



# *Running Effective Meetings: A Handbook*

**NSGEU**  
EDUCATION

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## *Dear members,*

We are working hard on your behalf, but remember the convention motto this year – You are the Union. It's only through working together with individuals like you that we can all bring about positive results for our members.



Thank you so much for your commitment to taking on a leadership role in the NSGEU, and congratulations on your election. If Locals and Councils function effectively and efficiently it makes the whole union work. The positions that you have taken on will improve not only your own life, by expanding your knowledge and skills, but can also help improve the working life of your fellow workers, and in some cases all of the working people of Nova Scotia.

As a member of the largest union in N.S., with over 30,000 members, when we all work together we make positive changes. When elected to a position in the union, it is of course an honour, but it is also an incredible responsibility. We are honoured to be elected in the highest offices in the union, and take that responsibility seriously. Over the next three years, you, as frontline leaders will help set the tone and fulfill campaign and political mandates. We need to work together. Please feel free to contact us for assistance in mobilizing your local.

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# *How to Run an Effective Meeting*

Well run and efficient meetings make members feel like they are respected, their time valued, and their input appreciated. This, along with relevant information sharing and debate will make people want to attend and come back.

It is the responsibility of the person who chairs the meeting to ensure that meetings reflect the values of democracy, open participation, and fairness, and defend the values of unions – justice, fairness and collective solutions.

A union meeting should do three things:

1. Inform the members of what is happening in the local and in the larger union, what might happen in the near future, and explain why.
2. Make decisions that guide the local, council or committee and complete all necessary union business, e.g. hold local elections.
3. Increase solidarity amongst the membership, bring people together, and grow support for the union.

Small attendance at union meetings means that important decisions are made by a small group of members. Although, you may not have 100% attendance at meetings, you should make an effort to get a large, representative turnout.

## Setting the meeting time and date

It is important to make sure the membership know about upcoming meetings well in advance. Members need time to make arrangements to attend.

*Here are some suggestions about setting the date:*

- You can set a regular meeting time each month and let people know what it is at the beginning of your term in office, e.g. every second Thursday of every month except December, July and August; or every second month on the second Wednesday; or a set of dates that are set out at the beginning of a calendar year or term.
- If members are on shift work or work in diverse departments, you may choose to rotate or change the time and location of meetings so that everyone has an opportunity to attend. However, if meetings are scheduled on a more ad-hoc basis then the officers need to ensure that the members know when and where the meetings are going to be held.

## Creating the agenda

There is a standard agenda for a Regional or Occupational Council and Local meetings, that includes reports, and new business. Each meeting should have at least 10-15 minutes to educate or inform members of important items e.g. on a campaign, an article in the collective agreement, on pensions, or on an issue like mental health, bullying or OHS.

**Sample Local Agenda**

**NSGEU Local 007 Meeting**

**Dec. 4th, 2016, – 7-8:30 pm**

1. Introductions
2. Guest Speaker, if any
3. Approve Agenda
4. Minutes from Nov. 6th, 2016
5. Items from Minutes
  - a.Christmas Party plans
  - b.Assignment of Duties for Vice-Presidents
6. Education or Information Session
7. New Business
  - a.Review of Attendance Management  
announcement from HR
  - b.Steward Training
8. Reports
  - a.President's Report
  - b.Vice President's Report
  - c.Treasurer's Report
  - d.Secretary's Report
  - e.Chief Steward's Report
  - f.Occupations Councilor's Report
  - g.Regional Councilor's Report
  - h.Labour Council Report
9. Employee Relations Officer (if attending)
- 10.Other Business
  - a. Announcements
- 11.Next Meeting
- 12.Adjournment

## **Preparing for the meeting:**

The president and or other executive members should review the minutes for errors and have the secretary correct them.

Follow up with any persons who were given any tasks at the previous meeting to ask them to report on their progress with the task. If the person is not able to attend, ensure they have passed their update to an officer or member who will be in attendance.

If there is going to be an election, and if the chair or president is running, ensure there is someone else who can conduct the election (you can request assistance from the NSGEU office) and that you have the items you need to conduct the election.

### *Items needed to conduct local elections:*

- Ballots (blank pieces of paper)
- A box or ballot box
- A flip chart or white board for writing down names

## **The meeting notice:**

The meeting notice may be the first thing a person sees from the union. It may be their introduction to what unions are all about. Keep this in mind when you are deciding what to say in the notice.

### *Here are some suggestions about the notice:*

- The notice should make people feel that they are truly welcome and encouraged to attend.
- It should give people something to look forward to, or a reason to attend, e.g. let members know about a decision that will be made or an election that is happening, a special guest or speaker, or even an interesting item on the agenda.

## Getting the word out:

For each meeting please ensure that the NSGEU office is informed of the date, time and place of the meeting and a notice is put on the website calendar. You can send your meeting notice to [inquiry@nsgeu.ca](mailto:inquiry@nsgeu.ca). Or, you can complete the form on the website. It can be found on the right hand side of the yellow bar at the very top of your screen, called: "Submit Local Meeting Info". Ideally each meeting notice along with date, time and location, will provide an agenda, and notice of election if any are being held. It should be clear that for each meeting the union pays mileage and childcare and provides refreshments as per NSGEU financial policies.

Besides the calendar on our website, it is important that you use the most appropriate method of communication for your members. If everyone works in one location and uses the same lunch room, perhaps a meeting notice on your union bulletin board will work. It will be up to your local executive, council, or committee to decide how best to get the word out.

### *Here are some suggestions about getting the word out:*

- If you have an email list of your members then meeting notices may be circulated by email.
- If you have a bulletin board at work, you should post a notice. If there are multiple work locations with bulletin boards, you should develop a network of members who can post notices in all, or most, of the workplaces in your local.
- If your members have mail slots, you can print one for each person.



- If your local has a large number of members, and no accessible internal mail system, it is possible for the NSGEU office to send the notice (as they already do for some Locals) using software we subscribe to called “Constant Contact”. Please contact Bruce Thomson, Director of Finance and Administration at NSGEU, for approval and details or your ERO’s secretary.

## **At the meeting:**

Have a “greeter” at the door to sign people in, (have them sign a card if they are not a “signed” member.) Make sure that everyone feels welcomed, and knows their attendance is noted, and appreciated. Make sure the “greeter” introduces themselves to new people, and thanks people for coming. The “greeter” can be an executive member or another member that regularly attends local meetings and can greet people warmly.

## **The role of the chair**

The chair’s role is to maintain order and make sure that the meeting is democratic. The chair uses the “rules of order” to make decisions fairly and ensure that all views are heard. She practices using the rules of order and is skilled at using them. The chair:

- Is in charge of keeping order;
- Is accountable to the group for reaching good decisions;
- Keeps the group to the agenda, and on time (unless the chair has assigned a “time keeper”);
- Does not participate in debate (If the chair wishes to speak to an item on the agenda other than to introduce it, the chair usually gives up the chair to do this);
- Is not a “rules” fanatic;

- Should move debate forward, not stand in the way;
- The chair SHOULD NOT speak to each item or participate in debate.

*The chair conducts debate generally in this order:*

- a) What is the motion?
- b) Does it have a seconder?
- c) Is there any discussion or debate?
- d) Is it time for a vote (usually by way of a show of hands), counting those for, those against, and those who do not vote (abstentions)?

## **Who should chair?**

The local president or designate, or chair of a committee or council, should chair. Or you could decide to rotate the chair through the executive in order to give others the experience of chairing a meeting. Rotating the chair has the benefit of mentoring others so in the event that the elected chair or president is not able to attend, someone will feel confident in chairing the meeting after they have done so with an experienced person at their side.

## **Meeting follow-up**

At the end of the meeting, assess how people felt. At an effective meeting, members will feel welcomed, informed and heard. They feel that their time was well used. They have had their concerns addressed and have a more positive attitude about the union when leaving.

Make sure that any tasks identified during the meeting are assigned and that someone is responsible for each task and reports back at the next meeting.

## Sample follow-up sheet

<i>Board of Directors – Follow-ups</i>					
<i>Origin</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Completed</i>

### Local executive meetings

For local executive meetings, meeting dates and times should be mutually agreed to and meeting notices should be sent in a timely manner.

Your executive meeting is where you can plan the agenda for the local meeting, discuss any issues you anticipate may arise at the meeting, and report to each other on assigned follow ups from the last meeting. Some locals hold their local executive meetings directly before their local meetings.

### Special note for Regional Councils:

In each three year term, Regional Councils are required to have a pension information meeting. This is set up with the Pensions Officer from the NSGEU office.

At the second meeting of the term, in addition to regional Councillors; all Regional Council Alternates will be invited to attend as observers.

