

PART 2: Roles & Responsibilities

Local Executive Members

Local President

In this duty, the president is required to:

- Conduct the affairs of the local as dictated by the NSGEU Constitution and By-laws and NSGEU's Policy Manual;
- Hold executive meetings prior to local meetings to discuss items of importance and plan strategy for local meetings;
- In advance supply dates, time and location of local meetings;
- Notify NSGEU office of the meeting schedules;
- Prepare and distribute or post an agenda for the local meetings, or ensure that this is completed by the secretary;
- Conduct a business meeting according to rules of order;
- Ensure that the members' questions are answered and that issues of concern are discussed at each meeting;
- Ensure that the attendance record is circulated at each meeting;
- Review with the recording secretary the minutes of the meeting to ensure that all pertinent data has been included;
- Ensure that all positions are elected and that election notice is sent when elections are required.

OTHER DUTIES:

- Inform members of the local of all Educational seminars, workshops, etc.;
- Inform the membership of scholarship and bursaries available to members and members' children;
- Be knowledgeable of the finances of the local;
- Make recommendations to the NSGEU President concerning certificates of merit for local members;
- Maintain a close liaison with the rest of the local executive;
- Use the NSGEU Constitution & By-laws as a guideline for calling meetings for election of delegates to conventions, elections of local officers, and elections of bargaining unit representatives.

THE ROLE OF THE **LOCAL VICE PRESIDENT** is to assist the president in their duties, and where necessary, to replace them.

Suggested role also includes keeping a speakers list at meetings, to assist the chair, and/or create and complete follow up list, and tasks, from meetings.

Local Secretary

Duties include:

- attending local executive meetings, and also, recording any executive recommendations on correspondence or matters that will be brought forward at the union meeting.
- preparing agenda for the union meeting
- preparing notices for the union meeting
- distribution of union meeting notices
- arranging for meeting facilities, refreshments, etc.
- review minutes of the last Local union meeting
- copies of various reports & newsletter (if applicable)
- contact those who are responsible for reports as per the agenda.
- distribution of minutes to members
- forward copies of minutes to NSGEU Office
- prepare sign-in sheet - book
- read or present minutes from the previous meeting
- record the proceedings of the meeting
- maintaining meeting attendance records (attendance book)
- extra supplies of union info, bursary, scholarship, membership cards, new membership kits, contract.
- request for information from members or executive at the meetings.
- Prepare minutes for inclusion into minute book or binder
- Take action on items arising from the meeting: i.e. - responding to correspondence
- filing correspondence
- forwarding copies of minutes to the NSGEU Resource Centre
- follow-up on the "action items" with those designated (VP can be assigned to do some of this work)

The role of the Secretary is vital to the efficient running of the Local, without a Secretary the running of a Local is greatly hampered. In this handbook there are hints and suggestions to help you achieve your goal of being a great Local Secretary.

Local Treasurer

The Local is responsible for maintaining the funds in both the local imprest and local social account as per NSGEU Policy 3.1 and 3.2.

For the local imprest account, the treasurer is required to:

- Ensure funds for the local imprest account are maintained in a separate account called the Local # ____ Imprest Account;
- Keep accurate records and bank statements on the account;
- Prior to issuing payment to members for expenses, review the accuracy of claims and ensure all expenses claimed eligible expenses according to NSGEU policy 3.1;
- Write cheques for valid claims submitted by members;
- Make regular submissions to NSGEU on the appropriate forms and with the required documentation to maintain the funds in the account;
- Keep a copy of attendance records for submission of claims to NSGEU;
- Submit a written report to the Local on this account at each local meeting;
- Ensure the account is audited every term as per NSGEU Policy;
- Ensure a written audit report is submitted at the local triennial meeting.

For the local social account, the local treasurer is required to:

- Ensure funds for the local social account are maintained in a separate bank account;
- Keep accurate records and bank statements on the account;
- Make regular submissions to NSGEU on the appropriate forms and with the required documentation according to NSGEU Policy 3.2 to document the use of funds as approved by the local at local meetings;
- Submit a written report to the Local on this account at each local meeting;
- Ensure the account is audited every term as per NSGEU Policy;

Ensure a written audit report is submitted at the local triennial meeting.

Chief Steward

Details of the chief steward role varies slightly local by local. In some locals, chief stewards review all grievances before they are submitted and write many grievances.

In other locals, the chief steward provides information to the employee relations officer who writes all grievances. Chief stewards should, however, in every local, be interested in taking on a high level role in negotiating solutions to workplace problems.

Regardless of the culture of your local, the role of the chief steward includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Be vigilant and monitor the implementation of the collective agreement, and issues arising in the workplace. This includes (but is not limited to) contact with the employer, and regular contact and consultation with stewards and other local activists, concerning issues arising out of the workplace/collective agreement;
- Participation in labour-management committees and other joint committees, when applicable;
- High level involvement in local executive activities, and regular communications with other local officers regarding pertinent matters;
- Recruit and orient stewards to the local culture re: collective agreement and complaints;
- Call regular steward meetings;
- Work with the employee relations officer to hold annual steward training (on collective agreement issues) meetings if necessary;
- Conduct steward elections at local meetings;
- When elections are not possible, appoint stewards subject to ratification at the next local meeting;
- Chief stewards should keep in touch with, and receive reports from, stewards, and be informed about complaints and potential areas of labour-management conflict;
- At the request of the local president, the chief steward shall report on their activities, bearing mind the confidentiality of grievances and reporting only on the location and subject of the of the grievance.

The Steward

- Stewards must be familiar with the collective agreements for which they are responsible;
- Stewards will keep the local's chief steward and the employee relations officer, assigned to their areas, informed about complaints, and potential areas of labour-management conflict;
- Issues that may properly be dealt with by a labour/management committee, where they exist, should be brought to the attention of the union representatives on that committee;
- The steward is responsible to represent the members who elected them;
- The steward should attend all local meetings and meetings of the bargaining unit called by the local, or at least attend the required number of meetings to maintain eligibility for holding office in accordance with the local by-Laws, where applicable;
- At the request of the local president, the steward shall report on their activities. Stewards should bear in mind the confidentiality of grievances and report only on the location of the grievance and its subject.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

NSGEU will encourage members to deal with stewards or chief stewards on complaints or grievances arising out of the workplace.

Where feasible, NSGEU will encourage stewards' participation in all stages of the grievance and arbitration process.

Members who require information or are experiencing problems should contact their steward, or in the absence of their steward, their chief steward, the Resource Center or the employee relations officer.

Regional Councils

In this duty, the regional councillor is required to:

- Represent their local at the regional council;
- Takes a full and active part in the operation of the regional council and may serve in various capacities as required;
- Takes concerns of their local to the regional council and vice versa;
- Establishes and maintains communication between their local and the regional council;
- Attends and participates in all meetings of their local, regional council and special meetings that may be required from time to time unless absent due to just cause;
- Ensures that a verbal/written report of regional council and/or board of directors activities are given to their local;
- May be required to represent the union at local, provincial or national functions;
- Adheres to the NSGEU Constitution and By-laws and respect the rights of each individual member;
- Keeps confidential those matters designated as such;
- Assist in, and is aware of the policies, goals and objectives of the union;
- Makes decisions without personal prejudice in the best interest of all the members they represent and with the welfare of NSGEU being top priority;
- To be elected as regional councillor, the member may be required by their local to have attended a certain percentage of local meetings.

Regional council members are entitled to expenses per NSGEU Policy 3.6 - Regional Council - Imprest Account System – these expenses include but are not limited to mileage, child/elder/support care and meal allowances. Members attending these sessions are not entitled to time off for union business.

Occupational Councils

In this duty, the occupational councillor is required to:

- Represent their occupational group within the local from which they are elected;
- Takes a full and active part in the operation of the occupational council and may serve in various capacities as required;
- Takes concerns of the occupational members of the local to the occupational council and vice versa;
- Establishes and maintains communication between the occupational members of the Local and the occupational council;
- Attends and participates in meetings of the occupational council and their respective local. If requested, may attend regional council meetings in own respective area;
- Ensures a verbal/written report of the occupational council meeting is given to the occupational members of the local and/or to all the local;
- May be required to represent the Union at local, provincial or national functions;
- Adheres to the NSGEU Constitution and By-laws and respects the rights of each individual member;
- Keeps confidential those matters designated as such;
- Assists in and be aware of the policies, goals and objectives of the union;
- Makes decisions without personal prejudice in the best interest of all the members they represent and with welfare of NSGEU being top priority;
- May be involved with negotiations when and where required;
- To be elected as an occupational councillor, the member may be required by their local to have attended a certain percentage of local meetings.

Occupational council members are entitled to expenses per NSGEU Policy 18.8 – Expense Policy and Policy 18.10 – child/elder/support care. Members attending these sessions are entitled to time off for union business.

Committee Pool Members

NSGEU provincial committees are selected by the union executive, from the committee pool elected by locals.

Your local elects a number of committee members, (minimum four) based on size. Your allocation (that is the number that your local is entitled to, according to the Constitution) is included in the election return form. Each committee has eight members, one from each region of the province (Cape Breton, Cumberland-Colchester, Metro A, B, and C, PAG, South Shore, and Valley).

Ad-hoc committees, which at the moment includes the Young Worker Committee are not selected from among the committee pool, but a special call for expression of interest is emailed to members and put on the website. Members are selected from these expressions of interest.

Provincial Committees

The Board of Directors will be recommending that the following Committees of the Board of Directors for the 2022 - 2025 term be established and incorporate the following focuses:

Constitution & By-Laws Committee

Focus: role outlined in the Constitution & By-Laws

Education Committee

Focus: dispersement of NSGEU scholarship and bursaries. Raise awareness of community available educational issues and resources

Finance Committee

Focus: policy, ongoing fiscal and budget recommendations with defined surplus goals for budgets.

Health, Safety & Environment Committee

Focus: raise awareness, advocacy and promotion of workplace health and safety issues. Secondary is the promotion and awareness of green efforts and environmental.

Human Rights Committee

Focus: raising awareness, advocacy and promotion of human rights and social justice within NSGEU and the global community.

Political Action Committee

Focus: to raise awareness of members on participation in the political process.

Resolutions Committee

Focus: role outlined in the NSGEU Constitution & By-laws.

Social Recreation

Focus: coordination and development of social and recreational programs for the membership for NSGEU to promote membership solidarity. Dispersement of Amateur Sports/Fine Arts Awards. Dispersement of Region social funds assistance.

Women's Issues Committee

Focus: advocacy and advancement of women's issues and women's rights.

Composition of Provincial Committees

Each provincial committee is comprised of a chairperson appointed from the NSGEU Board of Directors, an executive liaison and eight regional members (one member from each region).

Each local is entitled to elect members to serve in a committee pool based on the local's signed membership. Once a determination is made on the committee pool, forms are provided to elected members to complete indicating their 1st, 2nd, & 3rd committee choices.

Once this information is received, it is reviewed by the executive and an executive recommendation to the board is prepared for ratification at the first meeting of the newly elected board.

Following ratification of committees, letters from the president's office will be sent to those members selected for committees.

How are committee members selected? What are their responsibilities?

1. To be eligible for election to a provincial committee, a member shall have attended a minimum of forty per cent (40%) of his or her Local meetings during the previous twelve (12) months.
2. Provincial committees shall be comprised of one (1) member selected from the committee pool from each of the eight (8) regions and one (1) member from the Board to act as the Chairperson or Recording Secretary.
3. Members submitting their names for provincial committees, if chosen to sit on a committee from the committee pool, must be willing and able to attend meetings as required and to perform specific tasks between meetings as may be assigned to them.
4. Members selected for provincial committees should be aware that provincial committee meetings are held on Friday nights and carry over business to Saturday morning. Committee members are expected to attend Saturday meetings as required.
5. Any member absent for two (2) consecutive meetings, without cause acceptable to the committee chairperson and/or the board liaison, or any member unable to fulfill their committee duties (at the discretion of the executive committee) shall be asked to resign their position on the committee. The board of directors will appoint a replacement from the committee pool.

JOHSC Members and Alternates

In keeping with the OHS Act, the NSGEU takes the following position with respect to the selection, continuing service and replacement of JOHSC members and alternates that are representing bargaining unit employees:

- The number of JOHSC members and alternates will be agreed upon by the parties and stated in the Rules of Procedure (Terms of Reference);
- Terms of office for members and alternates will be in the 1 to 3 year range and terms may be renewed as agreed in the Rules of Procedure (Terms of Reference);
- JOHSC members and alternates representing bargaining unit employees must be: members of the union be in good standing; selected in an open and fair process that is endorsed by the union; and, free from the influence of management;
- At least half of the members and alternates will represent employees not connected to management;
- Chairing of committee meetings must be rotated between the co-chairs on a regular basis (e.g. monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, etc.) The co-chairs have equal status. The employee members of the JOHSC shall select one of its committee members to act as its co-chair;
- Quorum for meetings will be stated in the Rules of Procedure (Terms of Reference) and will ensure at least half the number required represent employees not connected with management;
- Terms for members and alternates who are representing bargaining unit employees are not automatically renewed. Member and alternate positions that have expired are open to the bargaining unit employees for selection/ratification;
- An alternate may fill in for a member when the member is unable to attend a meeting. Alternates are to be afforded similar privileges such as training, receiving the minutes and agenda of meetings and inclusion in committee activities where their assistance is beneficial in carrying out the functions of the committee indicated in Section 31 of the OHS Act (e.g. inspections, program auditing, hazard identification, etc.);
- Alternates may ascend to become JOHSC members as agreed in the Rules of Procedure (Terms of Reference);

- A position is vacant when:
 - the term of office expires;
 - the incumbent resigns or changes job so that they no longer are in the bargaining unit or representing the affected employees;
 - the incumbent violates conditions of conduct stated in the Rules of Procedure; or;
 - the incumbent is removed by the union acting on behalf of the bargaining unit employees the incumbent represents.
- Workplace JOHSCs must conduct their business as outlined in the OHS Act and as further detailed in the JOHSC's Rules of Procedure (Terms of Reference) that have been agreed upon by the parties;
- As 'owner' of the bargaining unit positions on the JOHSC, the union retains the right to replace members and alternates at any time to ensure incumbents properly represent bargaining unit employees;
- The union may be represented in the workplace by:
 - duly selected JOHSC members and alternates;
 - shop stewards;
 - local union executive, or;
 - any other officer of the union (e.g. an ERO) who is so authorized.

These expectations should serve as guidelines for JOHSC members and alternates, employees, employers, shop stewards and local executive. They and may be altered from time to time as required.

For further information or for specific circumstance, the NSGEU should be consulted.

What is a labour council?

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) is the National “Labour Central” at the federal level in Canada.

Federations of Labour, like the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL), are the coordinating bodies for the labour movement at the provincial or territorial level. Labour Councils operate at the municipal or regional level.

All of these bodies - CLC, NSFL and labour councils bring together affiliated unions and give them opportunities to support each other, and create actions that assist in reaching common objectives and interests.

CLC-chartered labour councils deal with matters concerning local government, municipal councils, and local boards and commissions. Labour councils provide a means of bringing together local unions in a community and enable “labour” as a body to play a role in the community. The range of activities in which the labour council involves itself is diverse - from providing strike support to local unions, assisting in local area organizing, fund raising, and supporting local and international “causes”, hosting education events, liaising with other partners/local groups and coalitions that share objectives, to implementing national or provincial campaigns from the CLC, or Federation of Labour, at the local level.

Why should we send delegates from our local?

The NSGEU pays the affiliation fees for all Locals. All that your local has to do to participate, is to elect, and send delegates to, meetings. Your local will benefit by meeting and forming support networks with other union locals, learning about union issues, and knowing where to go to get support if your local is going on strike, or seeking allies for a campaign.

If you have any questions regarding the labour council in your area, (other than electing delegates and mileage paid by NSGEU) please contact the labour council directly.

Labour councils have different ways of determining delegate entitlement but every local in a Labour Council area, will be entitled to at least two delegates and up to six depending on numbers in the local and the labour council by-laws.