

Please feel free to print this information to share with those who may not have access to the internet.

This information has been prepared in the hope it may be of assistance to you. It is shown in this format in the most condensed form with facts of interest and importance. It attempts to point out the essentials without burdening you with unnecessary details.

If you wish further or more specific information on any subject, we would be pleased to supply it at your request. **A word of warning**, there are those who will attempt to distort and thereby destroy your access to true facts about union organization. With the knowledge that there is nothing so strong as the simple truth we bring you these IBEW Facts.

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"If any man tells you he loves America, yet hates labor, he is a liar. If any man tells you he trusts America, yet fears labor, he is a fool.".....Abraham Lincoln

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

Organization through unionism is a legal right. The law has been in effect for over 50 years guaranteeing workers freedom of organization.

Here is **what the law says** (Quotation from the "National Labor Relations Act"):

"Employees shall have the right to self-organization to form, join, or assist labor organizations..."

...."It shall be an unfair labor practice for an employer-to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed-(above)"

You're better off in the IBEW.

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"Only a fool would try to deprive workingmen and workingwomen of their right to join the union of their choice."Dwight D. Eisenhower

NLRB CONDUCTED ELECTIONS

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is a branch of the U. S. Government. It makes the rules governing union elections and protects workers' rights. The NLRB is empowered to prosecute employers who violate the law.

A company cannot prevent its employees from organizing nor can it prevent a union election. **In Union there is strength.**

The NLRB will order an election whenever it believes there is sufficient interest to warrant the time and expense. It is up to the union to produce this "evidence of interest" through "authorization cards" which must be signed by individual employees.

The NLRB makes the final decision as to when, where, and how the election shall occur. The election must be by secret ballot so it is impossible to tell how anyone votes.

When the employees win their election, their union is "certified" by the NLRB. "Certification" can be considered the point at which the employer is required by law to negotiate all terms and conditions of employment and reduce them to writing in an IBEW contract.

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"The mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few (born) to ride them..."Thomas Jefferson

ABOUT THE IBEW

The IBEW is affiliated with the AFL-CIO which gives us the combined strength of 14 million workers. There are over 750,000 members of the IBEW in over 1,200 local unions. Over 175,000 of these members are women.

IBEW headquarters are in Washington, D.C., with field offices throughout the United States and Canada. IBEW Local Unions are spread over all 50 States of the United States, Canada, and the Canal Zone. We cover all branches of the electrical industry: manufacturing; radio and TV broadcasting; cable TV; construction; electric, gas, and water utilities; telephone; railroads; shipyards; government arsenals; and nuclear installations.

The IBEW is an organization run by the members and for the members. It is a union with a clear record of dedication to the basic principles of organized labor. It is the largest, strongest, and oldest union devoted exclusively to electrical workers.

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ABOUT LOCAL UNIONS

The local union is the basic unit of the IBEW. There are locals with only a dozen members and some with 30,000 members; but regardless of size, the principle of operation is the same. **A local union is the people in it, and the people are the union.**

The company, the businessman, the doctor, and just about every known group have their own organization. The union is exactly the same thing to the worker.

You and your fellow employees may have your own local union and elect your own officers (election of officers by secret ballot) who are subject to control by the members. Each member has equal voice and vote at regular democratically conducted meetings.

Each local union receives assistance from our International Office through its field staff. Guidance, advice, technical and legal help, but never domination of local union affairs, is the policy and the practice of the IBEW.

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"If I went to work in a factory, the first thing I'd do would be to join a union."Franklin D. Roosevelt

DUES, INITIATIONS, FUNDS

The amount of dues payable each month to the local union is decided by the local union members. IBEW locals establish in their bylaws a prescribed amount for dues with a portion forwarded to the International consistent with the Constitution. The remaining monies stay in the local union treasury and are under the sole control of the membership.

Strict accounting of funds is required and expenditures are subject to the approval of the members.

A full financial report is made at each meeting and certified audits are made quarterly. Officers handling local union funds are bonded to protect members.

Many locals have their own special "distress funds" for the purpose of helping members in case of sickness, family deaths, or other worthy needs. Some have an annual dance or picnic if the members so decide.

IBEW membership doesn't cost - it pays.

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CONTRACTS

The contract (or agreement) is the signed document between the company and your local union that describes terms and conditions of employment, such as the following:

Wages: Fair rates of pay for each job, including automatic wage increases, etc.

Hours: Rest periods, paid holidays, vacations, overtime pay, etc.

Conditions: Seniority, job security, safety and health, personal rights, and fair treatment.

Benefits: Company-paid insurance, hospitalization, sick leave, pension, etc.

People of goodwill can always find a peaceful solution to their problems.

One of the contract's most important features is an orderly system for settling disputes between employees and the company bosses. This is called a "**grievance/arbitration procedure**", and it requires the employer to go through successively higher steps until a satisfactory solution is found to an employee's problem.

Under a written contract nobody has to guess at their rights or to seek individual favors from the boss. All things are spelled out for everyone to see and understand, and copies are provided for each member.

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"The American Labor Movement has consistently demonstrated its devotion to the public interest. It is, and has been, good for all America."John F. Kennedy

NEGOTIATIONS

The contract is the worker's "Bill of Rights." There is no such thing as a ready-made contract. Each one is written to meet the special needs of the members it protects.

The method of reaching an agreement with the company works like this:

A negotiating committee is selected from among the members. This committee, with the help of an IBEW representative, prepares a list of negotiating goals like those described previously.

The negotiating committee's recommendations are brought before the members for discussion and approval. The members can add to, delete, or alter as they see fit.

When the members negotiating goals are in their final form, they are presented to the employer and the process of "collective bargaining" begins.

The term "**collective bargaining**" or "**negotiations**" refers to the meetings between the employer and your union negotiating committee, which are for the purpose of talking over the requests of the members and/or the employer. The process implies that both sides must "give and take" fairly until a "bargain" or "agreement" is reached.

The law requires the Company to meet in good faith with the certified union and the committee of workers. This means they must listen to and give reasonable consideration to all union requests.

When the union negotiating committee feels it has obtained the best possible compromise, the results are brought back for final consideration by the union members.

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THE TRUTH ABOUT STRIKES

The right of a worker to refuse to work is protected by law. When people decide to cease work (withhold their labor) in order to resolve a dispute with their employer, it is called a strike.

Partially because the news media is inclined to publicize small and insignificant strikes out of proportion to their importance, the true facts are highly misunderstood. **Antiunion employers use the word as a device to scare people away from unions.**

The IBEW has long recognized that strikes mean serious losses to everyone and must be avoided except as a last possible resort. All IBEW Contracts (except where the employer refuses) contain a section which requires that disputes are settled by arbitration and strikes are outlawed. Arbitration means disputes are decided by an impartial umpire.

No official of the IBEW, no officer or committee of the local union is empowered to call a strike. A strike can only be called by a majority vote of the members affected.

Reasonable and fair employers have no reason to fear their own employees.

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RESPECT, FAIRNESS, JUSTICE, DIGNITY

There can be no democracy on the job without workers' empowerment through their union.

THE OBJECTS OF THE IBEW

The objects of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers are:

- *To organize all workers in the entire electrical industry in the United States and Canada, including all those in public utilities and electrical manufacturing, into local unions;
- *to promote reasonable methods of work;
- *to cultivate feelings of friendship among those of our industry;
- *to settle all disputes between employers and employees by arbitration (if possible);
- *to assist each other in sickness or distress;
- *to secure employment;
- *to reduce the hours of daily labor;
- *to secure adequate pay for our work;
- *to seek a higher and higher standard of living;
- *to seek security for the individual;
- *and by legal and proper means to elevate the moral, intellectual and social conditions of our members, their families and dependents, in the interest of a higher standard of citizenship.

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