

CMAW OWNER'S MANUAL

A close-up, high-angle photograph of a man's face, likely a construction worker. He is wearing a bright orange hard hat and clear safety glasses. His expression is neutral and focused. The background is solid black, which makes the worker's face and gear stand out prominently.

MARCH, 2008

MEMBERS DRIVE THE UNION

That's the thinking behind an "owner's manual" for you as a member of CMAW, the Construction, Maintenance and Allied Workers Union.

CMAW was formed when the BC Provincial Council of Carpenters broke away from the carpenters international union based in Washington, DC, to form an independent Canadian union controlled by its members here in Canada. CMAW holds the certifications formerly held by the Provincial Council of Carpenters, and is dedicated to organizing in the non-union and other sectors to represent carpenters and other workers who want to enjoy the benefits of a truly Canadian union.

CMAW is affiliated with CEP - Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union -- one of Canada's largest unions, representing 150,000 workers from one end of Canada to the other. CEP members work at pulp and paper mills, telephone companies, and in the oil, gas, chemical and mining industries. They are printers, journalists, radio and TV broadcasters, graphic artists, hotel workers, IT workers, truck drivers, construction workers, school board employees - you name it, CEP members do it. CEP was formed in 1992 as an independent Canadian union through a merger of three smaller unions which historically had their headquarters in the United States.

This booklet contains some basic information about how CMAW works - what we do, how we do it, how union dues

are set, how policies are set, the structure of the union and who to contact if you have a problem or to become more involved. For more detailed information about specific campaigns and events, policy papers, news, or to keep up to date on the day-to-day priorities of your union, visit the CMAW website at CMAW.ca, or the CEP website at CEP.ca.

A glossary is provided at the back, as some of the terms in this booklet may be unfamiliar to newer union members.

WHAT WE DO

MEMBERSHIP IN CMAW MEANS A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

CMAW negotiates pay increases, job security, shorter work time, better pensions, sick leave, accident and life insurance, vacations, parental leave, health and safety protection, employee assistance plans for personal and family problems, grievance procedures, and lots more.

Members get professional representation, be it at the collective bargaining table, at grievance hearings, or for workers' compensation claims.

Our union education program includes training for union stewards, union leadership seminars and workshops for local treasurers. CEP's Mentorship Program helps ensure a steady supply of local activists.

The CMAW website is updated daily with news and information about our union's activities. And every CMAW

member receives our regular newsletter by mail. In addition, members whose locals pay affiliation dues to CEP receive a copy of the CEP Journal mailed to their homes.

CMAW and CEP places a high priority on the health and safety of its members. We provide expert advice to locals, and CEP also publishes a newsletter on health and safety issues.

Our union is affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), a national umbrella organization covering some 2.3 million workers. When all these workers get together we are a force to be reckoned with by political decision makers. Our membership in the CLC also entitles us to participate in district labour councils across BC, and to participate as members of the BC Federation of Labour.

Through the CLC and CEP we are affiliated with various international organizations that keep track of the activities of multinational companies.

A NEW KIND OF UNION IN CONSTRUCTION

CMAW members are carpenters shipbuilders, scaffolders, lathers, cabinetmakers, display technicians, industrial workers, employees in school boards and many other specialized workers. And as an independent Canadian union CMAW is also organizing workers in construction and other fields on an all-employee basis, where a number of different crafts or specialties are represented under a single, comprehensive collective agreement. An all-employee certification is particularly appropriate where a project might require workers from a dozen or more

separate trades or specialties on the site at the same time.

In pursuit of these goals, CMAW and CEP have established a national Construction Strategy Committee comprising representatives from across the country including representatives from CEP's partner in Quebec --Federation des Travailleurs du Quebec Construction (FTQ) -- to work on organizing on a national scale.

It's easy to see why workers want to join CMAW. That's why we're busy unionizing new workplaces all the time.

HOW WE DO IT

Of course none of this happens without a lot of work on the part of CMAW's elected officers and its full-time staff.

Decisions about what's to be done and how to do it are made democratically at the CMAW convention, which is held every year. Convention delegates, who are elected in their Local, elect the CMAW Executive Board, which governs the union between conventions. The President and Secretary Treasurer of CMAW are elected at convention every three years.

WE MANAGE OUR OWN BENEFITS

Construction work differs from many other lines of work in that the workers rarely work for one employer all the

time. Except for shop workers and some others, most construction carpenters work on a project basis for whichever contractor hires them for that job.

