

# UNITED ACTION

## PROVIDENCE UNITED STRIKE MANUAL

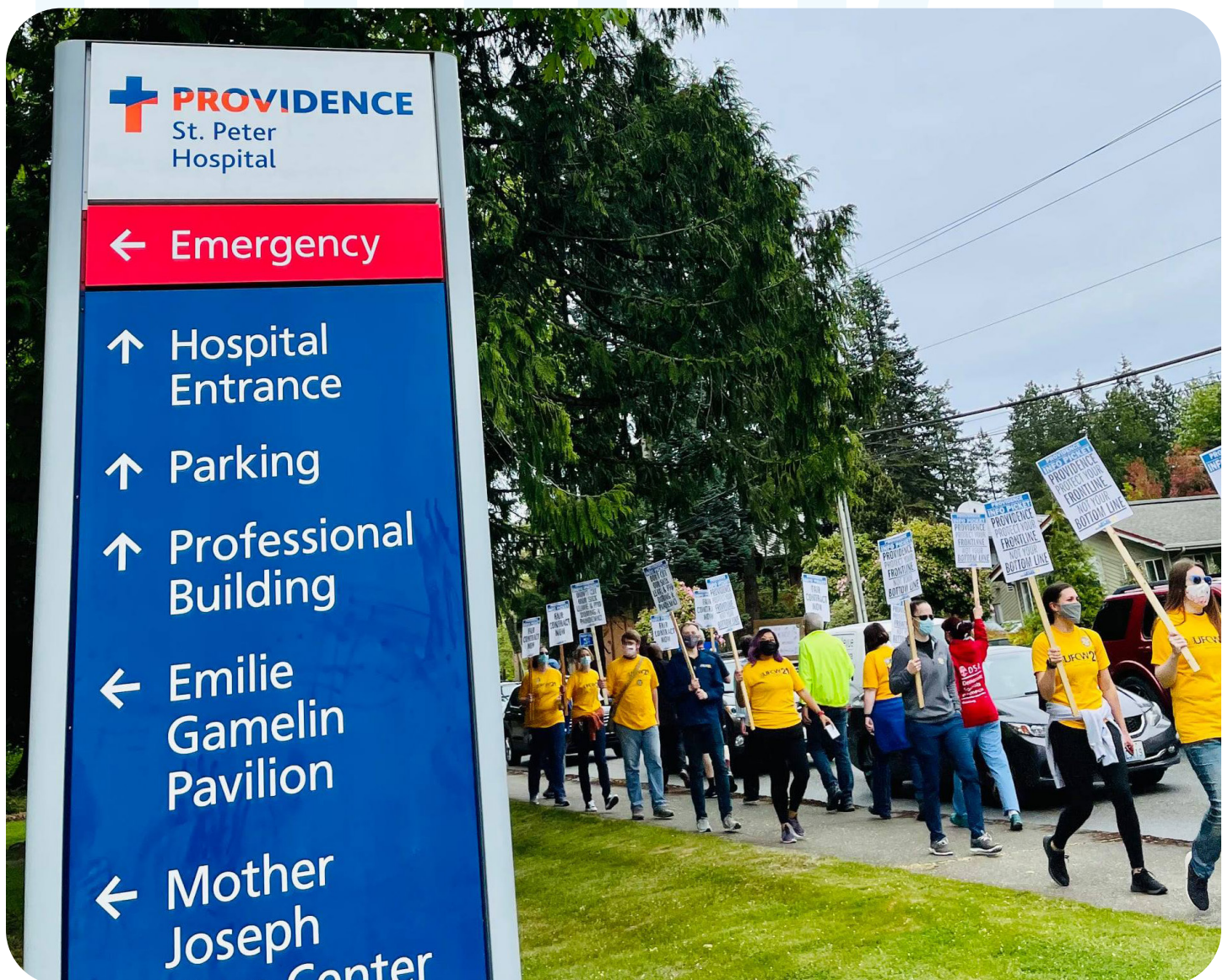




# INTRODUCTION

**It has been said that the threat of a strike is the ultimate economic weapon a union can use.** This is what can motivate the Union and the employer to reexamine their positions. The threat of a strike may be as potent a weapon as the strike itself. If the threat is to be taken seriously, the employer must be convinced that every member is ready, willing, and committed to walk out together. And in fact, every worker must be willing to walk out as a united force.