## Checklist for preparing for the meeting

- \_ Set meeting date(s)
- \_ Book meeting location(s)
- \_ Create meeting notice
- \_ Send meeting notice for posting on NSGEU calendar
- \_ Get the word out! Notify the membership in advance (follow your By-laws if time frames are given)
- \_ Canvass the membership for agenda items
- \_ Create the agenda, ensuring any items with follow-up actions from the last meeting are brought forward
- \_ For local meetings, obtain a signed membership list from the NSGEU every few meetings (keeping in mind they need a few days' notice)
- \_ Book a volunteer to help with check-in duties at the meeting (stewards are great for this)
- \_ Make sure minutes from the last meeting have been reviewed
- \_ Make sure the follow-up items from the last meeting have been followed-up.

### Items to bring to a local meeting:

- \_ Membership cards and pre-paid envelopes to put in the mail. If someone wants to attend that is not a "signed member" they should sign a card at the meeting. Please ensure that the card is then sent to membership at the NSGEU office. Contact the NSGEU for membership cards and pre-paid envelopes
- \_ A copy of your local By-Laws, and the NSGEU Constitution and By-Laws, are essential
- \_ A sign in sheet at the entry -- everyone attending the meeting must sign in
- \_ Copies of the agenda
- \_ Copies of the previous minutes
- \_ Paper to take notes
- \_ A couple of pens or pencils (you never know when one will give out)
- \_ A watch
- \_ A calendar
- \_ Any correspondence received to be discussed or distributed

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# *Basic Rules of Order*

*It is customary in union meetings, when recognized by the chair to preface your remarks with “brother” or “sister,” followed by the reason you requested the floor.*

The next few pages give you an overview of the rules of order that we use in the NSGEU. Probably not more than once in 20 years will any situation arise at a meeting which will not be covered by the 10 easily-understood rules explained here.

Using these, anyone can participate intelligently in local union meetings.

**1. Making the motion:** For discussion purposes, and especially for making

decisions, it is easiest if someone “puts a motion on the floor.” You do this by raising your hand, and when recognized by the chair you say “I move that we. . .” You may make a motion when you want

the group to make a decision or take some action, for example:

- a. To send a letter

*“Sister Chairperson, I move that we...”*

*NOTE: If you disagree with a motion or an amendment, you do not defeat it by trying to change the sense of the motion through amendments. Instead, you speak against the motion or the amendments, urging your fellow local members to vote against them. If these are defeated, new motions calling for different action may be made or considered.*

- b. To accept a report.
- c. To make a decision to spend money
- d. To schedule a special meeting
- e. To set up an ad hoc committee

## 2. Second the motion:

- A motion requires someone to “second the motion.” If the motion is not seconded it stops right there and requires no debate. You should only second the motion if you agree with it. There is no point in being the seconder to a motion that no one in the room wants. It is a waste of time to “put a motion on the floor for discussion” that no one in the room actually agrees with! This happens too often, and should be avoided.

## 3. Amending a motion:

- Amendments are offered in the same way as motions. They are introduced to assist in changing, modifying, or completing a motion to make it more acceptable to the members.
- You may offer such an amendment when you agree substantially with the motion that has been made but want to make some change before it is adopted: i.e. a motion has been made to hold a special local union meeting, but no date has been specified. You want to be sure the meeting will be held at a time when all members can attend.
- After being recognized by the chair you may then amend the motion by saying: “I move to amend the motion to the effect that the special meeting shall be

*“Brother or sister  
Chairperson, I move to  
amend the motion to the  
effect that...”*

held two weeks from next Monday at 7:30 P.M.”

- As with any motion this requires a seconder in order to be debated.
- The amendment is debated and voted on BEFORE the main motion is debated and voted on. The chair needs to be very clear about what motion is on the floor and what is being debated. The secretary should make sure that they are clear on the wording of the motion and any amendments and should ask for clarification if the intent and wording are not clear. The secretary may be asked to read back the motion being debated, at any time.

## 4. Amending an amendment

- Just as a motion may be amended, an amendment may also be changed in the same way.
- As with the first amendment, any or all amendments must relate to the motion.

*“Brother or sister  
Chairperson, I move to  
amend the amendment to  
the effect that...”*

## 5. Speaking on motions and amendments

- When you want to speak at a meeting, you raise your hand, asking the chair for recognition.
- As soon as you are recognized by the chair you may proceed to speak either for or against the motion or amendments that are being considered. You should make it clear whether your remarks are in support of, or against, the motion.
- Motions or amendments are proper only after they have been offered to and accepted by the chair, and have been supported (seconded) by someone in the group. Remember it is efficient and good practice to NEVER second a motion that you do not agree with. If

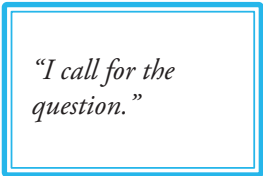


there is no seconder, a motion should not be debated.

- There should be someone keeping a speakers list. Often this is the chair.
- When someone speaks a second time it normally will (or should) trigger the end of the debate.
- When you are recognized and may speak you must either speak for or against the motion (and it should be clear which) or amend or refer or table the motion. You cannot speak for or against the motion and then refer, table or amend.

## 6. Ending debate

- Sometimes it may feel like debate is not moving forward but going round in circles. If you think there has been enough discussion of any motion or amendment being considered, you may try to close the discussion.
- You do this by getting recognition from the chair after which you say "brother or sister chairperson, I call for the question."
- If seconded, the chair must put the question to a vote.
- If enough votes are cast for the question, debate on the issue ends and the chair must call for an immediate vote.
- Voting takes place in reverse order. For example, the amendment to the amendment is voted on first. If carried, the amendment as amended is then voted on. Finally, the motion as amended is voted on.



*"I call for the question."*

## 7. Postponing debate on a motion – table or refer

- You can table, or refer a motion in order to postpone debate.
- If you feel that the motion before the meeting should be delayed so that more information can be made available, or for some other reason, you may move a motion to table.
- If seconded and the *motion to table* passes, the main motion is put aside: no action is taken and the meeting goes on to other business. If the *motion to table* is defeated, discussion on the main motion continues.
- A *motion to table* IS NOT DEBATABLE or amendable; and if it is supported by ONE other member, it should be put to an immediate vote by the chair.
- It is helpful if a *motion to table* has instructions for a committee to review, or an individual to collect more information, before it comes back to a vote. If you just table it, you may find that at the next meeting no one has been instructed to get information or to check with a venue availability etc. So you should “table with instructions.”
- If you are sending the motion to a committee, or to the officers to reassess, or get information, or to reword it, it is usually called a *motion to refer*, and usually the motion would refer the motion to a person or group with instructions, i.e. one might refer a motion to the treasurer until the next meeting, who will be expected to cost it and report on whether it is affordable.

## 8. Point of information

If at any time during the meeting you are confused

*“Brother or sister  
Chairperson, I rise to a point  
of information.”*

about the business being discussed or if you want the motion more clearly explained, you may rise to ask the chair for a POINT OF INFORMATION. However, you may not interrupt a speaker who has the floor.

- After you are recognized, ask for the explanation you desire.
- With only a few limitations, a point of information is in order at almost any time during a meeting, but can and should only be used to ask for information relevant to the current discussion.

## 9. Point of order

- If you disagree with any of the chair's rulings or if you believe that the person who is speaking is not talking about the business being considered, you may raise a POINT OF ORDER and state your objection to the chair.

*“Brother or sister  
Chairperson, I rise to a  
point of order.”*

- The chair then is required to rule one way or another on your point of order.

## 10. Challenging the chair or appealing the ruling of the chair

- If you disagree with a ruling of the chair on a point of order, you may APPEAL THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR.

*“Brother or sister  
Chairperson, I  
challenge the decision  
of the chair.”*

- After you make such an appeal, it must be supported by at least one other member. If someone supports you, the chair must be turned over to the next highest ranking officer.

- You will then be given an opportunity to state your reasons for believing the chair should be overruled, after which the chair who made the ruling will also have an opportunity to give his/her reasons for the ruling.
- No one else may participate in this discussion. There is no debate.
- The acting chair will then place your appeal before the group for a vote.
- The group can then, by majority vote, overrule your appeal and uphold the chair, or support your opinion by overruling the chair.
- Whether the chair's ruling is overturned or upheld, the chair returns to chairing the meeting following the vote.

