

Teamsters **ORGANIZING TOOLKIT**





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WHO ARE THE TEAMSTERS?

The Teamsters are America's largest, most diverse union. In 1903, the Teamsters started as a merger of the two leading team driver associations. These drivers were the backbone of America's robust economic growth, but they needed to organize to wrest their fair share from greedy corporations. Today, the union's task is exactly the same.

The Teamsters are known as the champion of freight drivers and warehouse workers, but have organized workers in virtually every occupation imaginable, both professional and non-professional, private sector and public sector.

Our 1.3 million members are public defenders in Minnesota; vegetable workers in California; sanitation workers in New York; brewers in St. Louis; newspaper workers in Seattle; construction workers in Las Vegas; zookeepers in Pennsylvania; health care workers in Rhode Island; bakery workers in Maine; airline pilots, secretaries, and police officers. Name the occupation and chances are we represent those workers somewhere.

There are nearly 1,900 Teamsters affiliates throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico.

Teamsters stand ready to organize workers who want to bargain collectively. Once a contract is negotiated and signed, the union works to enforce it—holding management's feet to the fire and invoking contract grievance procedures if management chooses not to. Wages and benefits under Teamsters contracts are markedly better than those of nonunion employees in similar jobs. Teamsters contracts guarantee decent wages, fair promotion, health coverage, job security, paid time-off, and retirement income.

The Teamsters Union also performs vital tasks in pension management, safety and health standards, community outreach, governmental affairs, and communications. For more than a century, the Teamsters have been a public voice for the rights and aspirations of working men and women, and a key player in securing them.



Our Rights Under the Law

To protect workers from the illegal tactics many employers use to stop you from organizing, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) gives workers rights:

- ☒ The right to join or help organize a union without being harassed or punished by our employer.
- ☒ The right to have meetings at lunchtime or break time in non-work areas on company property without being harassed or punished by our employer.
- ☒ The right to talk about the union, distribute union materials, or ask our co-workers to join the union on non-work time (including lunch and breaks) in non-work areas (break rooms, locker rooms, etc.).
- ☒ The right to go to union meetings and wear union buttons—in most cases—without interference from our boss or supervisors.
- ☒ The right to hold demonstrations and rallies about the union or about work problems.

When we support the union or engage in any of these activities, federal law protects us from harassment by our employer. This means our employer may not:

- ✗ Fire, discipline, lay off, or cut our hours for supporting the union.
- ✗ Spy, or pretend to spy, on our union activities.
- ✗ Threaten or question us about the union.
- ✗ Deny us the right to participate in forming a union.
- ✗ Pressure us not to join a union.



ORGANIZING IS OUR RIGHT.
LET'S SECURE OUR FUTURE WITH A UNION CONTRACT.

ROADMAP TO WINNING *a Teamsters Contract*

1. Form a representative organizing committee amongst workers from all departments.
2. Establish majority union support.
3. Petition for an election and file with the National Labor Relations Board.
4. Maintain supermajority union support.
5. Election Day – Vote YES for Teamsters representation.
6. Bargaining committee is elected amongst workers to help negotiate the contract.
7. Bargaining surveys are circulated to establish priorities for contract negotiations.
8. Contract is negotiated.
9. Workers vote to accept the contract.
10. If contract is ratified, workers are now covered by a Teamsters contract.



STRAIGHT FACTS

On Union Dues

- **NO INITIATION FEE**

You will NOT pay any initiation fee when you become Teamsters. This is because you will be a newly organized unit. Any new hire that starts after you and your co-workers become Teamsters may be assessed an initiation fee based on local union bylaws.

- **DUES ARE 2.5 TIMES OUR BASE HOURLY RATE, PER MONTH**

The Teamsters dues rate is your hourly base rate, multiplied by 2.5, assessed monthly. For example, if you make \$20 per hour, your monthly dues will be \$50. In some cases, local membership may have added an additional assessment. You will be notified if this applies to you.

- **YOUR DUES STAY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

Unlike other unions, the overwhelming majority of Teamsters dues – at least 78 percent – stays with your local union for direct services and support to our members.

- **DUES ARE SET AND APPROVED BY THE MEMBERS**

Teamsters dues rates based upon hourly rates of pay are set and approved by the membership. Dues increases are rare and must be voted on by the members.

- **YOU WON'T PAY DUES UNTIL AFTER YOU HAVE A TEAMSTERS CONTRACT**

Dues are not assessed until after the collective bargaining agreement is implemented. Your union contract must be ratified by a direct vote from you and your coworkers before it can be implemented.



