

STRIKE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What does “being on strike” actually mean?

“Being on strike” means members who are a part of CUPE 500 withdraw their labour power. This means that no employment-related duties are completed.

2. Do I get paid if I’m on strike?

Yes. Strike pay starts the first day of a strike. For the first eight (8) weeks of a strike you get \$300/week for a minimum of 20 hours of picket duties. During the 8th to 12th week, you get \$350/week. From the 12th to the 16th week, you get \$375 per week. From the 16th week of the strike, you get \$400 per week.

3. What do I have to do to get strike pay?

You must perform picket duties. Which means, you must walk a picket line for 4 hours/day for 5 days a week. If you are not physically able to walk a picket line, there are other duties that can be done. You would need to contact the Strike Coordinator to let them know you require an accommodation. The accommodation must be verified that it is for medical reasons. The Strike Coordinator for Local 500 will be shared when we serve notice to go on strike.

4. Is strike pay the same for all members?

Yes, all members whether full-time, part-time, permanent or temporary receive the same rate of strike pay.

5. Is Strike Pay Taxable?

No.

6. Where will the picket lines be?

In a strike, there will be a limited number of picket locations with a focus on larger sites with a lot of public visibility. The Union will provide picket location information to all members if there is a strike. Most members will not be picketing at their own job site.

7. What about my benefits?

CUPE pays for the premiums of your group life and extended health benefits for the duration of the strike. If you work essential services shifts, you will be paid by the employer just like normal. Therefore, your benefit premiums would be deducted, and coverage will continue. The pension plan deductions will not be paid by CUPE.

Pension – contributions are suspended during a strike and no pensionable service is accumulated.

8. What if I am on a leave of absence for medical or other reasons?

If the third-party insurer [Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI), Workers Compensation (WCB), City of Winnipeg, etc.] cuts you off because of the strike, CUPE will provide you with strike pay in lieu. Please contact your Strike Coordinator once a strike is declared if you are on LTD, WCB, MPI, etc.

Maternity Leave - You will continue to receive your EI benefits but will not continue to receive the city top up while on strike. If you prefer, you may cancel your EI benefits, sign up for picket duty and collective strike pay. However, you cannot collect EI and strike pay.

9. What if I have to work an essential services shift?

Essential services shifts will be shared amongst members qualified to work in that area. If you do work a shift, you will get paid normally from the Employer.

10. What if I have vacation booked during a strike?

The Union cannot speak to how pre-booked vacation time will be handled by the Employer in the event of a strike, but in the past all vacations would be cancelled by the Employer. Please direct inquiries to your manager or HR. If you choose to continue with vacation while on strike and are unable to participate in strike duties, you will not receive strike pay.

11. What about my financial obligations like mortgage, rent, credit cards, car payment, loans, child support, etc.?

In past bargaining bulletins, CUPE has recommended members not take on new financial obligations during bargaining because of the possibility of a strike and reduced incomes. CUPE has a form letter that you will be able to send to financial institutions and creditors, notifying them of a strike and requesting adjusted payment conditions be arranged with you. Most financial institutions will help you put together a plan to deal with your situation in the event of a strike which may include allowing you to reduce payments, paying interest only charges, etc. Should we serve notice to strike, we highly recommend contacting your financial institution/credit cards, etc., right away to discuss a plan.

12. Am I eligible for Employment Insurance while on strike?

No.

13. What happens if I cross the picket line?

Should you choose to cross the picket line, (even virtually/working from home), you are acting as “scab labour”. What we mean by “cross the picket line” is you try to go to work when you are not deemed as essential that day. Any members known to cross the picket line (this doesn’t include essential services shifts) will be brought forward under the CUPE Constitution. The CUPE Constitution has a CUPE trial procedure where members can face CUPE charges which could include significant monetary fines and revocation of CUPE membership, and other consequences.

Crossing the picket line fractures the solidarity that unions depend on for our power and it undermines the efforts to achieve a fair deal and could lead to a lengthier strike.

14. Am I allowed to bring my children/pet(s) with me to the picket line?

No. Family members and pets (except certified service animals) are NOT permitted on the picket line. We understand members may have childcare or elder care issues. Please contact the Strike Coordinator for the Local 500 office if you require accommodation around childcare/elder care.

15. What do I do if I am assigned a Picket location and can't go because I get sick?

If you are sick, notify your area coordinator immediately. You will not be paid for that shift. However, we will make every effort to reschedule you if possible.