

National Workers' Union

***Code
of
Good
Practice***

2005



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1 Code of Good Practice

This *Code of Good Practice* sets out the ethical and administrative protocols to be adhered to within the Union and sets the standards which the Union aims to achieve and maintain at all times.

2 Organisation

The Branch is the cornerstone of the Union's organisation. It is the means by which members become involved in the Union and policies are implemented locally and therefore:

- 2.1 Branches will, whenever possible, be employer based;
- 2.2 the Union will ensure at all times that Branches are organisationally strong;
- 2.3 the Union will at all time times develop and maintain a strong workplace organisation through an effective stewards structure. Union Stewards will be elected for all groups of members based on such factors as group, shift or occupation;
- 2.4 the Union will ensure that there is appropriate training for new Officers.

3 Members Rights

All members should be able to exercise their rights as set out in the Union's *Rules* and in particular to:

- 3.1 receive information about the Union and its work on a regular basis;
- 3.2 take part in meetings, discussions and educational activities arranged by the Union to meet their trade union, working and domestic needs;
- 3.3 stand for election to any office open to them under the Union *Rules*;
- 3.4 vote for policies, representatives and delegates;
- 3.5 hold to account those representatives and delegates elected on their behalf;
- 3.6 participate in the development, change and implementation of policy;
- 3.7 raise questions about any matter and receive a considered reply within a reasonable time;
- 3.8 have access to a wide range of Union services;
- 3.9 have minimum guaranteed standards of advice, representation and service.

4 New Members

New members will receive a *New Members Pack* which will contain:

- 4.1 information about the Union, its aims and policies;
- 4.2 the Union's *Rule Book*;
- 4.3 the Union's *Code of Good Practice*;
- 4.4 details of their Branch and Branch Officers;
- 4.5 a Membership Card;
- 4.6 details of the Collective Agreement covering their workplace.

5 Responding to members

The Union is the membership. The members must be treated with respect at all times and therefore:

- 5.1 all correspondence received by the Union will be acknowledged within forty-eight (48) hours and a comprehensive answer given at the earliest opportunity. Members will, at all times, be kept advised of the progress that is being made in answering their correspondence;
- 5.2 all messages will be responded to within forty-eight (48) hours.

6 Representation – individual members

It is important to ensure that members' trade disputes are dealt with in an efficient and transparent way and therefore:

- 6.1 all members have the right to expect that any matter they raise with the Union will be dealt with in the strictest confidence;
- 6.2 no meetings will be held concerning the members' matter without the member being present unless this has been agreed in advance;
- 6.3 the member will receive copies of all correspondence and other documents on their matter;
- 6.4 no settlement will be made concerning the members' matter unless it is agreed by the parties concerned;
- 6.5 all matters will be referred to the Ministry of Labour within six (6) months as required by law;
- 6.6 all matters at the Industrial Court will be dealt with within the time limits set by the Court.

7 Representation – collective issues

Because the working class finds its strength through collectivism, it is central to the work of the Union that Branches will be actively involved in all collective issues and therefore:

- 7.1 Branches will be actively involved in developing their own proposals for Collective Agreements and other collective matters;
- 7.2 no meetings will be held on collective issues without appropriate representation from the Branches;
- 7.3 no agreement will be made on behalf of members on collective issues except through the Branches.

8 Union democracy

The democratic involvement of members is the lifeblood of the Union and the guarantee of a healthy and vibrant organisation. Union members have the right to participatory democracy through:

- 8.1 work group meetings;
- 8.2 Branch meetings.

Efforts should be made to ensure that discussion and debate takes place in an atmosphere that is not aggressive or overly procedural. Standing Orders should be used to aid the organisation, not as a tool to exclude or restrict discussion or participation.

In organising meetings, the Union will ensure that:

- 8.3 proper notice is given;
- 8.4 people with disabilities have adequate access;

- 8.5 the times and locations of meeting are compatible for members with family responsibilities;
- 8.6 members' wishes on smoking during meetings and on using premises where alcohol can be consumed are taken into account.

Members must have faith in the electoral integrity of the procedures in the Union and therefore all elections will be:

- 8.7 based on the principle of *One Member One Vote*;
- 8.8 free from intimidation and any internal or external pressure;
- 8.9 fair and transparent at all stages;
- 8.10 organised within the time limits set out in the *Rules* of the Union.

9 Financial Principles

The Union is an organisation of the working class and as such is not a means by which individuals should be allowed to make personal gain.

Officers of the Union are the custodians of the members' money and will at all times base their financial dealings on honesty, transparency and discipline. As such, no Officer will:

- 9.1 take money for representing members except as agreed by the General Council;
- 9.2 claim expenses from the Union when no expenses have been incurred or when expenses have already been paid by another organisation;
- 9.3 accept payments for representing the Union except as agreed by the General Council.

In making payments, the Union will:

- 9.4 reimburse any agreed expenses or pay any benefits or settlements within five (5) working days of a claim being submitted.

10 Employment for members

Workers survive by selling their labour. Whilst the Union believes that there should be a right to work, the capitalist economic system is incapable of meeting this elementary demand. Therefore, the Union will:

- 10.1 endeavour to find work for its members and accordingly maintain a list of unemployed members;
- 10.2 as a principle, seek to incorporate in any Collective Agreements that the Union will be given first opportunity to nominate workers for job vacancies;
- 10.3 secure employment opportunities only for Union members;
- 10.4 develop a fair and transparent way of prioritising job offers.

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