## Tips for running an effective meeting

- Start and end on time.
- Set the agenda in advance, identifying follow ups and new business, and outline general timing of the meeting, or even of individual items.
- The authority of the chair should be clear to everyone at the meeting and the chair should be respected in their role. The chair's job is not to tell everyone what to do, but to make sure there is an order to the meeting.
- As chair, keep control of the speakers, and the meeting, especially in terms of time. You will have to balance control and flexibility, and constantly try to scan the room to make sure that members are "with you".
- Introductions of (depending on numbers) everyone in the room, or if large numbers, the executive members and stewards. Be welcoming; thank people for coming. Remember to tell people to ask if they do not understand an acronym or concept.
- Have a box or container that contains the items from "things to bring to a local meeting"(please see page 13).
- Make sure someone, other than the meeting chair, keeps a speaker's list.
- Make sure someone, other than the meeting chair, keeps a follow-up list. Please see the sample on pg. 11. Every time that an officer or member suggests that information will be brought back to the next meeting, or requests information, make sure someone takes a note of it and follows up before the next meeting. There should be a list of follow-up items from each meeting (if any arise).
- If you need it, make sure that someone acts as a timekeeper, to be sure that you will have completed the agenda by the end time you have specified.

### **Resources available from the NSGEU office, staff and officers.**

#### *Under Policy 3.5 in the Board Policy manual:*

- NSGEU letterhead without the address and telephone numbers may be made available to the local for local correspondence, when requested.
- NSGEU shall provide blank business cards for local executive members, chief stewards and stewards, as requested, for union business use.

#### *Other possible resources include:*

- You can request assistance with sending email notices of meetings, and/or complete the form, or email details so that the meeting time and details can be put on the NSGEU website calendar;
- Membership cards and pre-paid return envelopes can be requested from the NSGEU;
- You can also request assistance to identify topics and speakers for meetings, through the NSGEU Education Office. Requests for staff (other than ERO) to attend your local meeting must be approved by the office of the union president. Some examples of requests are:
  - Union education (requirement to disseminate information to members);
  - Presentations on pensions, OHS, bargaining, or collective agreement clauses;
  - Invite president, executive member, board member, OHS, Education or Organizing Officer, or ERO.

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## *Frequently asked Questions:*

### **How do I ensure the meeting starts and ends on time?**

Start the meeting on time. Even if people are still trickling in, or a lot of people are late, if you regularly begin on time, people will start to understand that the meeting will not wait for them. It is not respectful of the members who HAVE shown up on time to wait for late comers.

Make sure that you time your agenda before you start, ask for items of new business at the beginning of the meeting, so that you can allocate time appropriately, and if necessary appoint a time keeper. The time keeper's job is to let people know that the time for an item is used up and that we either move on or will need to amend the agenda, possibly spending less time on another item.

Everyone should have their say, but speaking time limits should be clear from the beginning of the meeting (and not just when someone runs on too long). Speaking time limits should be set and mentioned at the beginning of every meeting. 3-5 minutes is usually enough for each speaker on each issue, and no more.

If an agenda item takes much longer than expected you can amend the agenda to remove items or postpone them until the next meeting.

If there is something that the membership wants to have an extended discussion about, you can ask for a vote to extend the meeting time but this should not happen at every meeting.

### **How do I open a meeting, what introductions are required at every meeting, and how do we make members feel welcomed and included?**

Always introduce yourself as chair along with any other officers in the room. If there is time you should have everyone introduce themselves. If necessary you could take a moment to explain who does what and why we run the meetings using rules of order. Encourage people to speak and ask for input on each motion.

Assist people in putting their ideas into motions and amendments and make sure that anyone new to the meeting is talked to, before or after the meeting, to make sure that they feel welcome, that their questions are answered, and that they are leaving with a good feeling about the local.

### **How do we make members feel welcome?**

When new people attend a meeting, we want them to come back. Many new members report that they feel too intimidated to ask questions and they feel like the executive is a “clique” and resentful of questions or challenges.

For a democratic organization like the union to work, the members must feel that they can take part and make a difference. Imagine yourself at your first meeting and make a habit out of identifying and welcoming new members.

Make sure members have an opportunity to ask questions and tell them to ask if they do not understand any of the union jargon. Your efforts will pay off in the long run and members will return to the meetings knowing they are welcome and that they can find friendship and information.



### **How do I end on time when there is new business?**

Any “new business” must be put into the agenda at the beginning of the meeting when the agenda is being approved. You can ask “is there any new business for the agenda? Now is the time to let us know about new business.”