TEAMSTERS
REAL UNION, REAL POWER

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING *Teamsters Contract Negotiations*



After you vote to form your union, everything will mostly remain the same.



During negotiations, you have the opportunity to sit down with the company to discuss improvements **YOU** want.



Once the contract has been negotiated, **YOU** and your co-workers will have the opportunity to vote by a secret ballot on the contract.



The company may tell you joining a union is bad for you. This is a lie.



The company may tell you that contract negotiations must start from scratch. This is a lie.



The company wants to maintain complete control of the workforce. This is wrong – and why you need a union.



Having a *Strong Teamsters Contract* means that **YOU** will have a say in your future and get a legally binding agreement with improved wages, better benefits, and safe working conditions!

THE JUST CAUSE STANDARD



NOTICE

Did management adequately warn workers of the consequences of their conduct?

REASONABLE RULE

Was management's rule reasonably related to efficient and safe operations?

INVESTIGATION

Did management investigate before issuing discipline?

OBJECTIVITY

Was the investigation fair and free from bias?

PROOF

Did the investigation produce substantial evidence or proof of wrongdoing?

EQUAL TREATMENT

Were the rules, orders, and penalties applied evenly and without discrimination to all workers?

PENALTY

Was the penalty reasonably related to the seriousness of the offence and the past record?

*Without the **"JUST CAUSE" STANDARD** that comes with a Teamsters contract, you will remain an at-will employee. This means that the boss can discipline whoever they want, whenever they want, however they want.*

PREPARE FOR **UNION-BUSTING**

Your employer WILL run an intense anti-union campaign and you will get sick of it — but standing strong and seeing past it to your goal of bargaining a Teamsters contract will be worth it! Here is what to expect:

- **CAPTIVE AUDIENCE MEETINGS**
Mandatory "forced" meetings full of misinformation, lies and scare tactics. The goal is to confuse and scare workers. *Illegal in several states*
- **ONE-ON-ONE MEETING**
Management will drill it down to a personal level. The goal is to lean on relationships. They will say, "We do not need a union."
- **RIDE-ALONG**
Management is in your truck/personal space all day. Their goal is to dive deeper into your personal life and get to know you and your family.
- **BAD ACTORS**
Bring in anti-union workers from other facilities and well-liked supervisors who have retired or transferred. These "company pets/favorites" will be instructed to work alongside you and your co-workers daily. The goal is to have one-on-one conversations, spread false information, pit workers against each other, divide/disrupt the workplace, and then snitch to management what they heard and learned.
- **ANTI-UNION LITERATURE AND CONTENT IN COMMON AREAS**
Management wants as much misinformation out there as possible on dues, strikes, third-party, bargaining, Teamsters constitution. The goal is to confuse workers with an overload of misinformation.
- **SCARE LETTER TO YOUR HOME**
Management wants to instigate issues in your home. The goal is to get your spouse concerned that forming a union will negatively affect any family security currently in place.



Do not let anyone treat you like a child or question your intelligence to know the facts! To successfully form your union unfortunately you will have to push through anti-union attacks.
ARE YOU READY?



WHAT EMPLOYERS AND SUPERVISORS CANNOT LEGALLY DO

As we work to form our union, the employer may try to get us to not support the union. This is typical anti-worker, anti-union corporate behavior. They may want to scare and intimidate us. Please see the list below of what the company and supervisors can **NOT** legally do.

1. They can **NOT** attend any union meetings, park across the street from a meeting place, or engage in any undercover activity which would indicate that the employees are being kept under surveillance to determine who is and is not participating in the union program.
2. They can **NOT** tell employees that the company will fire or punish them if they engage in union activity.
3. They can **NOT** lay off, discharge, or discipline any employee for union activity.
4. They can **NOT** bar employees in support of the union from soliciting employees' memberships on or off the company property during nonworking time.
5. They can **NOT** grant employees wage increases, special concessions, or benefits in order to keep the union out.
6. They can **NOT** ask employees about union matters, meetings, etc. (Some employees may, of their own accord, walk up and tell of such matters, but to ask questions to obtain additional information is illegal.)
7. They can **NOT** ask employees what they think about the union or a union representative.
8. They can **NOT** ask employees how they intend to vote.
9. They can **NOT** threaten employees with reprisal for participation in union activities.
10. They can **NOT** promise to increase benefits to employees if they reject the union.
11. They can **NOT** give financial support or other assistance to employees or groups of employees who favor or oppose the union.
12. They can **NOT** announce that the company will not deal with the union.
13. They can **NOT** threaten to close, in fact close, or move a plant in order to avoid dealing with a union.
14. They can **NOT** ask employees whether they belong to a union or have signed up for union representation.
15. They can **NOT** ask employees, during the hiring interview, about their affiliation with a labor organization or how they feel about unions.
16. They can **NOT** act in a way that might show preference for a nonunion employee.
17. They can **NOT** make distinctions between union and nonunion employees when assigning overtime work or desirable work.

