

New Delegates Guide



Welcome!

Welcome to your Local Labour Council! As a delegate representing your local, you play a vital role at your local Labour Council. This document was created to give you some tips to help get you started in your labour council activism. We hope you enjoy your time at your local Council.



WHAT IS A LABOUR COUNCIL

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) chartered labour councils deal with matters concerning local government. These include municipal councils, school boards, and regional districts. Every local union belonging to a CLC-affiliated national or international union is eligible to join a local labour council. Labour councils provide a means of bringing together local unions in a community and enable labour to play a role in their community. Labour council responsibilities go beyond that. They have the responsibility at the community level for carrying out the policies of the trade union movement that were initiated at the provincial and national levels. The range of activities in which the Labour Council involves itself is diverse – from providing strike support for local unions, lobbying MPs, MLAs, and local government officials, assisting in local area organizing, hosting local CLC educational schools, to implementing national and/or provincial campaigns developed by the CLC. In addition, labour councils are labour's vehicles as partners in community networks and coalitions with like-minded groups in our community.

STRUCTURE OF THE LABOUR COUNCIL

Local unions of CLC-affiliated unions can affiliate to (join) their local labour council. This allows them to appoint delegates to the Council. These delegates then elect an executive team from among themselves, usually at an annual general meeting. While there's no standard executive structure for all labour councils in B.C., they typically have a President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Sometimes, the roles of Secretary and Treasurer are combined. Most labour councils also have additional executive positions, such as representatives from the largest affiliates, Vice-Presidents, a Sergeant-at-Arms, and representatives for young workers. The executive structure is determined by the Constitution and Bylaws of each labour council.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE

It is the duty of the executive to conduct the Labour Council's business between council meetings and to provide guidance to the delegates regarding issues facing the Council. The executive's responsibilities extend to making critical decisions, formulating strategies, and ensuring the smooth execution of the Council's plans and policies.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DELEGATE

Affiliated local unions participate in the work of labour councils by selecting delegates to act as their official representatives. Most labour councils have monthly general and executive meetings. A labour council delegate has a very important role to play in representing their local within the Labour Council. The Labour Council is the voice of labour at the community level and delegates are their union's contribution to that unified voice.

Your main responsibility as a delegate is to represent your local at the general meetings. This is done by speaking to motions, voting on motions, making motions, and reporting on the issues your local is facing. Your responsibility as a delegate is to ensure the position of your local is represented, not just your individual position. If you are unsure of your local's position on an issue, it may be best for you to abstain from speaking or voting on a motion. You could also "move that the motion be deferred until" the next meeting or a later time.

All this ensures the Labour Council is responding to issues that are most important and critical to the affiliated local unions. The participation of delegates in the work of the Council, including the committees, is vital to the effectiveness of the Labour Council's work.

The members of the executive, particularly the President, play a crucial role in representing the Labour Council. They act as the Council's voice, articulating its views, goals, and concerns to the outside world. The President, especially, is often seen as the face of the Council, responsible for communicating its mission and vision to the public. They are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that the Council's message is effectively conveyed and its interests are adequately represented.



ROLE OF YOUR CLC REPRESENTATIVE

The job of linking your Labour Council into the huge organizational structure of the Canadian labour movement rests with your CLC representative. It is that person's role to assist and advise the Local Labour Council. This ensures that the Labour Council promotes, articulates, and coordinates CLC policy and action at the community level and within the labour movement.

CLC representatives are given all rights and privileges of delegates at meetings of the Labour Council, except the right to vote. They are also charged with ensuring that elections are fair and properly run, that the Constitution and Bylaws are followed, minutes kept and distributed, and that audits are regularly performed. Labour council by-law changes must be approved by the CLC, and your representative is also responsible for processing such changes.

HOW DO LABOUR COUNCILS' MEETINGS RUN?

Labour councils meet on a regular basis to hear from affiliates, plan events, discuss issues of importance in their communities, and share information.

The chairperson, normally the president, helps facilitate discussion, keeps the meeting running smoothly and ensures the proper procedures are followed, and makes sure the meeting follows the agenda and stays on-time.

Labour councils have rules of order to help make sure meetings run smoothly and fairly. Most of these rules are in the council's bylaws and constitution, but "standing rules" that delegates would have approved in the past, may exist. Bourinot's Rules of Order will cover any issues that the Bylaws and Constitution don't address.

While rules of order can be confusing at first, they are helpful in the smooth running of a meeting.

A motion serves as the mechanism by which a delegate proposes a course of action or raises a specific issue for consideration by the meeting. Whether it's suggesting a new event, approving a budget, or directing the executive to write a letter to the local MP, motions are the driving force behind the deliberative process. They provide structure to our discussions and allow us to move forward with purpose.

To move a motion, a delegate simply needs to express their proposal clearly and succinctly, addressing the chair. This initiates the formal consideration of the matter at hand. It's important to state the motion in a manner that is precise and unambiguous, ensuring that all participants understand the proposal being put forth. Once the motion has been moved, it requires a seconder – another delegate who supports the proposal – to proceed to discussion. It is important to not start debating a motion until it has been moved and seconded.