**When we authorize a strike without comprehensive preparations, careful assessment and a commitment to do the work that must be done in order to ensure victory, is a formula for disaster.** UFCW 21 staff is committed and responsible for working with local unit leaders to ensure that the local unit is prepared for a strike.



# LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND RESTRICTIONS ON STRIKE

**The federal law regulating the rights of workers employed by private sector employers (including both for-profit and nonprofit hospitals) is the National Labor Relations Act, which is administered by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).** In Washington, the state law regulating the rights of workers employed by public sector employers (such as public hospitals and public health districts) is the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Act, which is administered by the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC).

**A strike is an economic weapon utilized by workers to try to compel an employer to agree to union demands or to protest an employer's unfair labor practices**

*“A strike is a concerted stoppage of work by employees (including a stoppage by reason of the expiration of a collective bargaining agreement) and any concerted slowdown or other concerted interruption of operations by employees.”*

– Section 501(2) of the Labor Management Relations Act (Taft-Hartley Act), 29 USC § 142(2)

**Depending on the circumstances and balance of power in a particular strike:**

- An employer may lose revenue from the curtailment of business operations.
- Employees lose wages and benefits for duration of a strike.
- Employees may be temporarily or permanently replaced during a strike.

**Federal law generally protects workers' right to engage in concerted activities:**

*“An employee shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.”*

**A few examples of “concerted activities” protected by law include:** the right to attend a union meeting, to wear a union button or other insignia at work, to talk to co-workers (in nonwork areas on nonwork time) about union-related matters, to distribute leaflets about a labor dispute, or to collectively raise complaints to your employer about working conditions. Except under “special circumstances”, your employer is legally prohibited from retaliating against you for engaging in these concerted activities. Federal law thus recognizes a strike involving a labor dispute between an employer and the striking employees as a “concerted activity for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection,” and workers are legally protected from retaliation by the employer.

**By collectively withholding their labor, workers seek to pressure an employer economically to accede to demands regarding wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment, or to protest unfair labor practices committed by an employer.** Federal law imposes a special restriction for strikes and picketing at health care facilities, requiring at least 10-days advance written notice by the union so the health care facility can take steps to ensure continuity of patient care, including making arrangements to hire replacement employees (strikebreakers). This 10-day notice requirement applies to any private sector “health care institution,” which includes “any hospital, convalescent hospital, health maintenance organization, health clinic, nursing home, extended care facility, or other institution devoted to the care of sick, infirm, or aged person[s].” The 10-day notice requirement applies to any “concerted refusal to work” organized by the union, including a collective refusal to perform voluntary overtime.

**A strike can be declared for a predetermined length of time, or it may be initiated for an indefinite duration—until the employer concedes the strikers' demands or the strikers abandon the strike.** Unless an employee engages in “strike misconduct”—generally, acts of violence or destruction of the employer's property—the employer may not legally fire or discipline or otherwise retaliate against an employee for participating in a lawful strike.

# STRIKEBREAKERS AND REINSTATEMENT OF STRIKERS

**Federal law permits an employer to continue to operate its business during a strike by hiring replacement workers—strikebreakers—to fill the strikers’ jobs.** When workers engage in a strike to protest unfair labor practices committed by the employer—such as threats to coerce employees to refrain from union activity, or spying on employees’ union activities, or refusing to bargain in good faith—the employer may only hire temporary replacement workers, and when the strike ends the employer must promptly reinstate the strikers to their former positions. Thus, if a strike is called or prolonged (wholly or partly) by the employer’s unfair labor practices, the strikers are protected from permanently losing their jobs.

**However, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that when employees engage in a strike solely to try to compel the employer to agree to their economic demands (such as union recognition, higher wages or better working conditions), the employer may legally hire other workers to permanently replace the strikers.** At the end of an economic strike, when the union on behalf of the employees makes an unconditional offer to return to work, the employer is not legally required to reinstate the strikers to their jobs. The employer has no obligation to discharge the replacement workers and is only required to put the strikers on a rehire list with preferential recall rights. So, while the strikers are not fired and technically remain “employees” for certain legal purposes, they may not have a job or any income.

## POSSIBLE EMPLOYER WEAPONS

### LOCK-OUT

**A lock-out occurs when an employer withholds employment from its employees for the purpose of pressuring the union to agree to the employer’s economic demands.** Just as a strike is an economic weapon for workers and their unions, the lock-out is a powerful weapon for employers.

### UNILATERAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EMPLOYER’S LAST, BEST AND FINAL OFFER

**If the union and the employer have reached a genuine “impasse,” or stalemate in negotiations**—in which, after good faith bargaining, there are irreconcilable differences in the parties’ positions and the parties are unwilling to compromise, so further bargaining would be futile at that time—an employer may lawfully implement changes in wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment by unilateral action.

# STRIKE ASSESSMENT

**The strike is an economic weapon.** Once initiated, it imposes certain economic pressures on both parties, in the form of lost revenues for the employer and lost wages for the employees. As the strike continues, those pressures build until either or both parties alter their pre-strike positions and seek an agreement. Despite the difficulties encountered by the parties (and the public), the strike is a legitimate procedure in which the parties themselves work out the terms governing their unique relationship.

**The first thing to think about when you begin to consider undertaking a strike is “Have we exhausted all other actions, methods, and opportunities?”** If the answer is “I don’t know” or “No,” then it may not be time for a strike. It is important to understand that a strike comes at the end of a campaign, once you’ve planned and implemented many other events and actions to move the employer. Actions can include meetings, surveys of your members, petitions and postcard campaigns, letter writing campaigns engaging the media and community, rallies and informational pickets. The possibilities are nearly endless and only limited by the engagement you can count on from the bargaining unit and your imagination.

**Think of a strike as your last line of defense of your issues.** It’s the big bang. It’s also not a guarantee that you’ll get what you’re asking for from the employer. Very little done after a strike will lead to an agreement with your employer, so you need to be confident that you and all of your colleagues are all-in and ready to do whatever it takes for as long as it takes to implement a strong action. If your first thought is “I think we can do it” or “I know I’m ready, but I’ve never asked anyone else if they are,” again, you may not be ready, and you have some work to do to get there.

**The work that needs to be done well in advance of a strike vote is that of assessing and considering multiple factors.** Paramount in that is the conversations between the bargaining unit members. Every single member should be assessed for their level of interest and participation in a strike. A hard assessment like this takes time and effort but will give you the most evidence-based support for any decision-making moving forward.

# POWER CONSIDERATIONS

**Perhaps the most crucial aspect of a strike assessment is the comprehensive examination of the power considerations.** “Power” is a fluid concept and will, of course, vary from situation to situation. However, an understanding of the factors present to some degree in every situation will assist in determining the relative power of the union and the employer.

# EMPLOYER POWER CONSIDERATIONS

**Fundamental in this determination is the employer's ability to withstand a strike.** Central to this is the financial position of the employer. The financial position of the employer may be discovered through annual reports, or, in the case of proprietary hospitals, stockholders' reports. The board of directors or trustees of various institutions may also serve as sources of information, although obtaining information from these sources may be difficult.

**A potential resource of the employer is the availability of strike replacements.** Replacements may take the form of agency nurses, students, workers from hospital personnel pools, and even non-nurses. Another resource of the employer is the complement of supervisory staff. The ratio of supervisors to workers is an important consideration. In a strike situation, supervisors will generally be expected to work long hours with minimum time off, often performing direct patient care. Consequently, the higher the number of supervisors working in the struck facility, the less impact workers will have in withholding their services.

# UFCW 21 + LOCAL UNIT POWER CONSIDERATIONS

**Equally as important as the employer's power considerations is the relative power possessed by the local unit and UFCW 21.** We assess whether we have the strength for a successful strike by tracking, throughout the contract campaign, which members have participated in various union sponsored escalation actions. These actions can include attending a membership meeting, wearing a union button at work on the designated day, signing a petition or attending a rally in support of the negotiating team and signing a strike commitment pledge card. Our tracking charts will tell us where we are weak and strong and whether we are ready for the final test, the primary indicator of potential power—the strike authorization vote.

**The most powerful measurement of current union power is measured by density of union membership in the local unit and shows administration you stand united for your cause.** An important indicator of your potential power is the percent of the bargaining unit members voting to strike. The greater the number voting to strike, the greater the probable number who will actively engage in the strike and honor the picket line. To have maximum effectiveness, a strike must have near total member support from both members and nonmembers in the bargaining unit.

**The degree of support for the strike will vary among members of the bargaining unit, as will both financial reserves and morale.** Absence of a paycheck will most certainly put a drain on members financial reserves.

