



Using labor-management meetings effectively

Article 17, Section 5.A. of the National Agreement provides for labor-management committee meetings. These types of meetings can be held at national, area and local levels and at such other intermediate levels as may be appropriate.

To improve the workplace, local branches should meet with management on a regular basis to discuss issues or concerns. A wide variety of topics can be covered at these meetings. Some examples are leave, overtime, handling of mail, posting of positions, holiday scheduling, maintenance issues, work environment, vehicles and safety.

Meetings should be scheduled with ample advance notice at a mutually agreeable time. It is important to circulate an agenda of the topics for discussion to inform the parties who will be in attendance. This will give them the

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opportunity to prepare and bring relevant information pertaining to the agenda item(s) to the meeting.

During the meeting, the parties sometimes conclude that a subcommittee is needed to review or analyze information and report back to the committee at a subsequent meeting. This is an effective tool for the parties to utilize when the allotted time for the meeting is insufficient.

Someone should be designated to take minutes of the meeting. The key parties should review the minutes and approve them before their dissemination.

A few problems that sometimes occur with labor-management meetings are having no agenda, no advance notice, failure of the parties to control the meeting, decision-makers not in attendance, complaining, not looking for solutions, or the meeting becoming a lecture.

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as conduits for working on solutions to everyday questions that arise. Labor-management meetings are mechanisms to discuss items that can relieve problems in the workplace, making a better environment for all.

Getting involved

“Getting involved” is more than just a couple of words. It is a commitment to making a difference. That is what each NALC member needs to do when it comes to his or her workplace environment. How many times have you heard on the workroom floor, “Things will never change here”? Well, they can change, and it takes the members to step up and let their voices be heard.

In talking with branch members and local branch leaders, one of the biggest issues is that no one seems to want to be involved. If there are problems in the work unit, no one will come forward and provide specific details as to what is going on or report what may have happened. Well, that is just not acceptable! To let a brother or sister be subjected to mistreat-

ment is just wrong. This is where members need to aid their co-workers.

If you see an injustice, you should report it to your shop steward and provide a detailed written statement of the incident as soon as possible so you can capture what took place while it is fresh in your mind. This is extremely important, as the shop steward may need you to testify in the future.

To withhold or not report an incident only perpetuates the situation and usually makes things worse. Providing the truth should never be a problem for anyone.

There are mechanisms in place for the membership to seek assistance. Your local shop steward, local union officials and/or your national business agent can help you. By seeking their assistance and aid, things can change; however, it takes everyone to get involved. 