



The STEEL GUARDIAN

July 2019

A quarterly newsletter to all members of USW Local 9597 throughout Eastern,
Central and Southwestern Ontario 2nd QUARTER

Letter from the President – Sherry Charette

Since we are in the age of electronics with everything being done via a phone or computer, it's very easy when your sitting at work to fire off an email rather than calling the Local union office to talk with someone. The ratio of emails to calls these days is about 5 to 1. I receive on average about 300 emails a day, and you can imagine when I am out of the office for a week attending meetings or training, how many emails I have in my inbox upon my return, it's quite overwhelming. Once I start responding to those emails, then it's almost a never-ending cycle. In order to catch up on the emails, I need to hold myself out of the office from answering calls for a couple days minimum, which of course frustrates anyone trying to call me.

I either get accusations that I don't respond to emails/calls in a timely manner or I am never in the office, but I wanted to take this time to let you all know why that is and don't misinterpret this since I am not complaining, I did sign up for this and am happy to be able to help, however I do want you to understand why I am out of the office or not responding to emails and offer a solution.

I work more than 8 hours a day most days and I do not get paid any overtime. The union cannot pay overtime as it is an easy way to scam the Local for money (if I was not an honest person that is) by saying I was working overtime, so pay me and so no holidays or overtime hours are paid. This is of course why our offices are closed on the holidays, but getting back to the email/call issue, if I only ever worked 8 hours a day, which if I was still working at my site doing patrols etc, I would do my 8 hours and go home, but this is not a 9-5 position and regardless of what some of you think, I do care about each and every member in this local; I am not looking for sympathy when I tell you this, I am simply looking for a bit of understanding and patience. You don't need to email me 5 times asking if I got your email or sending an email every other day asking me for an update. If I hear anything regarding your grievance I will call or email you and I will eventually get to your email, however it might take me awhile and if you don't hear from me and know I am in the office or have been for a few days, perhaps I have missed it and if it's an urgent matter call me rather than emailing me again.

I assure you that you will get a quicker and more immediate response upon my return to the office than if you email me. I also have the ability to send an auto response notice that I am out of the office and it will always contain my expected return date, so please keep this in mind as well when waiting for a response.

Did You Know ... you can find my schedule on the website?

My calendar is posted on the website so you will know on any given day if I am in the office or not. If you have registered for access to the website, you will have access to my schedule, if you want it. You must register in order for us to verify you are a member of this local and to access the confidential information we have posted on the site such as Collective Agreements for all employers covered under this local (we may be missing 1 or 2 but they are coming), Benefits books, contact information, breaking news and a lot of other useful information.

I update this calendar regularly, so I encourage you to go sign up and check it out. While we only publish the newsletters quarterly, the website and our Facebook page are updated almost daily with news and other important information as well as the Unit meeting dates which are always posted to these sites first before the newsletters hit the mailboxes. Links are on the website.



Come Join the United Steelworkers in London for the Pride Parade on **Sunday July 28, 2019**. Some of our local Executive members will be marching in the parade and showing our Support. It's from 1100 – 400pm at the Western Fair District, 316 Rectory Street in London Ontario. You can find more information online and we will have this information posted on our Facebook page and website or give us a call, if you want more information.

Please remember we are all human so if you find a spelling error or mistake, just ignore it ☺ Thank You.

TO PRINT OR NOT TO PRINT – THAT WAS THE QUESTION COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS – GARDA, SECURITAS & PALADIN

At our last executive meeting the local debated whether or not to have the Collective Agreements (CBA) for the Security Guards printed in pocketbook size. Our decision was unanimous, not to do this.

This does not mean you will not get a Collective Agreement, however we made this decision due to the fact that the Agreements all expire June 30, 2020 (this date is extended and the CBA remains in place until we either ratify a new one, or go on strike) and the cost of printing and mailing out these CBA's would be in excess of approximately \$15,000.00 or more. This of course comes from our dues and we cannot justify this expense for a CBA that will last a year.