**Commitment must be viewed as identification with the strike issues; attachment to the profession of nursing; attachment to the job, to UFCW 21 and the Local Unit; and attachment to the community.** The concept of commitment involves the important difference between striking and resigning. A strike is a positive attempt to alter or change a given situation. For a strike to be successful, every worker involved will have to contribute considerable time, energy and skills to that objective. Because in truth, a strike cannot be won without everyone's active participation.

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**A third major consideration in the assessment in preparation for a strike is what could be referred to as “community support”.** Public attitude toward strikes is often highly correlated with the acceptance of the collective bargaining process in general. Even where there is support for collective bargaining, however, the concept of healthcare workers striking may be viewed quite differently from the traditional industrial work stoppage. In each of those situations, healthcare workers have experienced tremendous support of the community. Nevertheless, community experience with other non-health care strike activity will have some bearing on the community’s reaction to a strike by health care workers. Since a strike inevitably inconveniences a segment of the community, the availability of alternative health care may play a role in shaping community climate or public opinion. In situations where alternative health care is not available, favorable community support is dependent upon the success of the healthcare workers in convincing the public that, while there may be short-term inconveniences attached to the strike, in the long run the patient will be better served through improved health care.

**A critical factor to consider in making a strike assessment may be attitudes of governmental policymakers at the local, state and federal levels.** Government policymakers can have a major impact on the power dynamics of a strike. For instance, when the federal government fired more than 11,000 air traffic controllers for engaging in an unlawful strike in 1981, employers across the country were emboldened to take a much more belligerent approach toward unions; it became common for private sector employers to hire permanent replacements for strikers – something that the law had permitted all along, but which for decades had been almost unheard of before 1981. On the other hand, when the federal government has been under a pro-worker administration (as it was, for instance, in the 1930s), workers have been encouraged to exercise their rights to organize and strike, and millions of workers won recognition for their unions, dramatic improvements in their working conditions, and a higher standard of living for their families and their communities.

**An objective assessment should include realistic consideration of the following kinds of questions:** What is the union’s relationship with key government policymakers? Can the union expect public officials to publicly express support or opposition to the strike? Will local judges and police officials be inclined to be sympathetic or hostile to the union? Will the National Labor Relations Board effectively investigate and prosecute any unfair labor practice charges the union may file in connection with the labor dispute? Overall, will public officials be a help or a hindrance to the workers in their strike?





# SUPPORT SYSTEMS

**The most immediate support system for collective action by healthcare workers is their fellow workers at the facility.** These employees may be organized or unorganized. Organized employees are in a better position to offer or lend formal support, although they may be limited in the types of support, they can provide by restrictions in their collective bargaining agreement. Such support may include honoring the healthcare workers' picket line, not doing nursing work, financial contributions, loans and use of facilities for meetings.

**However, such relationships are not easily cultivated overnight, and support from other unions may be dependent upon prior relationships, which is why it is critical to build and maintain relations now – not just when you need help.** While unorganized employees in

a health care facility are certainly able to be supportive, their support may be more difficult to tap because of employer pressure or fear of losing their jobs. Other organizations, not necessarily only unions, may also be able to provide support for workers collective action, such as a union's sanction of a picket line and refusal to make deliveries across the picket line, willingness to write letters of support to the editor, speak on healthcare workers behalf at Board meetings and community meetings, etc. Perhaps the greatest form of support is that given by the Central Labor Councils, other Local Units, union partners and by workers in surrounding states.

## TEAMS THAT SHOULD BE IN PLACE BEFORE A STRIKE

### NEGOTIATING TEAM

**Representatives chosen from the bargaining unit according to the local unit's rules and must be members in good standing.** The Negotiating Team will be extremely busy at this time and should not attempt to do the functions of the other committees. Delegation is a must and a will indicate whether a strike will be successful or not.

### STRIKE HEADQUARTERS TEAM

**This team will be responsible for securing a reasonable location for strike headquarters, and for ensuring that the appropriate communication tools are available.** A strike headquarters near the struck facility is preferable; space in a local union or central labor council office is ideal, but the basement of a home, an RV, an inexpensive motel unit or an apartment can be utilized. Office and strike line supplies should all be considered and housed at this location for easy access. The Strike Headquarters Team and UFCW 21 staff should see that the headquarters is staffed around the clock for the duration of the strike. Strike headquarters is the focal point for the transmission and reception of strike information for workers, the media, the community and other supporters.