Because of this, our collective agreements provide that the portion of your wage and benefits package which cover health coverage and the pension plan are sent by your employer directly to your account at the Carpentry Workers Benefit and Pension Plans, which has offices in the Carpenters Building on Kingsway Avenue in Vancouver. These plans are administered by this organization on your behalf, and benefits are paid to you from the plan as required.

The convention elects seven trustees who manage the Carpentry Workers Health and Benefit Plans. Details on how this organization works on your behalf can be found at cwbp.ca

Names of all these elected officers and contact information including email addresses and phone numbers can be found in the CMAW web site, at CMAW.ca

CMAW AND CEP - A POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP

When CMAW established itself as an independent Canadian union it sought an affiliation with a national union with a similar history and development. The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union filled the bill perfectly. It is a dynamic national union which represents a wide variety of workers in diverse fields, and each of its constituent unions had severed their ties with the international unions based in Washington. Their

similar histories made a good match for the members of both organizations.

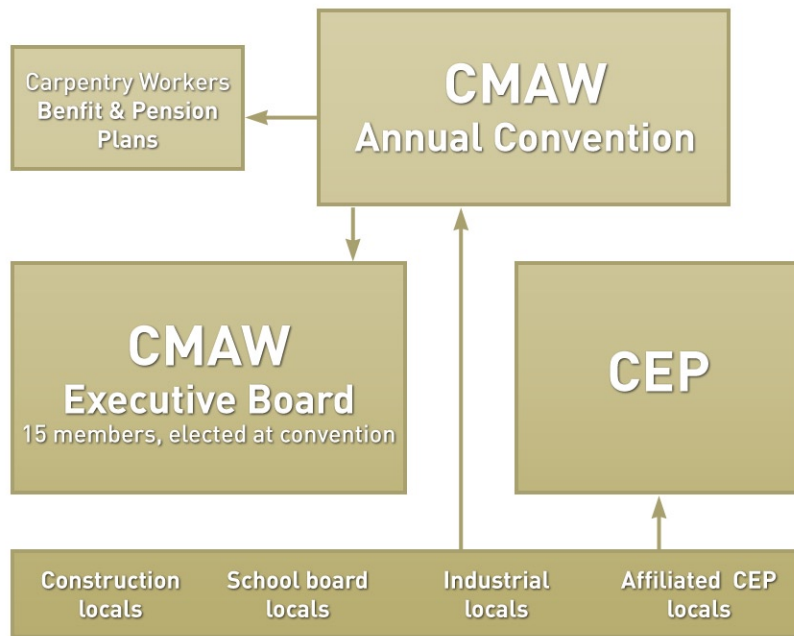
CMAW has its office in Vancouver and most of locals also have offices. For a complete list of locals and contact numbers, go to the website CMAW.ca

CEP national headquarters is in Ottawa and there are regional offices in the Atlantic Region, Québec, Ontario, and the Western Region - with full-time executive board members in each. The Western Region office is located in Vancouver. Four members from each region - half of the board - continue to work at their regular jobs while serving as executive board members. These people are commonly referred to as rank-and-file board members. At least one of those four is a woman. In addition, almost 200 full-time staff work in the 17 CEP offices from St. John's to Vancouver.

CMAW STRUCTURE

Getting involved at the local union level is the best way to make sure that your union - Construction Maintenance and Allied Workers Bargaining Council -- takes positions you can support.

CMAW is a bargaining council comprising 16 local units covering about 200 different certifications, mainly in BC. It is governed by an Executive council comprising 19 members, elected at the CMAW convention. The President and the Secretary Treasurer are full-time employees of CMAW, and are elected every three years. The Executive Board meets six times year, and has



established separate committees dealing with finance, apprenticeship, education and training to help it complete its work. Click Here (<http://cmaw.ca/about/prov-council.php>) to view a list of current members of the Executive Board.

LOCAL UNITS

The majority vote of members is how your local unit elects officers, sets dues, decides bargaining priorities and decides who will participate in conventions, educational seminars and other union events.

Want to get in on the action? Taking part in union meetings is a good start.

