hearing care, life insurance, pet insurance, car rentals, merchandise at select retail outlets, and more. For more information, contact the union office or visit our website.



## WHO'S WHO IN THE IBEW?

### INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

International President .....	Kenneth Cooper
International Secretary Treasurer .....	Paul A. Noble
International Vice President (Canada) .....	Russ Shewchuk
International Executive Council Rep (Canada) ...	Tom Griffiths
International Representative (Atlantic Canada) ..	Cordell Cole

### LOCAL 37 EXECUTIVE BOARD & STAFF

Business Manager/Financial Secretary .....	David Brown
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### Executive Board Members

President .....	Peter Hanlon
Vice President .....	Jonathan Sherrard
Treasurer .....	Bernie Lynch
Recording Secretary .....	Melissa Morin
Customer Service and Transmission Rep .....	Mark Maillard
Generation Rep .....	George Gilbert
Corporate & Shared Services Rep .....	Amanda Dixon
Nuclear Rep .....	Greg MacLeod
Non-NB Power Members' Rep .....	Joel Landry
Northern Unit Chair .....	Lyne Gallant

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Southern A Unit Chair .....	Jeff Colepaugh
Southern B Unit Chair .....	Andy Mawhinney
Eastern Unit Chair .....	Sean MacDonald
Western Unit Chair .....	Mel Morin
Central Unit Chair .....	Vicki Von Richter

**Union Staff**

Assistant Business Manager .....	Bernie Lynch
Assistant Business Manager .....	Mel Morin
Assistant Business Manager .....	Greg MacLeod
Member Support & Information Services .....	Darcey Hood
Member Support & Accounting Services .....	Hillary Ouellette
Member Support & Training Trust Fund .....	Hailey McCarthy
Organizer .....	Kelly Mountain

## UNION GLOSSARY

**Arbitration:** When grievances don't get resolved they're sometimes sent to arbitration, where an independent arbitrator decides the outcome. An arbitration hearing is convened in which both sides present their arguments. The final decision of the arbitrator is binding.

**Article:** A section of a legal document, such as a collective agreement or bylaw. It is also called a "provision", "clause", or "language".

**Bargaining / Collective Bargaining:** Negotiations between the union and the employer where wages, benefits, and working conditions for a certain length of time are determined.

**Bargaining Agent:** The union named as the exclusive representative for all the employees covered, or who will be covered, by the collective agreement.

**Bargaining Unit:** All of the employees represented by the bargaining agent.

**Checkoff:** A clause in a collective agreement that says the employer must deduct dues from workers' pay and send those dues to the union.

**Collective Agreement:** The legal document (contract) that spells out the agreement between the union and the employer over wages, benefits, and working conditions.

**Discipline:** When an employer punishes an employee for misconduct and usually includes verbal warning, written warning, suspension, demotion or firing.

**Duty of Fair Representation:** Unions have the obligation to handle grievances in a manner that is not arbitrary, discriminatory, or in bad faith.

**Grievance:** A complaint against an employer for violating the contract, work rules, or labour laws.

**IBEW Code of Excellence:** A program designed to bring out the best in union members and demonstrate to employers and the public that IBEW members exercise safe and productive work practices, perform the highest quality and quantity of work, and utilize their skills and abilities to the maximum.

**Just Cause (or cause of discipline):** The employer is responsible to establish a reasonable and lawful ground for disciplining an employee.

**Labour/Management Meetings:** Meetings between representatives of the employer (management) and the union representing employees (labour). At these meetings, both parties discuss many different issues including interpretation of the collective agreement, training, changes in the workplace, etc.

**Last Chance Agreement:** A written agreement between the union and the employer giving a worker, who has been accused of engaging in some kind of serious misconduct, one last chance to keep his/her job.

**Local Union:** A union organization formed under the constitution of an International, national, or parent union. A local union can represent workers in one or more bargaining units. Local unions have their own bylaws and elect their own officers.



**Lockout:** When the employer locks workers out of their workplace (denying employment) during a labour dispute.

**Mediation:** If the result of a grievance meeting remains unsatisfactory, the union may decide to take the grievance to mediation.

**Mediator:** A mediator is a third party who tries to bring the two sides together by working toward an agreement.

**Ratification Vote:** A vote of bargaining unit members to accept or reject a proposed collective agreement (or other agreement).

**Shop Steward:** Your trained union point-person at work who builds unity and helps fellow members solve problems.

**Solidarity:** All members of the union-movement agree to help one another in their struggles for fair wages, safe workplaces, better benefits, and human rights.

**Strike:** A collective action taken by all workers in a bargaining unit to put pressure on the employer to take their concerns seriously by withdrawing all, or some, of their labour.

**Tentative Agreement:** A collective agreement agreed to by the employer and the union, but not yet agreed to (ratified) by bargaining unit members.

IBEW Local 37 would like to thank the Canadian Media Guild (CMG) for permission to use content from the "CMG *New Members Handbook*".



## WE'RE HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

Members of Local 37 can receive the help they need when they want, where they want, and how they want:

### CALL

Your call will be answered by one of our helpful staff Monday to Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm. Voicemail is always available after hours. Call 455-0037, or if you're outside of Fredericton, call us toll-free at 1-877-437-0037.

### COME ON BY

You're always welcome to drop by the union office through the week. We're open 8:00am - 5:00pm and are located at 138 Neill Street on the Northside of Fredericton.

### CLICK

Check out Local 37's website ([ibew37.com](http://ibew37.com)) for regular updates, information on training, contracts, policies, schedules, shop stewards, and much more! Email is a great way to get in touch too, send one anytime to [info@ibew37.com](mailto:info@ibew37.com)

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1-877-437-0037 | [info@ibew37.com](mailto:info@ibew37.com) | [www.ibew37.com](http://www.ibew37.com)



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**As proud members of our union,  
each of us—without exception—brings to the job  
a personal commitment to these goals:**

- ✓ **The SAFEST possible workplace**
- ✓ **The most PRODUCTIVE workforce**
- ✓ **The highest QUALITY of workmanship**
- ✓ **The best SKILLS in the marketplace**

**THIS IS OUR PLEDGE. THIS IS OUR PROMISE.**

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