In the age of electronics and almost everyone having a phones/tablet/laptop, if you want an electronic copy of your CBA please email us (ottawa@usw9597.ca or windsor.local9597@sympatico.ca) and let us know who you work for (if you work for multiple employers let us know that too) and we will email you a copy. For those of you who prefer a hard copy or do not have a computer, please call us and provide us with your full mailing address and we will send you a copy you the agreement by mail. Be advised all the Agreements can all be found on the website and are downloadable and have been posted up there now for a couple months.

Summer is Coming!! Vacation Requests

With summer almost upon us we wanted to take the time to advise everyone that vacation requests in most if not all of the Collective Agreements are done on a first come first serve basis. If you are not aware of what this means as far as the Vacation language it means that regardless of your seniority if you put your vacation request in first for a week which nobody else has requested, you should be approved to have that time off. Only when you put your vacation request in at the SAME TIME for the SAME DATES as someone else on your site does the approve get done based on seniority. Additionally, if the Employer operationally can approve to have more than one person off on vacation at your work site then both of you should be approved.

If you have been denied because another employee on site was already approved for that same time off but you think operationally there is enough back up trained to cover both vacation requests, it won't hurt for you to contact your Supervisor/Branch Manager to talk with them further about getting the time covered also. If you are still turned down you may want to give us a call to see if we can help you out, at the very least we can look into it and verify whether in fact there is an operational deficit if the company approved both vacation request.

If you are taking off a week or more, you **MUST** submit your request minimum a month before. There is also NO limit on how many weeks you can take, if you want to take them all at once you can do so. You also have the ability now to request one or two days off with just two weeks' notice, or less but refer to the Collective Agreements since even one day short will mean your request could be denied, and the Employer doesn't have to approve it.

Please **MAKE SURE** you submit your vacation request in plenty of time to be approved - the more time you give your Employer the better your chances of it being approved and your Employer must notify you if it's denied within 5 working days of submitting your request otherwise it is automatically approved, but please refer to your CBA.

ALL MEMBERS – When you are booking vacation and want your vacation pay (all of it or a partial amount) paid out to you **You MUST request this at the time you are requesting your vacation time.** If you do not request your vacation pay it WILL NOT be paid out to you! If you also do not state whether you only want half of it etc., it most likely will be paid out in full. Please also request when you want it paid out if you would rather have it paid out on the payday before you leave for vacation or after.

BE ADVISED - *If you do not have something in writing as proof of your vacation request, or just allow your Superiors to fax your request to the office without getting any proof they sent it, then it wasn't! If your Supervisor has forgotten to fax it or denies that you asked them to send it, it's unfortunate but we will not be able to help you.*

BENEFIT PLAN HOUR BANK ... how it works (simplified)

The following information will basically explain how the benefit plan works – and to clarify, all contributions are made by the employer, you do not have to pay to have benefits other than what is listed in the book as far as the 15% for prescriptions, or dental if you have to pay up front (the dental offices in Ottawa & Hamilton don't make you pay up front, as well as the affiliated dental clinics I believe, but you should call them to verify that). If you are in a postal code area listed in the benefit book or if you live in the Ottawa, Toronto or Hamilton area you must go to the USW dental clinics, otherwise you will not be reimbursed for any dental procedures if you go to your own dentist.

The Employer will not make any contributions towards your benefit plan until you complete your probationary period, which usually takes about 3 months if you're working full time. It will be a further 3 months or more to build up your hour bank before you are in benefits and from that point you have an additional 6 month wait for dental benefits due to the expense of dental procedures.

The benefit plan works by an ***hour bank system***, so in order to maintain your hour bank so that you will NEVER fall out of benefits if you are working part time you **must work 90 hours every month** and for full time you **must work 38 hours every week**, ***this will keep you in benefits all the time.***

If you are working full time once you have 300 hours in your bank, you are then in benefits (and must be maintained at this figure), so for every week you don't work 38 hours ... for example let's say you are only working 32 hours per week, then that 6 hours that is missing each week is taken out of your 300 hour bank which then drops to 294 hours in your bank. The same process applies to part time employees except the hour bank that you need to maintain is only 150 hours.