YOUR LOCAL EXECUTIVE

Every local unit of CMAW has an elected executive to run its day to day affairs. In most larger local units the senior officers are paid employees who work part time or full-time on behalf of the members. Your local executive will usually include a:

- **President** who co-ordinates all the work of the local. He or she plans and chairs regular union meetings, and sees that CMAW policies are carried out at the local level as set out by the membership of the local by-laws.
- **Vice-president** - the president's right-hand person. Locals with several hundred workers usually have more than one vice-president.
- **Local secretary** who takes minutes of local meetings, handles correspondence and maintains files.
- **Financial officer** (sometimes called the treasurer or secretary-treasurer) who collects all monies paid to the local union, including membership dues, fines and assessments and is responsible for properly accounting for all funds. He or she keeps a record of all the names and addresses of local members.

If you have a problem...

You can get the most out of your union by knowing who to call if you have a question or a problem.

If, for example, you're having a dispute with your supervisor, think you're working too much overtime, or are being harassed by management - see your union steward first.

UNION STEWARD

NAME: _____

PHONE (home): _____

PHONE (cell): _____

EMAIL: _____

The union steward is your official representative at the worksite. He or she will tell you if you have a legitimate complaint, and will accompany you when you talk to your supervisor about it. It is very important that you enlist the union steward's help in processing your complaint or grievance, especially if it ends up being taken to the higher stages outlined in your collective agreement. He or she will act as a witness to any statements or commitments made. The steward can also explain any part of the collective agreement to you.

LOCAL PRESIDENT

NAME: _____

PHONE (home): _____

PHONE (work): _____

EMAIL: _____

The local union president is the chairperson of the local executive board which administers the local's day-to-day affairs. In locals with more than one bargaining unit, there are also elected chairpersons from each bargaining unit who sit on the local executive board.

DUES DOLLARS THAT MAKE SENSE

Be it at the negotiating table, at the worksite, at the provincial legislature or on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, your union dues make it possible for your union to obtain a better standard of living for you.

Your local union decides by a vote of the members the amount of the dues which will be taken off your pay every month. Your local union keeps a portion of the dues to finance your local activities. A portion is sent to CMAW to fund its activities, including an amount which is sent as dues to the Canadian Labour Congress through the CEP. In addition, most CMAW local unions have also voted to pay dues directly to CEP which provides the local with

access to CEP's strike fund, their legal and defense fund, their publications and other services provided directly by CEP. It also entitles the local to send delegates to the CEP National Convention. Every penny of the dues you pay is tax-deductible.

Your local officers who can advise you of the details of the dues which your local union members have voted to support union activities at local, provincial and national levels.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Each local determines its own spending priorities. Local expenses can include the cost for time off work for officers to carry out union duties, costs for sending delegates to union courses, conventions and special meetings, and for grievance arbitrations, lawyers or other advisors. Some larger locals also hire staff, maintain offices and some even own office buildings.

Local unions typically provide a financial report at each meeting of its executive council, so members are able to see the detail of where their dues dollars are coming from, and what they're being spent on. At the end of each year the audited statements of the local are tabled, giving members another opportunity to see how funds are being spent.

The CMAW Executive Board also sees regular financial reports from the Secretary Treasurer, and audited financial statements and a budget are presented to the annual convention for discussion, debate and approval.

All union funds are fully accounted for all the time, and at all levels.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Arbitration - A final and binding means of settling workplace problems or grievances. Arbitration procedures are spelled out in the collective agreement.

Audited financial report - A report about the state of the union's finances that has been compiled and reviewed, according to standard accounting practice, by a Chartered Accountant.

Bargaining unit - A group of workers in a craft, department, plant, firm, industry or occupation, determined by a labour relations board or similar body as appropriate for representation by a union for purposes of collective bargaining.

Canadian Labour Congress - Most union organizations in Canada are members of the CLC, including national and international unions, the provincial and territorial federations of labour and district labour councils. It is the national voice for labour in Canada.

Caucus - A group of union members with something in common, normally equity-seeking groups -- such as, women, Aboriginal workers, or workers with disabilities - who meet to pursue common goals. Meetings often take place before annual or biennial conventions of national or international unions.

Collective agreement - A contract (agreement and contract are used interchangeably) between one or more

unions - acting as a bargaining agent - and the employer, covering wages, hours, working conditions, fringe benefits, rights of workers and unions, and procedures to be followed in settling disputes and grievances.

