

Your Rights



Joining a Union

In Ontario your right to join a Union is protected by Law

The Ontario Labour Relations Act (OLRA)

In Ontario the OLRA protects the rights of workers to join a Union. Sections 70 and 72 of the OLRA prohibit employers from interfering with an employee's right to join a union and ensures that employees are free from coercion, intimidation, threats, promises or undue influence, including reprisals for their support and involvement with the union. If the employer violates those rights CUPE will file an Unfair Labour Practice application with the Labour Board.

Signing a CUPE membership card

In order to join CUPE you must complete, sign and date a CUPE membership card. Once you have completed it, mail it in to the postage paid envelope or drop it off with one of our Organizers. Signing a membership card is a requirement under the Ontario Labour Relations Act.

Once CUPE has received cards from at least 50% of the non union employees then CUPE will file an Application for Certification. When CUPE files the Application the membership cards are sent to the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) with the Application.

The cards are completely confidential and the employer will never know who signed a card.

When CUPE files the Application for Certification the Employer is served with a copy of the Application (not the membership cards). Five business days following the filing of the Application an Officer from **the OLRB comes out to the workplace and holds a secret ballot vote. No one will ever know how you voted.**

The vote is what determines whether CUPE is successful or not. It is a simple majority vote, so if 500 people come out to vote and 251 vote in favour of joining the union then everyone will become part of the union. Signing the CUPE membership card is the first step in joining CUPE but it is important to remember that the vote is what determines whether CUPE is successful.

Freeze Provision

The OLRA also has a 'freeze' provision which means that your working conditions are frozen from the date the application is filed until you have your 1st Collective Agreement. This prevents employers from reducing wages and working conditions as a 'punishment' for joining the union. The employer is forced to carry on business as usual.



Contact us for more information:
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Not intended to solicit workers already represented by a trade union