If you continue working less than 38 hours every week, eventually you will hit "0" in your hour bank and fall out of benefits, at which point you should receive a notice of termination of benefits stating you have fallen out of benefits. The other issue you should be aware of, which is in our Collective Agreement is that your company can only forward the hours you work each month AFTER you have worked them, so on the 15th of every month the Benefit plan is just getting your hours for the previous month; for example on July 15 your Company is just sending the Plan the hours you worked in June. These hours are put into the system and then notices are generated based on whether you maintained your hour bank or fell out of benefits.

The hour bank system is done for a couple of reasons, #1 it is the only way we are able to provide all the benefits you currently have at such a small contribution by the employer and #2 so that if you stop working and have built up this hour bank you will remain in benefits about 8-12 months or more, should you stop working completely for any reason (this will not apply for those members who do not have the hour bank system such as airport screeners or who have not built up the maximum contribution).

We understand it does become a bit of a nuisance when you are not working steady hours so if you are falling in and out of benefits all the time #1 pick up some extra shifts each month in order to keep you over that 38 hour per week limit (ALL hours worked in the month go towards your hour bank and for all Employers covered under our local), #2 drop down to part time benefits if you are really below that 38 hours per week or #3 keep track of your hour bank or when approximately you might fall out of benefits and get your prescriptions in a three month supply or dental work etc done when you are in benefits. Make sure to verify you are in or back in benefits before getting any dental work done or filling prescriptions etc. This is a simple phone call to Claim Secure and ask them when approximately you might fall out of benefits (or be back in) so you are not having to pay out of your own pocket.

If you are married, common law or have dependents they are NOT covered if you drop to part time benefits, and you will not be covered for critical illness benefit, vision care or eyeglasses. There may be some other benefits you are excluded from as well as the fact that all the benefits you are entitled to are cut in half.

As a part time employee you CAN opt to remain in full time benefits but it will take you longer to build up the 300 hour bank and you will only be in benefits a couple months before you fall out, but if you are keeping track of when you are in and out of benefits you can just use your benefits when you are in them

Please be advised that your status in the benefit plan (full or part time) has NO bearing on your status with your company or under the Collective Agreement. If you want to change your status with the benefit plan first you should

verify with them what your status is, and then contact your Employer to have it changed. The Union cannot make this change for you - while we can help you with this if you have difficulty getting your status changed, even we do not have the ability to contact the benefit department and change your status, so you should contact whoever does your payroll and ask them to contact the benefit plan to change your status. If you need any further benefit information or a Benefit Book, please contact them at the numbers below.

Increase to dental benefits if you use the affiliated dentists

We are in the process of seeking out and signing up dentists in Cities across the Province, (for now just in Southwest Ontario), who will work with the Trustees to provide the same benefits that our Steelworkers dental offices do, which are located in Hamilton and Ottawa, (there are also offices in Mississauga and downtown Toronto for those who may be close or want to travel).

What this means is that if you go to one of the affiliated dentists you will have coverage the same as you would if you go to the USW dental clinics of a \$1000.00 per person or family member rather than sharing \$1500.00 for the whole family.

If you are already using one of the USW dental offices you must continue to go there for your dental needs, these new locations are only for employees living outside the postal code areas and who use "fee-for-service" dental. You also cannot have half your family use the affiliated dentist and you use another dentist, it's an all or nothing program, and you DO have a choice, if you do not want to use the affiliated dentist you can continue to use your own dentist but your dental benefit will be capped at the \$1500.00 per family.

We are aware that Claim Secure is telling employees outside the postal code areas, that they MUST use the affiliated dentists to get coverage (only if you are outside the postal code areas and using fee for service dental benefits) for now anyway, this could change if we find the savings more valuable to our members and the plan, however currently you have a choice so if you are told you must use the affiliated dentists please contact us and we will straighten it out.

Kitchener

Monarch Dentistry
51 Benton Street
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 3H1
Phone 519 208-0690

Windsor

Eye Smile Dental
2055 Sandwich West Parkway Suite #900
Windsor, Ontario N9H 2S4
Phone 519 250-5056

BENEFIT CONTACT INFORMATION (Please SAVE THIS)

Please mail all manual reimbursement claims for Prescription Drugs, Extended Health Care, Vision and Fee-for-Service Dental to Claim Secure and for any questions on these issues call Toll Free **1-888-513-4464**

ClaimSecure

P.O. Box 6500 Sudbury, ON P3A 5N5

All Group Life, AD&D, Short Term Disability and Critical Illness claims should continue to be sent to the **Plan Administrator** and for questions about these listed issues call Toll Free **1-888-290-9777**

Benefit Plan Administrators Limited – Steelworkers' Benefit Plan

P.O. Box 3071, Station "A" Mississauga, ON L5A 3A4

Be advised we negotiated Spousal benefits last round of bargaining so that if something were to happen to you, your spouse and any dependents will remain in and be covered for benefits by the plan without any contributions or payment for up to 2 years after you pass away. Please let your family know about this benefit.

You can now access your benefit information online – Have you Registered Yet?

To register for your eProfile™ account simply logon to **www.claimsecure.com**, then either click on the eProfile™ Services tab or the top menu bar, select LOGIN and then click on Register Now tab OR scroll down the home page to eProfile™ Login and click on the Register Now tab and follow the instructions. You will need your Group number (**3169**) and your 10-digit certificate number (as shown on your ClaimSecure drug card – the white card) to get started.

HAVE YOU BEEN DENIED A POSTING Because You Didn't Have CPR or First Aid Training?

During the last round of bargaining with the Security Group Employers, they advised us they were in a very bad position with some of their clients because they had contracts that didn't anticipate a minimum wage increase to \$14.00/hr and some of those clients refused to absorb that minimum wage increase.

The Employers had a decision to make, absorb that cost themselves or drop the contracts; in order to help alleviate the deficits so the Employers didn't have to lose the contracts the bargaining committee looked at ways to ease some of their financial burdens and one of those ways was to allow the Employers to only train those guards who needed first aid and CPR for the sites they work on, when their certificates were about to expire.

This was a deviation to the practice prior to bargaining, in that all guards were provided with paid CPR & first aid training (and the time spent taking these courses) when their certification was due, regardless of whether the site they worked on needed it or not.

We made this decision in good faith however it seems that we didn't consider all potential pitfalls when this was discussed and it has come to our attention recently that some of the Employers are or may deny senior members who apply for vacancies/postings where first aid or CPR is a requirement of the site and who currently do not have it, because the site you work on currently doesn't/didn't require it.

We have put the Employers on notice that if they deny the senior applicant a posting, who fulfils all other requirements of a vacancy, but who doesn't have CPR & first aid because of this good faith decision, we will go back to the way things were prior to this round of bargaining and make sure that all guards are trained for CPR & first aid when their certificates expire.

The only time you have to have these certificates is when you are first hired, after that you do not require a valid CPR/first aid certificate to renew your security license. Further, if you are required to have this training on your site, the Employer **MUST** pay for the course and your time spent taking it.

If you have any issues getting paid for your training, the time spent taking the training or denied a posting because you do not have CPR/first aid training please contact us immediately.

GARDAWORLD EMPLOYEES – forms for paid sick days and vacation pay out

We have recently been advised that GardaWorld is asking employees to fill out forms to request their vacation pay and also for the payment of Sick days. We have not yet filed grievances, however if there is a delay in getting a form to you for the pay out of a sick day or your vacation pay, we want to hear from you.

We may put the Employer on notice that this is an unreasonable policy since the onus is on them to administer payment of your sick days, not you, and by having you wait and/or filling out these forms as well as having to return it to the office, it could not only delay payment but we are not certain at this point that all employees have been notified of this change.