Collective bargaining - A method of determining wages, hours and other conditions of employment through direct negotiations between the union and employer. Normally the result of collective bargaining is a written contract which covers all employees in the bargaining unit, both union members and non-union members, called a collective agreement.

Certification - The process by which a union becomes the exclusive bargaining agent for a group of employees on the basis of having received signed membership cards in sufficient numbers to satisfy the requirements of the labour relations board, typically 50 per cent.

District labour council - An organization composed of locals of CLC-affiliated unions in a given community or district.

Employee Assistance Plan - An employee- benefits program that normally covers the costs of professional counseling and treatment for employees who suffer from workplace and home-related stresses, disorders and addictions.

Federation of labour - A federation, chartered by the Canadian Labour Congress, grouping local unions and labour councils in a given province.

Grievance - A formal complaint that alleges a violation of language in the collective agreement.

Grievance procedure - A procedure for settling disputes that is normally spelled out in the collective bargaining agreement.

Labour Relations Board - an organization which has statutory responsibility to resolve grievances in labour relations between unions and employers, and to generally facilitate good labour/management practices in unionized workplaces. Each province has a labour board for workplace which have a provincial certification, and there is a national labour relations board which regulates federally-certified workplaces.

Local activist - A member who is actively involved in the union at the local level.

Local executive - A group elected to administer the affairs of the local on behalf of its membership.

Local union -The basic unit of union organization. Trade unions are usually divided into a number of local administrations. These locals have their own constitutions and elect their own officers; they are usually responsible for the negotiation and day-to-day administration of the collective agreements covering their members.

National convention - A meeting attended by union delegates, most of whom are elected to attend by members of their local. The national convention is sometimes referred to as the "supreme governing body" of the union. Delegates set the union's priorities by adopting policies and resolutions. They also elect a National Executive Board, including a full- time president, vice-presidents, and rank and file members who govern until the next convention.

National representative - A union employee who negotiates contracts, handles disputes and guides local union officers and members.

National union - The CEP office that is located in Ottawa is sometimes referred to as the national union as it works in the interest of all members right across the country.

Parental leave - A clause in the collective agreement that allows an employee to take time off work, paid or unpaid, to care for a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare. Often the term parental leave includes maternity, paternity and adoption leave.

Regional office - CEP has regional offices in each of the four regions of the country to deal with members' concerns in those geographic areas.

Union dues - Payments by union members for the financial support of their union.

Union Steward - A member in the workplace elected to represent a specific group of members and to deal with grievance matters and other employment-related issues.

WHY JOIN THE CMAW?

There are many good reasons. Here are just a few:

PART OF A TEAM

Workers band together in a union to bargain collectively for better working conditions. Collective bargaining ends with a collective agreement -- a legally binding contract between the employer and employees. The collective agreement outlines working conditions, including benefits, wages, hours of work and much more.

JOB SECURITY

If you are a union member, and you're fired without just cause, your union can get your job back. If you're not unionized and you're fired for no good reason, there is nothing in the law that forces your employer to hire you back. You could file a wrongful dismissal suit, but the only remedy is money.

HIGHER PAY

Jobs covered by a union collective agreement pay an average of 32% more than jobs that are not. (Click here For More Information on the latest available Statistics Canada data.)

BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS

From hours of work to health and safety to harassment protection, unionized workers have a better work environment. They have somewhere to turn if they need help.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Your collective agreement will spell out the steps to take if you have a grievance against your employer, or against a supervisor or co-worker. Unionized workers also have access to legal representation if necessary.

ACCESS TO MORE WORK

If you are a construction worker, CMAW is for you. As a member, you have access to excellent construction jobs ranging from the oil sands of Alberta, to the high-rise condominiums of Vancouver. We dispatch workers in every town in British Columbia, and we are gaining more work opportunities across Canada every day. We have also made 2010 Olympic work available to our members.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeship is an agreement between an apprentice who wants to learn a trade, and an employer who needs a skilled worker. In construction, the union takes on the apprentice, who will then move from job to job. In shops, carpenter apprentices are indentured directly with the employers. An apprenticeship in carpentry is four years long, and they begin work at 50% of a journeyperson's wage, and this amount increases 5 per cent every six months until you've completed your apprenticeship. Union apprentices also have medical and dental and all other benefits in the collective agreement. For more details go to our section on Apprenticeships on the CMAW web site. (<http://cmaw.ca/apprenticeship/>)