



TIPS FOR UNION STEWARDS

We tip our hats to you who serve your union brothers and sisters. You accepted the burdens of workplace leadership, a position that is fraught with anxiety, frustration and immediacy, but is also a position that can be truly gratifying as you help and assist your co-workers. Your position is a day to day activity of membership contact within your shop. Uniquely, by this position you have the opportunity to be on top of most situations that occur whether it is the employer violating the contract or the union rep is unavailable to be there quickly. Most members look first to their steward. You are the most often available on a daily basis, you have frequent and direct contact with your union office and usually you have been in bargaining and understand intimately the essence of the contract language. This is not easy; whether you are a new steward or one with years of experience. We know you have a lot of people relying on you to protect their interests and to enforce their labor agreement. Here's a list of quick tips to keep in mind.

- 1. You don't have to be an expert.** Stewards are always being asked questions. Don't act like you know what you're talking about when you don't; your co-workers will see through it right away. Say you'll find out, and get back to them.
- 2. Figure out where to turn for answers.** Your UPSEU Local 1222 representatives are knowledgeable in contract interpretation and many areas of labor law. And depending on where you work, on the job there are undoubtedly a few people who work in different departments who know more than anyone what goes on behind management's closed doors.
- 3. Knowing how to delegate tasks is your most important skill.** Recruiting volunteers is an easily learned skill. Some people do it naturally, others benefit from specific training in recruiting or team building.
- 4. If you try to do it all yourself, it won't work.** You won't be able to do anything as well as you could, you'll get frustrated, and then you'll burn out. The more people you get involved, the more you can accomplish.
- 5. Your job is to empower people.** Give a man a fish, he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, he'll eat for a lifetime. If all you do is solve other people's problems for them, what are they going to do when you're not there? Help people learn how to solve their problems.
- 6. Ask a lot of questions.** Socrates didn't become famous for nothing. The best ideas come from picking a lot of people's brains and getting them to think about old problems in new ways.
- 7. Learn how to listen.** With grievances and personnel problems, sometimes just being willing to listen is the most important thing you can do. When you're organizing you need to know how other people feel and how they view the situation before you can influence them. Ask and listen.
- 8. Don't let management treat you like pond scum.** When you're representing your co-workers as their union steward you are equal with the supervisor you're dealing with. You're both intelligent adults. On the job, your supervisor may have authority over you. But on union business, you're his or her equal.
- 9. Never assume that management knows better than you.** Most supervisors have little understanding of contract rights or labor law. They have experience in program or production and in supervision. Anything you learn about employees' rights on the job makes you more of an expert in that area than they are.
- 10. Pick your fights.** Defending your fellow employees is an important part of a union steward's job, but if that's all you do you're always on the defensive. If you identify issues and take the initiative to demand changes, you'll make important progress. Don't let management control the agenda. Be proactive and pick the issues that you think you can make some headway on.
- 11. Always get back to people.** If you want your co-workers to have trust in you, you've got to be responsible and reliable. Don't promise things you can't deliver on, and be sure to follow through on what you do commit to.
- 12. Be organized in your own life.** Pick a system and keep to it. How are you going to keep notes and reminders to yourself? Throw out papers you don't need, and have a good system for finding the stuff you keep.
- 13. Be a responsible employee on the job.** Not only is this important if you want your co-workers to have respect for you and your opinion, but it keeps you from getting into unnecessary trouble with management.
- 14. Maintain a sense of humor.** On the one hand, ridicule can be a powerful weapon against an irrational supervisor. On the other, don't take yourself too seriously. If you get self righteous you won't learn from your mistakes and you'll turn people off.
- 15. Keep your eyes on the prize.** There will be setbacks. There will be losses. Sometimes people will get angry at you, and sometimes you'll start to wonder if it's worth it. But as long as you remember that collective action is the only real way to change things for the better, you'll know that in the long run, helping to build the union is the best thing you can be doing for yourself and your family.

From Union Strong Blog

Why Do We Celebrate Labor Day?

Labor Day, an annual celebration of workers and their achievements, originated during one of American labor history's most dismal chapters. In the late 1800's, at the height of the Industrial Revolution in the United States, the average American worked 12-hour days and seven-day weeks in order to eke out a basic living. Despite restrictions in some states, children as young as 5 or 6 toiled in mills, factories and mines across the country, earning a fraction of their adult counterparts' wages. People of all ages, particularly the very poor and recent immigrants, often faced extremely unsafe working conditions, with insufficient access to fresh air, sanitary facilities and breaks.



As manufacturing increasingly supplanted agriculture as the wellspring of American employment, labor unions, which had first appeared in the late 18th century, grew more prominent and vocal. They began organizing strikes and rallies to protest poor conditions and compel employers to renegotiate hours and pay.

Many of these events turned violent during this period, including the infamous Haymarket Riot of 1886, in which several Chicago policemen and workers were killed. Others gave rise to longstanding traditions: On September 5, 1882, 10,000 workers took unpaid time off to march from City Hall to Union Square in New York City, holding the first Labor Day parade in U.S. history.

The idea of a “workingmen’s holiday,” celebrated on the first Monday in September, caught on in other industrial centers across the country, and many states passed legislation recognizing it. Congress would not legalize the holiday until 12 years later, when a watershed moment in American labor history brought workers’ rights squarely into the public’s view. On May 11, 1894, employees of the Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago went on strike to protest wage cuts and the firing of union representatives.

On June 26, the American Railroad Union, led by Eugene V. Debs, called for a boycott of all Pullman railway cars, crippling railroad traffic nationwide. To break the Pullman strike, the federal government dispatched troops to Chicago, unleashing a wave of riots that resulted in the deaths of more than a dozen workers.