## CONTRACT ACTION TEAM

**This team will serve the function of ensuring that speedy communications can be transmitted back and forth between bargaining unit members.** Responsibilities will include updating contact information on all members by coordinating the delegation of tasks to unit-based leaders to have one-on-one conversations; creating and maintaining adequate communication processes like phone, text and email lists; and reviewing the rosters to identify areas of opportunity for improved communications. Additionally, this team will serve to monitor rumors and give an appropriate response to such rumors to prevent confusion during a strike. This Team will also distribute “strike alert” updates, email messages, update the 24-hour voicemail hotline, and other communication mechanisms to keep bargaining unit members informed of current and upcoming strike related developments.

This team will provide strike/negotiations information to the general public, other unions and other local units, the press, and other targeted support groups. The purpose of these communications will be to convey the bargaining unit’s position on issues and to solicit public support. This team will assist UFCW 21 staff in speaking to newspapers and radio stations, press releases for the news media, informational leaflets for the public and any other matters of public relations.

## FINANCE TEAM

**The Finance Team is made up of Executive board, rank and file members who determine the strike benefit.** Our union does provide strike fund benefits for members who have been on strike two weeks. The International Union will pay \$100.00 a week beginning the eighth day. Your local union will provide a supplement which will continue as long as possible given the resources of the local Union strike fund. Our union also has a hardship fund to assist members whose families face particularly difficult financial situations. If you are in such a hardship position, please let the Union know so that you can apply for assistance. We also have several community partners including a credit union, many food banks and other services across the Puget Sound to help us through a strike.

## PICKET CAPTAIN TEAM

**This team will organize picket schedules to ensure a enough picketers are available for designated picketing times.** This team will oversee all actual picketing activities such as schedules for picketing, designation and training of picket line captains, picket line behavior, community participation, records of picket line participation, food and beverages for picketers and support staff, picket signs, and monitoring of picket sign wording.



# PICKET CAPTAINS

**Picket captains should be assigned the duty of monitoring the picket line.** The picket captains should be familiar and conversant with the strike issues. Further, picket captains should note and report all picket line incidents to the Strike Headquarters. It is very helpful, if not essential, that picket captains should have their cell phones with them and be prepared to photograph or record video of any unusual incidents on the picket line. Current, up-to-the minute information is critical for the captains to have because they may be approached by the public, the media, and workers seeking information. Captains should be easily identifiable while on the picket line.

**The following should serve as guidelines for picket captains:**

- *Help determine the most effective sites for picketing.*
- *Know the limits of public property.*
- *Ensure picketers are informed and compliant with the ground rules appropriate of picket line behavior.*
- *Help ensure the picket line is moving and not blocking entrances.*

**Two Picket Captains assigned to each picket line.**

Establish a picket schedule. Arrange the schedule in at least two-hour blocks (probably the minimum time for which it is worthwhile to come out and the maximum time that many health care workers will be able to maintain some enthusiasm). Make sure workers sign up for shifts and have some way to communicate if they cannot make their shift. Picket times should be viewed like a work schedule; once a commitment is made to picket, it is expected that the worker will be there or arrange coverage.

**Since most health care institutions are 24 hour a day operations and picketing may occur around the clock, the local police should be requested to make additional patrols to ensure picketer safety.** Any incidents or threats to safety should be reported to the Strike Headquarters immediately.



# STRIKE PICKETING

**The most visible part of any strike activity is the picket line (aka strike line).** Picketing creates an atmosphere of solidarity and strength and communicates that to the employer and the public. Furthermore, the presence of a picket line discourages potential replacements from accepting employment.

**Peaceful picketing that is designed to inform and persuade the public about a labor dispute is an exercise of the right of free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution.** This right is not absolute, however. There are restrictions on the conduct and the objectives of picketing. UFCW 21 staff will advise you what restrictions may apply in your setting. It is critical for all members to be well informed on these matters as they can have significant legal implications for the bargaining unit and UFCW 21.

**Picketing that is or becomes coercive rather than persuasive may be unlawful.** Examples of this would be pickets massed at entrances to the employer's facility to prevent entry through sheer force, or instances in which those who wish to enter picketed premises were prevented from doing so by physical violence or verbal threats. This has never been an issue on a UFCW 21 picket line, and it is our belief that health care workers enjoy the credibility we have earned in part because of the "professional" way we conduct ourselves, where we work and on the picket lines.