Since it is not being unilaterally deployed in all areas, this could cause confusion and delay in reimbursement of your sick days and possibly vacation pay. If it is only being done in one city rather than the whole Province, this means only one Branch is doing this and that gives way to a lot more questions and concerns for us.

If you are having or have had any problems with this we want to hear from you.

CALL OUT Joint Health & Safety Committee Members

We are still looking for Joint Health & Safety representatives for All Employers – mostly in Southwest Ontario

If you are still interested in making sure that your workplaces and co-workers are safe, please call or email us and let us know you are interested. Even if you have already reached out to us once, please check back to see if your area committee has a vacancy if the committee was full.

All training is provided to you free of cost, you will be paid for any time spent in training (if your scheduled to work) and you are also paid for your attendance to these JSHC meetings (which occur bi-monthly & some monthly). If overtime is incurred you get paid overtime, or you get the day off with pay (depending on when the meeting is scheduled & what shift you work), but you can negotiate the days/times when you are appointed to the committee.



WARNINGS

Lately some guards have been treating their workplace like a bar, local hangout or pick up spot – **PLEASE DO NOT DO THIS!** We can't even tell you how bad of an idea it is to hit on or try to pick someone up at your work site. Most times it ends badly for the guards, being either removed from site or more seriously, having a complaint of harassment filed against them.

Whether it is your co-worker, a member of the public or one of the client's employee, do yourself a favour and don't do it! If you do approach someone and start talking to them about getting together, going out after work or asking for their phone number/contact information or stalking them on Facebook, at best you will get a warning at worst you could be called into the Employers office for harassment or terminated depending on the severity of what you are doing or having the complaint filed under Bill 132. Do yourself a favour and leave the flirting out of the workplace, it's not a bar.



The other warning is for using your cell phone at work. There has been an increase of disciplinary meetings lately for guards using their cell phones at work. Most guard positions don't allow you to use your phone and a client does not want to see a guard with their face buried in their cell phone, especially if you are supposed to be doing a "Patient Watch" or watching CCTV cameras.

If you need it to make a call for an emergency or take a picture of a security breach, make sure first that your not in a confidential area or site where this is not permitted, otherwise this would be the only time you could use your phone and not be disciplined. If you need to make an "quick" emergency call, you are allowed to use your phone on your break but if you do it where members of the public or the client can see you, unless you have a sign on your back that says on a break, they will not know this and perception is everything, so find a quiet place, a washroom for example and make that quick call, then right back to work.

Local 9597 Website - Make sure to register today to get important updates immediately or breaking news, rather than waiting for the newsletter. You will only have access to the private member's section when you register due to the confidential information we post on the site. www.9597usw.ca

Changes to our Local 9597 Executive

There have been some recent changes to our local Executive – as you may remember Patrick Magee retired from the position of Inside Guard and so we appointed **Mike (Milo) Lori** an airport screener from Windsor to this position.

In addition to this change, Cecil Turcotte has also moved on leaving his Trustee position vacant. The Executive decided to move Milo into the Trustee position in order to audit the financial records and so he is now a Trustee leaving his Inside Guard position vacant. We appointed **Matt Strong** who was our Member-at-Large to the position of Inside Guard, he is from the ASAP security Company in Goderich.

With one final change being the vacant position of Member-at-Large, which is a position we use to bring someone on the Exec to get their feet wet so to speak as far as how the Executive works and what the expectations are. That being explained, we have decided unanimously to invite **Bonnie Medinets** to fill this position. She is a long-time security guard and member of the local who currently works for Paladin and who volunteers her time for unit meetings, rallies and anywhere else we may need her.

All of the above individuals as well as our long-standing Executive members are a valuable asset to the Executive and to you as members. Without the dedicated Team on the Executive to ensure your rights are not violated and your dues are not wasted, the Local wouldn't be in the very positive position we are in currently and we take our positions very seriously.

