

Did You Know? Executive Duties or What the heck have you been doing?

FROM THE "Did You Know?" E-MAIL SERIES PROVIDED BY THE
NOVA SCOTIA UNION OF PUBLIC & PRIVATE EMPLOYEES

Members may often think that because they haven't heard about anything going on that the union is doing nothing. But NSUPE Local Executives are always kept hopping – even in the dog days of summer (if we were ever to have any dog days in the Maritimes, that is).

The variety of issues that can crop up is amazing. For example, one day not so long ago, the Executive of Local 13 had to consider all of the following:

- Can HRM require some employees to use their own vehicles? (A. Yes. We grieved that before and lost.)
- Who has preference in a job appointment, a temp. with four years' seniority or a permanent employee with two years' seniority? (A. The collective agreement says the permanent employee.)
- How do I get my job re-evaluated? (A. Follow the process in the collective agreement.)
- Can the HRM Call Centre record all calls? (A. We don't think so but we'll have to ask an arbitrator to find out for sure.)
- How do we resolve an air quality problem at one of our work locations? (A. The short answer is through the Occupational Health and Safety Committee. The long answer is ... well too long to write here.)
- Was the testing for an IT Consultant job properly carried out? (A. We'll need to discuss it with HRM.)
- How do I get this attendance support letter removed from my file? (A. We'll talk to HRM about your compelling circumstances.)
- How do benefits work while I'm on deferred salary leave? (A. As long as the insurer permits it, they continue as if you're at work.)
- and so on, and so on...

The issues in other Locals might be different – and so might the answers to the same questions – but they're often just as busy. Needless to say, executives have to quickly educate themselves on the collective agreement, past practice and the law (with the help of the business agent/lawyers, of course) and make decisions on issues some of them never even thought about before joining the executive.

Why don't you hear about all this stuff? In some cases, it's a matter of confidentiality; in others it's because the circumstances are so specific to the individuals involved; but mostly it's because no one has time to write it all down for you. Many of the answers above required numerous e-mails, questions, explanations, research and lots and lots of follow up.

Since you're now thinking about all your Executive members do, also give some thought to the fact that they're all volunteers and have their own jobs to do too. We can't say thank you to them enough!

One last thing: did we mention that many NSUPE Locals have elections for Executive positions coming up? Just think of the opportunity you have to learn and to serve.

NOTE: The Did You Know? series is general information only. For advice specific to your workplace or personal circumstances, please contact a union representative. Comments are welcome at nsupe@ns.sympatico.ca. For back issues of Did You Know, look under "News" on the NSUPE website: www.nsupe.ca.