It is important to include and consider all new business at the beginning of the meeting in order to end the meeting on time. Once you know what the issues are, you can estimate the time on each agenda item and plan accordingly. If new business is brought up at the end of the meeting and it is a topic, question, or motion that is controversial it can take more time than allocated at the meeting. Once the agenda is approved, you must try and make sure that it can all be done in the time allotted. If necessary use a time keeper to push the meeting along.

### **What is a speaker’s list and why should we have one?**

The speaker’s list is a written list of those who want to speak at a meeting kept in the order in which they asked to speak usually by raising a hand.

It is important that all members “have their say”. A speaker’s list is a fair way of keeping track of all those who would like to speak on an issue in the order that they raised their hands. When chairing, it is difficult to also keep a speakers list, so have a vice-president or designate sitting beside you keep a list while you chair. They can then make sure that you take speakers in order. Keep in mind that when there is an amendment there needs to be a new speakers list for those who wish to speak to the amendment.

### **What is a follow-up list? Who should maintain it and who does the follow-ups?**

During a meeting, there will be times when someone asks a question, makes an inquiry or wants information. If no one at the meeting has the information, someone will invariably say “we will find out and bring it to the next meeting”. The executive should delegate someone to be in charge of tracking these requests and making sure that they are followed up and brought to the next meeting. See page 11 for a sample of a follow-up sheet.

### **What topics are appropriate or not appropriate at union meetings?**

Details of grievances and complaints about staff are two items that are not appropriate for discussion at union meetings.

If a member raises an issue or complaint about staff, tell them it is NOT an appropriate venue but that you will provide information on where they can take their complaint at the end of the meeting. Make sure that the person knows how to get the information they are seeking, but that criticizing or complaining about staff, publicly, at a union meeting will not be accepted or tolerated.

If the issue is one of a follow up on a grievance, or complaint, or detailed discussion of the merits of a grievance or complaint, ask the member to speak to the chief steward at the end of the meeting, or ask the chief steward to take the member aside right away to discuss their issue. This is not an appropriate issue for

the entire local to discuss.

It is appropriate to report on grievances and to share information, especially about victories, but individual grievances should not be discussed by an entire local meeting.

It is also very important to ensure that members get answers to their questions, know where it is appropriate to take a complaint, or to get an answer on the disposition of their grievance.

Bullying or offensive language is not acceptable at local meetings. The chair must be firm and not allow any member to criticize, complain or disparage a member who is present or not present at any time during a meeting. The climate of all meetings must be kept positive and discussions must not become personal.

### **How do I deal with speakers that dominate all discussion?**

The chair should be firm and able to keep order at a meeting. They should keep lists of speakers and call members “out of order” if they speak out of turn. The chair could also set a time limit for each person to speak (keeping those dominant speakers in mind).

### **What if suddenly there are a lot of members from a particular workplace that show up in a group at a local meeting?**

Welcome all members and follow the general directions for opening a meeting. Often, members attend union meetings because they have a particular issue that needs attention. This is a good opportunity to let the members know about the union and the benefits of being a part of the NSGEU. Make sure you ask them if they have an issue

to be added to the agenda as new business.

### **As a chair, how do I handle “side bar conversations” at a local meeting?**

It is important that the chair be firm in respecting the timelines of the meeting because this respects everyone’s time. You have a few options - bang a gavel and ask for order, or wait for them to finish speaking before you move on. The members want an efficient meeting that respects their time. Speak directly to the members and ask for order.

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## *NSGEU Election Procedure*

If you are running the election, the first thing to remember is to be fair and to treat everyone fairly and equitably. Democracy reigns! If every member of the organization is treated fairly, equally, and with respect, during the entire election process, then the methods used are likely proper. If the chair is running for election, the chair should vacate their position for the duration of the elections.

The following is the model that the NSGEU uses for conducting Triennial elections, and is the same process that should be used for filling vacancies throughout the term:

1. Elections are held in this order: president, vice president(s), secretary or secretary-treasurer, treasurer, chief steward, regional and occupational councillors, labour council delegates and if applicable labour management committee and JOSH committee reps. Stewards are next to be elected, removed from the list, or ratified. Inactive stewards should be removed from the list prior to ratification.
2. Locals can request assistance to conduct their elections. This will usually be an Employee Relations Officer (ERO), board or union executive member. This can be requested through your ERO or by calling the NSGEU.
3. As of the triennial meeting all positions with the exception of Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Representatives are vacant. Note: Stewards DO need to be ratified again, or removed at this meeting. Stewards are not elected for life – they must be ratified at every triennial meeting.

4. Locals should ensure that there is a secretary for the election to ensure that someone is recording the results. Someone (usually the local president or secretary) is responsible for ensuring that the election results are forwarded to the NSGEU. The union has forms designed specifically for this purpose (can be requested from the NSGEU).
5. The election process should be explained to all those at the meeting including all sections of the Constitution and By-laws that apply.
6. All votes are conducted at the meeting, and only those attending the meeting may vote. (E.g. no proxy ballots and no voting outside the meeting.)
7. Scrutineers to count ballots are selected or nominated at the meeting. Additionally, those running for election are able to appoint a scrutineer to watch the count if the position is contested.
8. Ballots are distributed to each person eligible to vote in the election.
9. Each office is then brought forward in turn as follows:
  - Call for nominations from the floor – nominations do not require a seconder.
  - Call must go out three times. i.e. “I am calling for the first time for nominations for president.” Record nominations, “I call a second time for nominations”, Record Nominations. “I call a third and final time for nominations.” Declare nominations closed.
  - List all names in the order nominated for all to see. You can do this on a flip chart or white board, beginning with the first person nominated.

- Ask each person nominated, in reverse order of nomination, whether he or she will stand for the position.
- If only one person agrees to stand, then he or she is elected by acclamation to that position. The elections officer/chair of elections announces that result. (Stewards may be elected or declined on a yes/no vote).
- If more than one person agrees to stand, then each person is asked to speak on why you should vote for them. The time limit is normally three minutes but the local, council or board may determine the time. A vote is then conducted.
- Each election for an office must be completed before the next one starts.
- When two or more candidates are to be elected for any position, i.e. where there are two vacant occupational council positions, each person must receive a majority of votes (50% +1).
- Each member voting shall be required to vote for the full number of candidates to be elected or the member's ballot will be declared spoiled.
- Voting should be by BALLOT, each member receiving one ballot. If using coloured ballot books, the person conducting the election will select a colour for the ballot for each election and communicate to the members about to vote. Each member then writes the name of the person of their choice on the correct coloured ballot.

- During the count, all ballots that are clearly marked are counted - first and/or last name. Even spelling errors will be acceptable as long as the voter intention is clear. If two candidates have the same first or last name be sure to communicate to members what they will have to put on the ballot - either full first and last name, or, if for example, Kathy Smith and Kathy Bates are running perhaps Kathy B. or Kathy S. will be acceptable. Advise voters to make their intention clear on the ballot.
10. Scrutineers distribute and collect ballots, count the votes cast for each candidate, and report results to the elections officer/chair. Results are announced, without the vote count being communicated, to the members (this helps those who lose to save face – the point is not to humiliate anyone, or to have challenges based on the difference in ballots) The winner of the election is the candidate that receives the majority (50% plus one) of votes cast.
  11. If no candidate receives a majority, then the candidate with the lowest number of votes received is dropped from the list and a second vote is taken. This process continues with a third or fourth vote until a candidate with clear majority emerges. No one may win by having the lowest vote name dropped off the ballot, and if there is a tie for second place, another vote must be taken until there is a candidate with fewer votes, or one person has over 50% of the ballots cast.
  12. If no nominee allows his or her name to stand, then there will be no candidates for election or acclamation. In this case, nominations can be



reopened and solicited from the floor. Again, if only one person stands, he or she is acclaimed. If more than one nominee allows his or her name to stand, an election is held.

13. But if once again no nominees agree to be candidates for the position, then it is declared vacant and an election can be held for that position at a subsequent meeting. Note: If you do not elect all positions at your triennial meeting, or do not have the quorum required (found in your local by-laws, if you have approved by-laws) to hold elections, you may lessen or eliminate your local's ability to participate fully in training and elections in the fall.
14. At the close of elections, a resolution, from the floor, should be put forward to destroy the ballots. Ballots should be disposed of at the direction of a motion from the floor.
15. The Officers who have been elected must take the officer's pledge from Section 5.9 of the NSGEU Constitution and By-Laws.
16. The names of those who won election should be recorded on the appropriate forms, and returned to the NSGEU Head office. Between triennial meetings, a letter or email from the secretary or president, reporting the results of an election, is acceptable.
17. The chair for elections, returns the meeting to the president or meeting chair.







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