Who Created Labor Day?

In the wake of this massive unrest and in an attempt to repair ties with American workers, Congress passed an act making Labor Day a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories. On June 28, 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed it into law. More than a century later, the true founder of Labor Day has yet to be identified. Many credit Peter J. McGuire, cofounder of the American Federation of Labor, while others have suggested that Matthew Maguire, a secretary of the Central Labor Union, first proposed the holiday.

CDC Tips for Reducing Risk of Getting COVID-19

Asking yourself these questions can help determine your level of risk when deciding what activities you are comfortable participating in. For further information go to www.cdc.gov

Is COVID-19 spreading in my community?

Find out by viewing the latest COVID-19 information and a map of states with reported COVID-19 infections.

What are the local orders in my community?

Review updates from your local health department to better understand the situation in your community and what local orders are in place in your community. Also find out about school closures, business re-openings, and stay-at-home orders in your state.

Will my activity put me in close contact with others?

Practice social distancing because COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with others.

- It's important that you and the people around you wear a mask when in public and particularly when it's difficult to stay 6 feet away from others consistently.
- Choose outdoor activities and places where it's easy to stay 6 feet apart, like parks and open-air facilities.
- Look for physical barriers, like plexiglass screens or modified layouts, that help you keep your distance from others.
- Use visual reminders—like signs, chair arrangements, markings on the floor, or arrows—to help remind you to keep your distance from others.

Am I at risk for severe illness?

Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. While the risk for severe illness is lower for others, everyone faces some risk of illness. Some people have no symptoms, others have mild symptoms, and some get severely ill.

Do I live with someone who is at risk for severe illness?

If you live with older adults or someone with certain underlying medical conditions, then you and all family members should take extra precautions to minimize risk. Learn more about what you can do if you or any members of your family are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Do I practice everyday preventive actions?

Continue to protect yourself by practicing everyday preventive actions, like monitoring yourself for symptoms, not touching your face with unwashed hands, washing your hands often, social distancing, disinfecting surfaces, wearing masks, and staying home if you are sick.

Will I have to share any items, equipment, or tools with other people?

Choose places where there is limited sharing of items and where any items that are shared are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between uses. You can also choose to visit places that share, post, or announce that they have increased cleaning and disinfection to protect others from COVID-19.

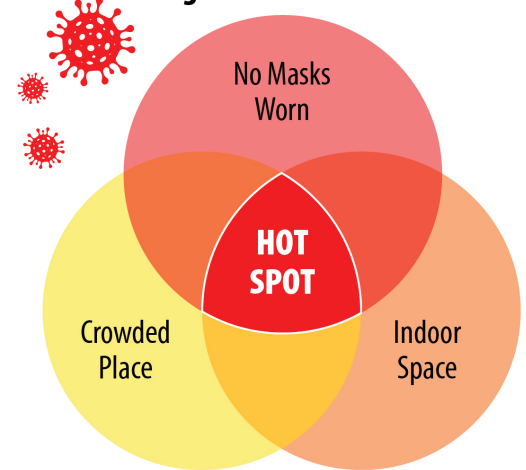
Will I need to take public transportation to get to the activity?

Public transit can put you in close contact with others. When using public transportation, follow CDC's guidance on how to protect yourself when using transportation.

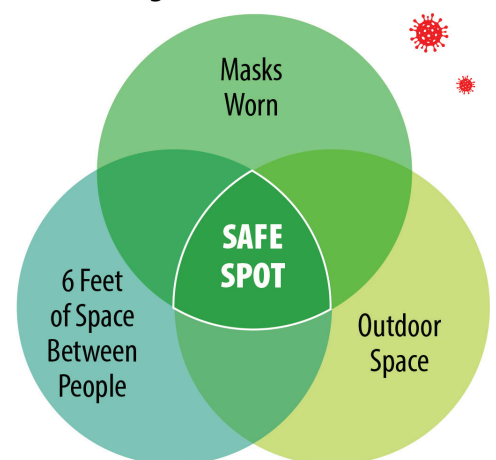
Does my activity require travel to another community?

Before considering trips outside your community, consult CDC's travel considerations.

Things that Increase Risk



Things that Decrease Risk



UPSEU Local 1222 Shop Talk

STEWARD TIP:



KEEPING MOTIVATION HIGH WHILE MANAGING YOUR TIME

Like most goals, mastering your time management skills isn't something that happens overnight. Throughout the process of working to improve the way you manage your time, you'll occasionally encounter points where you start feeling disappointed, wondering whether your efforts are paying off. Whenever you hit those lows, and you will, remember to give yourself credit for every step you take in the right direction.

One great way to stay motivated is to reward yourself. For example, if you complete certain actions that tie to your goals, give yourself a present. Or savor an evening on the couch with a good movie or dinner at a favorite restaurant. Do whatever serves as an enticing reward.

Take motivation to the next level by involving others in the reward. Let your spouse know that an evening out awaits you if you fulfill your week's goals before deadline. Tell the kids that if you spend the next couple of evenings working, you can head for the amusement park on Saturday. This strategy is a sure fire way to supercharge your motivation.

As you work through this difficult but worthy bout of self-improvement, keep your mind on the positive side and remember two simple truths:

- You're human
- Work always expands to fill the time you allow for it.

No matter how productive you are, whether you have just a couple of things to accomplish or a sky high pile on your desk, and whether you leave work on time or stay late, there's always something that doesn't get done. So don't get hung up on those things you don't accomplish. Keep your eyes on the goal, prioritize accordingly, delegate what you can and protect your boundaries so you only take on as much as you know you can handle, while still remaining satisfied with all parts of your life.

Excerpted from Time Management for Dummies by Dirk Zeller



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