**In short, picketing is generally protected as lawful "concerted activity" and a form of free speech when conducted in a peaceful manner,** when it is confined to the immediate location of the employer and when the picketing is not unlawful as described above.

**Although peaceful picketing (informational picketing) to inform the public of the Local Unit bargaining position prior to a strike or in conjunction with the strike is clearly protected activity under the Constitution and National Labor Relations Act,** Section 8(g) of the NLRA requires the union to give 10-day prior notice to the employer and the FMCS.

**Pickets should exercise care and caution so as not to trespass or damage private property.** Mass picketing and similar demonstrations should be confined to public property. These activities must be planned with consultation and assistance of UFCW 21 staff to ensure the legal requirements are met.



# PICKET LINE RULES

**In consultation with UFCW 21 staff, prepare written guidelines for picket line participants.** The following should serve as general ground rules for individual workers in conducting themselves on the picket line:

- \* **Let your picket captain know when you arrive and when you leave.** A clearly marked car or strike headquarters should serve as the action center for the facility.
- \* **Wear comfortable shoes and uniform or scrubs if possible.** (The media loves it.)
- \* **Be civil and professional in interactions, even in the face of incivility or unprofessional behavior of others.**
- \* **Keep the energy up during your shift by being actively engaged in strike line activities.**
- \* **Picket line should concentrate around hospital entrances but do not block traffic or prevent people from entering or leaving.** Do not block the street either. If participating in a march, observe traffic signals. Remember to keep the picket line moving.
- \* **Stay on public property.**
- \* **Do not argue with anyone**—if harassed, have your picket captain notify the UFCW 21 staff immediately.
- \* **If approached by administration, do not discuss issues**—refer them to your negotiators.
- \* **Remember TIPS (Threats—Interrogation—Promises—Surveillance).** Administration engaging in these behaviors with members should be reported immediately to UFCW 21 staff.
- \* **If approached by news media for pictures, permit this if you do not object personally.** Refer all questions and interviews to the picket captain or media point person.
- \* **If you are questioned by the public, these may serve as helpful short answers:** a) “We cannot allow our employer to violate our rights.” b) “The hospital has been unresponsive to the workers concern that they have a greater voice in determining the level and quality of patient care.”
- \* **Tempers can flare on the picket line;** try to avoid that. Maintain a determined, professional, upbeat atmosphere.
- \* **Anyone who engages in misconduct**—no drugs or drinking, committing or threatening violence, engaging in discriminatory behavior (verbally or in writing), damaging the employer’s property—must be told to leave, in no uncertain terms.
- \* **Make sure you are informed on the issues.**



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WILL I LOSE MY JOB IF I GO ON STRIKE?

**You cannot be fired.** You can be permanently replaced only if the strike is caused solely by economic issues and only after the actual hiring of a permanent replacement for your position. If the strike is called in part to protest unfair labor practices by the employer, the employer cannot legally hire a permanent replacement for you.

## CAN I RETURN TO MY SAME JOB AND SHIFT?

**A “return to work” agreement is usually negotiated prior to the conclusion of any strike.** We will insist, as part of the “return to work” agreement that each worker is returned to his/her job, unit, and shift. If workers stay unified in striking, we are more likely to prevail in negotiations for a “return to work” agreement.

## WHAT IF THE EMPLOYER LOCKS US OUT?

**If the employer chooses to lockout employees they have to lockout all employees including non-members.**

Workers locked out by their employers are generally eligible for unemployment benefits. The Employment Security Department will determine eligibility for unemployment benefits on a case by case basis.

## CAN I GET UNEMPLOYMENT WHEN ON STRIKE? DO I ACCRUE SICK LEAVE OR VACATION TIME WHEN ON STRIKE?

**You are not eligible for unemployment benefits.** You will not accrue sick leave or vacation while you are on strike. The employment security department determines eligibility for unemployment benefits on a case by case basis for workers in a labor dispute.

## CAN I USE ACCRUED VACATION OR PAID TIME OFF BENEFITS?

**Although an employer may not discriminate against strikers with respect to the use of vacation time or paid time off during a strike, an employer is not required to allow strikers to use their accrued vacation time or other benefits during a strike unless they are otherwise entitled to do so.** Thus, if a worker had submitted a vacation request before a strike and it was approved in accordance with the employer’s established policies, the employer must pay the vacation benefits even though the approved vacation occurs while the member is on strike.

## WILL I STILL HAVE HEALTHCARE DURING THE STRIKE?

**There is a lag month under your insurance plan that would keep your insurance through the end of the month.**

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T AFFORD TO GO ON STRIKE?

**See Page 15.**

## WILL A STRIKE AFFECT THE IMAGE OF HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN A NEGATIVE WAY?

**No.** We are professionals. We should demand reasonable management practices, a safe environment for both our patients and ourselves and benefits that reflect our professional status. It is important to conduct ourselves in a professional manner and be informed.

## WHAT ARE MY PERSONAL OBLIGATIONS IF WE GO ON STRIKE?

- *Do not cross the picket line!*
- *Take your share of picket duty and/or strike activity. A strike is not a vacation; it is a very intensive, goal-oriented job. If you cannot attend your shift, it's up to you to find someone to attend in your place.*
- *Pay attention and engaged on social media, meetings and any other communications from your team or UFCW 21.*
- *Do not contribute to the rumor mill.*
- *Stay in contact with your colleagues.*
- *Help each other out in any way you are able.*
- *Discuss issues and continue a productive dialogue.*

## HOW MANY WORKERS WILL IT TAKE FOR A STRIKE TO BE EFFECTIVE?

**A large active picket line is vital to a successful strike.** Every member needs to participate—members of UFCW 21 or not—to prevent the facility from operating as usual. The more members we have out on the line, the harder it is for people to cross it. Being at the picket is also the best way to get the latest information on how the strike is going and to show the community that healthcare workers are united in the strike.

## WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF MY PATIENTS? WILL IT BE CONSIDERED ABANDONMENT?

**The facility will have 10 days in which to move patients to other facilities and to cease taking elective patients.** Any patients remaining will be taken care of by managers and strike breakers (scabs). Patients who would normally come to the facility may have to use other facilities.

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF CROSSING THE PICKET LINE?

**Crossing a picket line will undermine our attempts as workers to provide a better framework for the future growth of our profession and achieve our negotiating goals.** It also erodes the camaraderie in the workplace, prolongs the strike and negatively impacts our efforts to work as a team once the strike is settled.

## HOW LONG WOULD A STRIKE LAST?

**We will decide how long the strike will last.** The 1999 Providence strike lasted one day. The key to a successful strike is a united work force and support from our allies and the patients in the communities where we work.

## CAN I BE FIRED FOR STRIKING?

**It is against the law for Management to fire you because you exercise your legal right to strike.**

## IF I AM NOT YET A MEMBER OF THE UNION, BUT AM IN THE BARGAINING UNIT, CAN I GO ON STRIKE?

**Yes.** All employees in the bargaining unit are represented by the Union. All employees, even those in their probationary period, have the legal right to strike and honor the picket line. Non-members within the bargaining unit have the same protection under the law as members do during a strike situation.

## CAN OTHER UFCW 21 MEMBERS NOT IN NEGOTIATIONS STRIKE?

**No.** We cannot strike while our contract is currently in effect.

## WHAT ARE WE ALLOWED TO DO TO OPENLY SUPPORT THE WORKERS ON STRIKE?

**We have the right to collective concerted union activity such as voicing our support and wearing buttons, stickers, or other visible solidarity.**

There is also a Facebook group with up-to-date information: [facebook.com/groups/ProvUnited/](https://facebook.com/groups/ProvUnited/)

## **CAN MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY JOIN THE PICKET LINE?**

**Yes!** Our fight is our friends', families' and communities' fight. However, they will be required to abide by the same rules of conduct expected of all bargaining unit members.

## **WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM MANAGEMENT IF WE VOTE FOR STRIKE AUTHORIZATION?**

**Management will try very hard to scare employees into settling for less.** You may be required to attend mandatory "informational" meetings on work time to hear why you should accept the employer contract offer. You have the right to express your opinion, ask questions, counter misinformation, and take notes of what management says. Union members have the right to act together and it is illegal for Management to threaten you or your employment in any way.

## **IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP BEFORE WE GO ON STRIKE?**

**Yes!** Volunteer to help. Let your managers know how you feel about your team's proposal. Always attend bargaining unit meetings and speak your mind.



# 10 STEPS TO PREPARE

- 1 Prepare a complete household budget.**  
Do this as a family project and include your:
- *Fixed expenses such as mortgage/rent, insurance, loans, installment payments. etc.*
  - *Monthly expenses such as food, vehicle gas and maintenance, repairs, dues, prescriptions, entertainment, etc.*
  - *Future expenses such as income and property taxes.*

- 2 List assets.**  
Include income, savings, dividends, cash value of insurance policies, prepaid burial/funeral policies, home equity (difference between home value and amount owed) and resale value of vehicles.

- 3 Set priorities for your expenses.**  
List payments in order of importance. The most important will be your mortgage/rent. Next are utilities, insurance, car payments, and gas. Child support and alimony (if any) are high priorities.

- 4 Make a complete list of creditors.**  
For each, list contact person's name, address, phone number, and e-mail address; account number; total amount owed; and payment schedule and amount.

- 5 Notify your creditors before getting behind.**  
Determine how much you can regularly pay on each bill. If negotiating lower payments is needed, notify your creditors before you get behind. Creditors are usually easier to work with when you inform them before a severe problem arises. Contact them in writing and include your account number, phone number, and address. State why you need to work out payment reduction, refinancing, or delay. Keep copies of your letters and notes from any phone conversations.

- 6 Pay what you can.**  
Even if you can't pay the total amount, pay something regularly. This lowers your overdue balance and lets creditors know you're acting in good faith. Partial payments may keep your account from being turned over to a collection agency.

- 7 Stay in touch with creditors.**  
After your first letter, keep in regular contact with your creditors. This is reassuring, shows a responsible attitude, and may keep them from "hounding" you. Important—Don't ignore your mail. That only makes things worse. If you don't understand a notice or bill, promptly contact the sender.

- 8 Stop credit purchases.**  
Stop relying on plastic. Interest on most credit cards is extremely high. Make larger payments to reduce your balance.

- 9 Reduce household expenses.**  
With your family, plan reductions to stay within your budget.
- *Cutting food costs:* Plan less expensive meals. Use leftovers and prepare snacks from scratch. Only shop when you need to, make a list, and comparison shop.
  - *Cutting phone bills:* Switch to a money-saving rate plan. Look into bundling electronic services such as cell phones, cable, internet, and others.
  - *Cutting energy & fuel costs:* Turn off lights, TVs and appliances. Cut back on "power hogs" like hair dryers and computers. Lower your heater thermostat and dress accordingly. Wash and dry full loads of clothes. Cut back on car use.

- 10 Check into other financial resources.**  
If you have life insurance, review your policy or talk to an agent to see if you can borrow against your policy or obtain a low interest rate. Look into cashing in some stocks or dipping into savings.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- \* **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING:** A relationship between a labor organization (UFCW 21) and the management of various institutions consisting of two major aspects:
- \* **CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION:** Making sure commitments made in the contract are kept by both parties.
- \* **NEGOTIATIONS:** A process that affords parties in a collective bargaining relationship an opportunity to exchange ideas and make commitments in an effort to resolve their differences and reach an agreement/contract.
- \* **IMPASSE:** That point in negotiations where one or both parties decide that no further progress toward an agreement is possible.
- \* **MEDIATION:** Occurs usually when the negotiating parties are approaching or have reached impasse. An impartial third party, a mediator, works with the parties to facilitate the bargaining process by clarifying issues and helping the parties discover areas of possible compromise. The mediator may offer suggestions but cannot force either party to agree to anything.
- \* **PICKET LINE:** A group of employees who patrol outside the employer's premises and carry signs and leaflets to express their message.
- \* **INFORMATIONAL PICKETING:** Picketing which serves to inform the public of the union's positions on issues and appeal to the public for support. Informational picketing does not attempt to stop employee services or deliveries. Informational picketing is not a strike.
- \* **TEN DAY NOTICE:** By law, a labor organization must give a health care institution a 10-day advance notice in writing of intent to strike or picket. Ten days will give the facility ample time to scale down operations and to arrange for patient transfer to other facilities, and to stop scheduling elective surgeries. This means you will not be abandoning patients.
- \* **STRIKE:** An organized work stoppage by employees.
- \* **ECONOMIC STRIKE:** A strike to put pressure on the employer to meet employee economic demands. Economic strikers may be permanently replaced.
- \* **UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE STRIKE:** A strike called to protest unfair labor practices committed by the employer. Unfair labor practice strikers cannot legally be permanently replaced.





**PROVIDENCE EVERETT, ST. PETER'S, CENTRALIA  
PROTECT THE FRONTLINE, NOT THE BOTTOM LINE**

**2021**  
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*If you have any questions, please contact your union representative @ 206-436-0210*

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