18. They can **NOT** purposely team up nonunion employees and keep them apart from those supporting the union.
19. They can **NOT** transfer workers on the basis of union affiliation or activities.
20. They can **NOT** choose employees to be laid off in order to weaken the union's strength or discourage membership in the union.
21. They can **NOT** discriminate against union people when disciplining employees.
22. They can **NOT** by nature of work assignments, create conditions intended to get rid of employees because of their union activity.
23. They can **NOT** fail to grant a scheduled benefit or wage increase because of union activity.
24. They can **NOT** deviate from company policy for the purpose of getting rid of a union supporter.
25. They can **NOT** take action that adversely affects an employee's job or pay rate because of union activity.
26. They can **NOT** threaten workers or coerce them in an attempt to influence their vote.
27. They can **NOT** threaten a union member through a third party.
28. They can **NOT** promise employees a reward or a future benefit if they decide to not join the union.
29. They can **NOT** tell employees overtime work (and premium pay) will be discontinued if the facility is unionized.
30. They can **NOT** say unionization will force the company to lay off employees.
31. They can **NOT** say unionization will do away with vacations or other benefits and privileges presently in effect.
32. They can **NOT** promise employees promotions, raises or other benefits if they get out of the union or refrain from joining the union.
33. They can **NOT** start a petition or circular against the union or encourage or take part in its circulation if started by employees
34. They can **NOT** urge employees to try to induce others to oppose the union or keep out of it.
35. They can **NOT** visit the homes of employees to urge them to reject the union.



Any of the above acts constitutes a violation of the National Labor Relations Act. Therefore, YOU as a worker and a supporter of a free trade union movement should report these acts to your union representative immediately.

SCARE TACTICS

FROM YOUR EMPLOYER

Your employer may deploy a variety of anti-union tactics to keep workers from forming a union. Below are some of the most common methods you may encounter during your organizing campaign.

- **They will say collective bargaining is "risky"** and you could get more, less, or the same in a union contract. This is not true. The Teamsters want to help you improve your compensation and ensure you have safe working conditions. We negotiate industry-leading contracts, and we are ready to do the same for you.
- **They will say the union will force you to strike.** This is not true. Workers can only go on strike if you and your co-workers vote to do so. 98 percent of Teamsters contracts are ratified by our members without a strike.
- **They will say the union is "a third party"** and you don't want someone coming in to be a go-between for you and management. This is not true. You and your co-workers ARE the union. You negotiate your contract. You vote on your contract. You ensure the contract is enforced.
- **They will say the Teamsters have a constitution that has rules and regulations that are bad for workers.** This is not true. The Teamsters do have a constitution, but its sole purpose is to guide the International Union's work in serving the interests of our members. The constitution supports workers' rights and is voted on by members. You can read the Teamsters' constitution on Teamster.org, where it is publicly available.



YOUR EMPLOYER WILL SAY A LOT OF THINGS TO KEEP YOU FROM JOINING A UNION. YOU DESERVE THE VERY BEST – AND THE ONLY WAY TO IT IS WITH A TEAMSTERS CONTRACT.

THE TEAMSTER *Guarantee*

Teamsters representation comes with a strong set of guarantees for workers, such as:



A guarantee that there will be no union dues during the organizing and bargaining process.



A guarantee that all workers regardless of membership status will be treated with dignity and respect and will benefit from the contract gains.



A guarantee that workers from the bargaining unit will be invited to participate in bargaining.



A guarantee that the Teamsters will provide the highest quality negotiators, legal counsel, researchers, and other resources as needed to aid the workers in getting a strong contract.



A guarantee that once a tentative agreement is reached, all workers will be given a detailed explanation of the agreement, have an opportunity to ask questions, and only workers will vote to accept or reject the agreement.

Workers have a legal right to form a union and your company is legally required to bargain in good faith with a representative of your choosing. Your employer is trying to keep you from forming a union so they can maintain power over you and your co-workers.



VOTE TEAMSTERS



**For more information on the Teamsters, visit
us online at [Teamster.org](https://www.teamster.org) or on social media.**



@Teamsters

If you have any questions or concerns, contact Teamsters organizers: