Example of a Strike and Joe’s Fabrication Station in the Spring of 2023

Welcome to Joe’s Fabrication Station! At Joe’s they fabricate anything you need. Joe’s is comprised of four employees Sherry, David, Anita and Raoul, they are membersof GSU Local 20 and fall under Federal jurisdiction of the Canada Labour Code. There is also one manager and one owner, Joe.

Working at Joe’s has always been good, but a few years ago the company changed the pay system. Under the old system, everyone received an annual salary increase they could rely on,. By comparison, the new pay system doesn’t seem fair,and this has upset the employees. Through their union, the employees have been bargaining with Joe for a number of months to make improvements to their collective agreement, but on February 18, 2023, they reached an impasse in bargaining. Before the parties began conciliation, they held a membership meeting and a strike vote was conducted. The majority of members voted in favour of strike action. They knew they had to wait until conciliation was complete before they would be in a position to strike, but they wanted to show their support for their bargaining committee and their determination to reach a fair settlement.

After the conciliation was complete and the cooling off period of 21 days had passed, Local 20 was in the position to strike on May 22, 2023, but before that date the Local was working to be prepared should they need to strike.

The Elected Officers of Local 20 decided that May 29, 2023, would be the date they would begin their strike and walk out of Joe’s Fabrication Shop. Notice was given to the Minister of Labour and the company, and the Local prepared to strike.

# In the few days before May 29

**Picket Rally Point/Headquarters** - a member who lives four blocks away and agreed to let the Local use his garage as their strike headquarters. After work, they set up a few chairs and folding tables; brought their picket signs, strike pay forms, phone number list to their new headquarters and organized their space.

Local 20’s staff representative reached out to the company and requested that the employer continue the benefit plan once the strike began and to bill GSU for both the employer and employee portion of the benefits.

During a lunch break, employees met and decided which entrances they would picket and identified where they could and couldn’t walk once they were on strike. They knew they wouldn’t be allowed on company property during the strike, so they figured out where the boundaries of the property are.

**Role Call** – The members made a detailed list of all members, including cell phone numbers and email addresses. They decided how information would be shared and who would be responsible for sharing.

**Duties** – They decided who would be the picket captains for each shift. One person was chosen to be the Strike Activity Admin responsible for tracking who was picketing and participating on the line. This person would also send in the picket activity sheet once each week to the GSU office so the Defense Fund would know who should receive strike pay.

**Shifts** – Knowing the hours of operation for the garage, the members decided to picket from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday to Friday and 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Saturday. They decided to break the Monday to Friday into two shifts of picketers for five hours each, while Saturday would be one shift for the full seven hours. They also set up a rotation of who picketed the shifts and agreed to post the schedule each week prior to the beginning of the following week.

**May 29 – First Day of Strike**

* All members met at their headquarters on the first morning. They all headed over to the picket line for the full day as they wanted everyone to be on the picket line and demonstrate their full support for the strike and to make a strong public display of their picketing.
* The local radio station came to the picket line and the picket captain went to answer questions and represent the members.
* The manager of the garage approached the picket line early in the morning and asked about an alley way and he thought it was company property. The picket captain discussed it with the manager and they agreed that the alley was a public space.
* A delivery driver was stopped at the picket line, like everyone else. The driver started getting mad and yelling at members as they tried to talk to him about the issues. The picket captain took notes of the interaction (date, time, who was involved and what was said). The picket captain also called their GSU staff rep to tell them about the incident and seek advice for the next time that driver comes back.

That week the four members of Local 20 successfully picketed for the six days, talked to a lot of customer and suppliers, and convinced a few to not cross the picket line but to come back once the strike was over.

On Saturday evening the Strike Activity Admin sent a list of who participated on the picket line that week to the GSU office. It said;

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Date: May 29 – June 3

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NAME** | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** | **Saturday** | **Sunday** |
| Sherry | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| David | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Anita | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Raoul | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NAME** | **Daily Rate** | **75% rate** | **Number of day** | **Strike Pay** |
| Sherry | $232.00 | $174.00 | 5 | $870.00 |
| David | $170.00 | $127.50 | 6 | $765.00 |
| Anita | $189.00 | $141.75 | 5 | $708.75 |
| Raoul | $210.00 | $157.50 | 4 | $630.00 |

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When the weekly Strike Activity information was receved by the GSU office, strike pay was paid to members. It was paid through an e-transfer (where available) or by cheque.

You don’t pay tax on Strike pay.

## Second week of the strike

On Monday morning, the members of Local 20 meet to discuss how last week went, what they learned, what they want to do different and they planned extra events to help build and maintain support they have from their community.

They followed their strike schedule and no major changes or issues arose on the picket line.

That Saturday the Strike Activity report was prepared and sent in to the GSU office for payment of strike pay.

## Third Week

On Monday morning, the members of Local 20 met to discuss how the second week went, what they learned and what they want to do differently. They see that community interest in the strike has been growing, so they want to invite the community to the picket line to learn more and eat a hot dog. They plan to host a community BBQ lunch on Saturday at the park across the street from the picket line.

Some members walk the picket line while others begin to plan and organize for the community BBQ.

Saturday is a big success. Members of the neighbourhood and other community groups come to the BBQ to learn more and support the picketers. One highlight of the BBQ is a supplier of Joe’s Fabrication Station pulled over and came out for a hot dog and told members they won’t bring steel to Joe’s until the strike is over.

After the BBQ, the Strike Activity report was prepared and sent to the GSU office for payment of strike pay.

## Fourth Week

Before the members could meet on Monday to talk about the success of last week, they received a call that the company wanted to talk and was willing to change its bargaining position.

Members continued to walk on the picket line while the bargaining committee returned to the bargaining table to meet with the company.

By Thursday, a new memorandum of agreement was reached, and on Saturday all members of Local 20 met to hear the agreement details and ask questions before voting to accept the offer. The results were relayed to the company and through discussions between Local 20 and the company, it was agreed that all members would return to work on Tuesday. This gave members Monday to clean up their headquarters and get ready to go back to work.

The Strike Activity report for the week was submitted to GSU and it included the Monday to Saturday for members on the picket line or at the bargaining table, and it also included the next Monday before everyone returned to work.

## Tuesday and every day afterward

Members went back to work a bit exhausted and run down, but proud and as a tighter group of employees knowing they had stood together as union members and won changes to their collective agreement.