After thorough discussion and debate on the motion, the meeting will proceed to vote on its adoption. The chair will call for those in favour and those opposed to vote. The outcome of the vote determines whether the motion is accepted, rejected, or requires further action.



Structure of the Labour Movement in Canada



LOCAL UNIONS

- Composed of members in one or more workplaces
- Democratic elections of leadership/representatives
- Regular membership meetings
- Deal with workplace problems, grievances, collective bargaining, and other issues.
- Have committees (OH&S, Education, Young Workers, Women's, etc.)
- Delegates to Labour Councils, Federations of Labour, and Canadian Labour Congress conventions are elected.
- Local is financed by membership dues.

LABOUR COUNCILS (APPROXIMATELY 130 ACROSS CANADA)

- Composed of elected delegates from union locals
- Regular monthly meetings
- Represent workers' issues with local governments, municipal councils, boards and commissions, and carry out the policies and campaigns of the Canadian Labour Congress at the local level
- Work with like-minded community organizations and coalition partners in their communities
- Have committees (Education, Political Action, etc.)
- Financed by per capita from affiliated unions
- Chartered by the Canadian Labour Congress

FEDERATIONS OF LABOUR (1 IN EACH PROVINCE OR TERRITORY)

- Composed of international or national unions in a province who pay per capita affiliation dues.
- Annual conventions held to determine the policies, amend the Constitution, and elect an Executive Council
- Carries out the policies and campaigns at the provincial level and works with the Canadian Labour Congress on federal issues of note.
- Works with like-minded organizations and coalition partners in the communities and province
- Joins with affiliates to lobby provincial governments on issues affecting working people
- Have committees (OH&S, Women's, Young Workers, Solidarity & Pride, Environment, etc.)
- Chartered by the Canadian Labour Congress. The Federation of Labour presidents sit on the Canadian Council (CLC executive body)

CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS (3.0 MILLION MEMBERS)

- Composed of national and international unions, 13 provincial and territorial federations of labour, and approximately 130 labour councils
- Convention every three years (with approximately 2,500 local delegates)
- Convention elects the four (4) ranking officers, discusses, and determines policies and direction for the Congress, and amends the Constitution
- Has specialized departments: Education; Anti-Racism & Human Rights; Health, Safety & the Environment; International; Political Action & Communications; Social & Economic Policy; Women's & Human Rights; and Young Workers
- Has national committees: Solidarity & Pride, Women's, Young Workers, Joint Apprenticeship, etc.
- Acts as the voice of labour on the national scene
- Lobbies the federal government on issues such as Unemployment Insurance, health care, federal legislation, etc.
- Financed by per capita from affiliated unions

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (191 MILLION WORKERS IN 169 COUNTRIES)

- Primary mission is the promotion and defence of workers' rights and interests through international cooperation between trade unions, global campaigning, and advocacy within the major global institutions.
- Represents 191 million workers in 169 countries and territories and has 340 national affiliates
- Cooperates closely with the International Labour Organization (ILO – specialized agency at the United Nations)
- Consults with the United Nations Economic & Social Council and with other specialized agencies
- Campaigns on issues such as
 - The respect and defence of trade union and workers' rights
 - The eradication of forced labour and child labour
 - The promotion of equal rights for working women
 - The environment
- Education programs for trade unionists worldwide
- Encouraging the organization of union workers
- Investigates working conditions worldwide
- Financed by fees paid by member organizations



Bourinot's Rules at a Glance

To Do This:	You Say This:	May Interrupt the Speaker?	Must you be Seconded?	Is the Motion Debatable?	Is the Motion Amendable?	What Majority is Required?
Move a Motion.	I move...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Change a motion. (You may not merely amend to negate.)	I move that the motion be amended to read...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
End debate on a motion.	I call the question.	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	I move that council proceed to the next order of business.	No	Yes	No	No	
Consider something out of its scheduled order.	I move the agenda be amended in order to deal with the following item...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Have a motion studied more before voting on it.	I move that the motion be referred to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone further discussion on a motion until a more desirable or appropriate time.	I move that the motion be deferred until... (a specified time or indefinitely)	No	Yes	Yes — only to time.	Yes	Majority
Postpone consideration of a motion so that more urgent business can be attended to.	I move that the motion be tabled.	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Raise a matter previously deferred (if at a different time from when was decided).	I move that the motion about XXX, previously deferred, be considered at this time.	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Raise a matter previously tabled.	I move that the motion about XXX be lifted from the table.	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Object to something which prevents your continued participation (e.g. excessive noise)	Point of Privilege.	Yes	No	No	No	No vote taken; chair rules.
Seek clarification from the previous speaker.	Point of Information.	Yes, if urgent.	No	No	No	No vote taken; chair rules.
Overturn the ruling of the chair.	I challenge the chair on XXX.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Enquire about procedure or consequences.	Point of Order.	Yes	No	Yes, only to the point.	No	No vote taken; chair rules
Object to incorrect procedure being used.	Point of Order.	Yes	No	Yes, only to the point.	No	No vote taken; chair rules

