

ALL-IN FOR HEALTH CARE

STRIKE FACT SHEET

September 06, 2024

Are we going to strike?

CUPE health care support members in the WRHA (Facility and Community), Shared Health (Facility and Community), and Southern Health-Sante Sud (Community) are in a strike position.

While no strike has been called at this time, strike preparation is ramping up, and members are encouraged to put their names forward to be a picket captain by visiting this link: cupe.mb.ca/members/picketcaptains.

A strike is only successful if we show solidarity and support for each other. Health care support workers go all-in every day for Manitobans, and we want the government to go all in for health care support workers too. As we continue to negotiate, we want to provide answers to some frequently asked questions about a potential strike. **We will continue to update these FAQs with new or changed information as we get closer to any potential strike.**

How does strike pay work?

Strike pay starts on the first day of a strike. The minimum weekly strike pay per CUPE's National Strike Fund regulations is \$300/week for 20 hours/week of strike duties for the first seven weeks. Then it increases to \$350/week for weeks 8 to 12, \$375/week for weeks 12 to 16, and \$400/week starting week 16. Additional strike pay will be determined by locals; more information to follow in coming days.

Your weekly strike pay will be prorated if you do less than 20 hours of picket duty. There is no additional pay for doing more than 20 hours/week of strike duties. Strike pay is the same for everyone regardless of their wage. Strike pay is not taxed.

What do I have to do to get strike pay?

You need to perform picket duties. For most people, this means you must walk a picket line at a designated picket location in 4-hour shifts. If you are not physically able to walk a picket line, there are other duties that can be done. You would need to contact your Strike Coordinator if you require an accommodation for alternate duties. The Strike Coordinators for each local will be shared if/when we serve notice to go on strike.

What about my benefits?

CUPE pays for the premiums of your group life and extended health benefits for the duration of the strike. If you work essential services shifts you will be paid by the Employer just like normal. Therefore, your benefit premiums would be deducted, and coverage will continue. The pension plan deductions will NOT be paid by CUPE.

Where will the picket lines be?

In a strike, there will be a limited number of picket locations with a focus on larger sites with more public visibility. The Union will provide picket location information to all members if there is a strike. Some members will not be picketing at their own job site but at the next closest worksite that has been designated as a picket location. We are looking into group transportation options like shuttle buses to help everyone get to the nearest picket location. Alternate picket duties will be provided for any members in small sites that are distant from designated picket locations.

What if I am on a leave of absence for medical or other reasons?

If the third-party insurer [HEB Manitoba, Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI), Workers Compensation (WCB), City of Winnipeg, etc.] cuts you off because of the strike, CUPE will provide you with strike pay in lieu. Please contact your Strike Coordinator once a strike is declared if you are on LTD, WCB, MPI, etc.

What do Essential Services Agreements (ESAs) mean?

By provincial law, ESAs must be in place in the health sector before a strike. ESAs outline which positions must continue to be filled during a strike to ensure a baseline of care and medical services. ESAs are

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negotiated between the Union and Employer for each unit. On average, about 70% of shifts will continue to be staffed. Some members will work fewer shifts than their EFT and be able to do some strike duties and receive some strike pay. Depending on the classification, some members will have no shifts and be fully on strike. Most members will still have to work some shifts per ESA baselines.

What if I have to work an essential services shift?

Essential services shifts will be shared amongst members qualified to work in that area. If you do work a shift, you will get paid normally from the Employer. You may also get deemed as a standby in the event of a sick call or emergency on your unit or department. If you are deemed standby, you must bring your work attire with you to the picket line in case you get called into work.

What if I have vacation booked during a strike?

Vacations are usually cancelled by the Employer if we go on strike. After a strike has ended CUPE will work with you to have vacation re-scheduled as per your Collective Agreement, as fairly as possible.

What happens with parking at picket locations?

The Union does not cover parking costs. We will attempt to share free/low-cost parking near picket locations. We also encourage members to ride share when possible.

What about my financial obligations like mortgage, rent, credit cards, car payment, loans, child support, etc.?

CUPE has a form letter that you will be able to send to financial institutions and creditors, notifying them of a strike and requesting adjusted payment conditions be arranged with you. Most financial institutions will help you put together a plan to deal with your situation in the event of a strike which may include allowing you to reduce payments, paying interest only charges, etc. Should we serve notice to strike, we highly recommend contacting your financial institution/credit cards, etc, right away to discuss a plan.

Am I eligible for Employment Insurance while on strike?

No.

Am I allowed to bring my children/pet(s) with me to the picket line? Friends and family?

Family members and service animals are permitted on the picket line. Supporters are certainly welcome to come and show their support for health care workers!

Is it still possible to go to binding arbitration if we go on strike?

Yes, after 60 days of being on legal strike either the Union or the Employers can apply to go to binding arbitration.

Do members still get to vote on the contract if we go to binding arbitration?

No. The arbitrator's decision is binding on both the Employer and the Union. There will be no opportunity for members to vote on an arbitrator's decision.

Do members vote again to go on strike?

No. Members have already given a strike mandate to the bargaining committee.

What are the consequences of not participating in strike activity (picket duties)?

Members need to do picket duty to receive strike pay. We are only as strong as our solidarity as union members. Our strength is in numbers. ESAs already reduce the size of our picket lines. The picket line is how we unite with one voice and show our commitment to being treated with respect and getting what we deserve. Picket duties are how we strike to win together: if there is a strike, we will emerge stronger and more united than ever!