What comes Next for our Local

We are always looking for people to get involved and perhaps your thinking you might want to be also. Most of the current executive members are within 10-15 years of retiring and so we worry about who will take our place, the knowledge and experience we have to navigate the Collective Agreements, the laws (employment standards, human rights, accommodations, WSIB, Labour Board etc) and the politics cannot be learned over night and we want so much to share our knowledge with the next generation, those who will take over the local when we decide to retire. We particularly look for those individuals who want to get involved not because of what they can personally gain (other than knowledge) but those who are willing to help out, are active at Union meetings & functions and volunteer their time for the benefit of all members so if you have been thinking that a position with the United Steelworkers is something you are interested in, you should come out to a meeting and see what it's all about, get involved and let us know you are interested, you can make a difference.

To be clear it's not something that happens overnight, there is no instant gratification when you get involved, (not always anyway), some of us have been working at it for over 25 years now, and it has taken us that long to get where we are today with the knowledge we have. The road is not always easy and it's a thankless job, but the satisfaction you get when that one person you have helped acknowledges and thanks you, makes it all worthwhile. Come out to a meeting today!

Something to Remember

And what most people never think of until it's too late, if you have recently changed your status, gotten a divorce or had a falling out with your common-law partner or the person you listed as the beneficiary of your life insurance on your benefit card – You **MUST** fill out a new card in order to change the name of the person listed as your beneficiary.

If you do not update your card and something should happen to you, any money or entitlement to the life insurance WILL be paid out to the person you have listed, there is no other option - it will be paid out to the person listed on your card.

Additionally, and this is the Law, the only person the benefit plan can tell who is listed on that card is the actual person who is named (other than yourself of course) but if you think you need to update your card, please contact the benefit administrators at 1-888-290 9777 and have them send you out a new enrolment card, then make sure you follow up with them to verify they have received your new card and have it on file once you mail it.

General Meeting Information

July 2019

Members are encouraged to bring new items to these meetings. It is requested that New Business in the form of Motions be brought to the attention of Lisa Hilt our Recording Secretary prior to July 8, 2019.

If you want a meeting in your area, please call us.

BARRIE **Cancelled**
if you want a meeting in this area **PLEASE** let us know and we will set one up

There has been no attendance at the last couple of meetings in **Kingston**; we are thinking of moving it to **Belleville** or cancelling this location – to help us decide, if you plan to attend the next meeting let us know

CHATHAM **5pm**
Wednesday July 17
Holiday Inn Express 575 Richmond St.
Dover Room

CAMBRIDGE
Friday July 19 **930am & 530pm**
Cambridge Hotel & conference center
700 Hespeler Rd

Hamilton **10am & 500pm**
Wednesday July 17
Sheraton Hotel 116 King Street West
Hunter Room

LONDON
Thursday July 18 **1000am & 730pm**
TownePlace Suites 800 Exeter Rd

OSHAWA **900am & 830pm**
Tuesday July 16
Quality Suites Whitby 1700 Champlain Ave

OTTAWA **9am & 7pm**
Wednesday July 17
USW Office - 2285 St. Laurent Blvd Unit D-12

PETERBOROUGH **6pm**
Wednesday July 17
Best Western Otonabee Inn - 84 Lansdown St. E.

ST. CATHARINES **9am & 5pm**
Wednesday July 17
CAW hall Local 199 124 Bunting Rd

WINDSOR **10am & 4:30pm**
Monday July 15
CAW Union Hall 3400 Somme Ave

LIFELINE FOUNDATION

If there is something in your life which is causing you difficulty, at home or work call this CONFIDENTIAL number and seek assistance. This program can be used by yourself, your spouse or your children **Call 1-877-801-7762** For Garda World & Paladin Members For Securitas members Call 1-800-387-4765
Workhealthlife.com

BENEFIT CLAIMS & INFORMATION

For information about life insurance, AD&D, short term disability or critical illness claims call **1-888-290-9777**

For information about claim reimbursement for Prescriptions Drugs, Fee-for-Service Dental, Vision or extended Health Care call **1-888-513-4464**

Contacts

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