

RIGHTS ON THE JOB

As members of CWA, most of us are covered by a union contract that we negotiate with our employer.

Our contract establishes rights, wages and benefits that cannot be changed by management without negotiating with us and our elected union representatives.

CWA members determine the bargaining priorities.

CWA contracts typically guarantee:

- Pay levels and increases.
- Benefits.
- Employment security with layoff protections.
- Fair treatment on the job.
- Due process during disciplinary actions.
- Retirement benefits.
- Paid time off for vacations and holidays.
- Medical coverage and sick pay.
- Protection against health and safety hazards.
- **Training opportunities** to help us develop skills for the future.



Some of us work for state, county or municipal governments that prohibit workers from having collective bargaining rights. In that case, our membership in CWA provides us with the ability — through collective action — to address issues where we work and to make a difference in the workplace.

Protection from Unfair Treatment

Our CWA contracts spell out grievance procedures that protect us from unfair firings, arbitrary treatment, and favoritism in the handling of promotions, layoffs, scheduling, work assignments, and other issues.

We are entitled to a hearing with representation from CWA if we are unfairly treated.

If the employer and grievant are unable to reach a resolution, our case can be decided by a neutral, third-party arbitrator. Arbitration provisions help guarantee due process and fair treatment — and it prevents employers from having the final say.

CWA Stewards: Leaders in Our Workplace

CWA stewards are co-workers who keep us connected with our union. They are trained to provide representation and to keep us informed about workplace issues and actions.

Your steward is someone to turn to with questions or concerns.

Stewards and local union officers are supported by CWA's professional staff of negotiators, researchers, lawyers, field representatives, communications specialists, and organizers.



WHAT WE CAN DO

- **Know our rights.** Read and familiarize ourselves with our union contract so we know our rights. Contact our steward if we don't understand something.
- **Insist on fair treatment.** If we have a dispute with management, we should let our steward know. CWA may already have addressed the same or similar issue.
- **Help others.** When a coworker has a problem with management and needs support, we back them up. Get involved whenever stewards need help in mobilizing.
- **Help maintain our standard of living.** During contract negotiations, provide input on issues and participate in mobilization activities to support our bargaining committee.
- **Become a CWA steward/mobilizer.** We encourage members to join our stewards' or mobilizers' network. If interested, please contact **your local union**.



Signing Documents

First, the union recommends that you sign nothing except your paycheck. If you have any doubts about signing a document ask your manager "Is this a condition of employment?" If you are told it is, then sign the required document and contact your union steward at once to determine if it is something the union knows about. Contrary to what you may be told, you do NOT have to and should NOT sign the following documents:

- **Code of business conduct**
- **Yearly appraisals**
- **Security or Witness statement (from AT&T)**
- **Policies regarding sexual harassment, violence in the workplace, or EEOC**
- **Internet or other computer policies**
- **Anything else not covered in this list. Check with a steward if it is a "condition of employment".**

Any of these documents can and will be used against you in any disciplinary matters that may come up regarding your employment. Again, do NOT sign them!!



OTHER THINGS YOU SHOULD NOT DO IN THE WORKPLACE

These are just a few of the items that have gotten our members in trouble over the years. This is by no means an all-inclusive list, just things to keep in mind:

1. Accessing accounts in the company's computer for which you have no business reason to be looking at-this includes listed and non-published numbers, your own telephone account, your friends' and relatives' telephone accounts. Employees have been disciplined or terminated for accessing telephone records they shouldn't have been looking at. Every time you access an account, it's documented indicating your ID, which the company can pull a report on. This is a difficult grievance to win.
2. Making personal long distance calls over the company's network. Again, people have been disciplined and/or terminated for this.
3. Using other company facilities or property for personal use-which includes fax machines, copiers, etc.
4. Threatening employees while on company premises-this is against the company's violence in the workplace policy.
5. Sexually harassing other employees either on or off company time-via email, telephone calls, or verbally. People have been terminated for this. Don't do it!
6. Cheating on sales. Don't put items on customer's accounts that they didn't order, you didn't sell them, or explain they were getting. Don't change sales codes on orders. This is a misconduct situation and more than likely, you will be terminated. It's not worth your job.
7. Be insubordinate. This means to do as you're asked to by your manager. Contact a steward if you don't agree with what you have been asked to do, but only after you have complied. The only time you should not comply with a request by a manager is if your health is at risk or if it is a safety issue. Remember-comply now, grieve later!
8. Lie about time off from work or disability issues. Time fraud is considered misconduct. Management has in the past, and will continue, to check up on employees if they suspect any type of wrong-doing and take disciplinary action.

Always use common sense. The union does not agree with company actions in these areas, and will file grievance on your behalf if disciplinary action is taken; make sure you take a steward with you in any company meetings, and do not sign any statements.