

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA (PSAC)



PSAC · BC

Public Service Alliance of Canada

Orientation Kit For New Members

NAME: _____

COMPONENT/DCL: _____

LOCAL/BRANCH: _____

PSAC ID #: _____

MY STEWARD/LOCAL CONTACT: _____

I AM A UNION MEMBER!

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

Welcome to the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)! The purpose of this guide is to provide you with answers to basic questions about navigating your union. We want you to be well informed about how your union can help you in your workplace.

MEMBERS

Our union is made strong by our members – that means you. PSAC's structure encourages active participation and supports our members' needs. The PSAC is one of Canada's largest unions, representing

over 180,000 members nationally, with over 15,000 members in the British Columbia region.

PSAC members in BC are employed in large and small communities throughout the province. Our members work in the federal government (including departments and agencies), crown corporations, airports, and in the scientific, transport, and security sectors.

PSAC recognizes the growing diversity of its members through committees and events that promote human rights.

It is this diversity that makes our union strong.

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER OF MY UNION?

UNION CARD

By being employed at a workplace that is unionized, you already receive many of the benefits negotiated by our union over the years such as pay equity. The RAND formula provides a form of union security whereby an employer automatically deducts a portion of the salary of each employee within a bargaining unit. This portion goes to the union as union dues. The RAND formula is also known as 'automatic checkoff'. It is based on the principle that all members have equal access to their collective agreement benefits, so should contribute equally as well.

However, to formally join PSAC as a full member, you need to sign a union card [pictured to the right]. By signing this card, you are able to enjoy even more benefits such as attending conferences and conventions, taking educational courses, voting and running in Local elections, and participating in our various committees, Area Councils, and other membership bodies.

In some cases, the card can also be filled out online. Contact your Local Executive or PSAC Regional Office for more information.

Contact your Local Executive or PSAC Regional Office to sign a union card and if you need information such as your PSAC ID or Local number.

The image shows two forms for PSAC membership. The top form, 'Side 2/Côté 2', is titled 'EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION / INFORMATION SUR L'EMPLOI'. It contains fields for 'EMPLOYER/EMPLOYER', 'DIVISION/DIVISION', 'WORK/TITRE DU TRAVAIL', 'CLASSIFICATION', 'GROUPE', 'SUB-GROUPE / NIVEAU/ SOUS-GROUPE', and 'DATE HERE/DATE D'EMBAUCHE'. It also has a section for 'ACTION REQUESTED/ ACTION DEMANDÉE' with checkboxes for 'Application for membership and PSAC ID card', 'ID Card replacement', and 'All other changes (update)'. Below this is a signature line with 'Date' and 'Signature' fields. The bottom form, 'Side 1/Côté 1', is titled 'PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA / ALLIANCE DE LA FONCTION PUBLIQUE DU CANADA'. It contains fields for 'PSAC ID', 'No ID / AFDPC', 'EMPLOYEE ID/NUMÉRO D'EMPLOIE (ANNÉE)', 'Component or DCL/Élément ou SLECD', 'Local Section locale', 'HOME ADDRESS/ADRESSE AU DOMICILE', 'CITY/VILLE', 'PROVINCE', 'POSTAL CODE/CODE POSTAL', 'WORK TEL./TEL. TRAVAIL', and 'E-MAIL/COORRÉL'. It also has a section for 'MEMBER'S DETAILS/COORDONNÉES DU MEMBRE' with checkboxes for 'Mr./M.', 'Ms./Mme', and 'First Name/Prénom'. The forms are bilingual and include instructions in both English and French.

WHERE DO I GO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MY UNION?

There are numerous resources available to you as a PSAC member. Below is a list of people who can help you starting with your Local.

UNION STEWARDS

The lifeblood of our labour movement is its stewards, who are member representatives in the workplace and occupy a formal role. Stewards help to link the rank and file members to their union. While defending the collective agreement, stewards are the union's presence at work. Stewards engage and inspire members to take action. Stewards help to build the capacity of the union and problem-solve prior to following the grievance process.

You can find your steward by contacting your Local Executive.

LOCAL EXECUTIVE

Local Executives are democratically elected leaders of your Local. Local Officers ensure that the integrity of our union is safe-guarded at the workplace. They work with members, other Local Officers, PSAC and Component Officers and other union staff and elected leaders to advocate for members.

You can find who your Local Executive is by visiting your Component website. If you are a Directly Chartered Local member, contact your PSAC Regional Office (see page 6).

COMPONENTS & DIRECTLY CHARTED LOCALS

Components are made up of Locals. Originally, Components were organized along departmental/ employer lines for the federal public service. Although that logic generally remains, it is not always the case anymore, given on-going employer re-organization, and PSAC organizing into new provincial and private workplaces.

Directly Chartered Locals (DCL) are Locals that are directly serviced by the PSAC and are not affiliated with a Component. There are currently 3 DCLs within British Columbia.

REGIONAL COUNCIL

The BC Regional Council brings activists together from different Components and DCLs to: network, share information, give regional policy direction, provide campaign updates, set priorities, and identify issues in the region.

Regional Council representatives are elected every 3 years within each region based on rules set in the regional by-laws. Regional Council brings together activists who provide leadership and political direction on a wide range of issues.

You can find the contact information for the BC Regional Council representatives at psacbc.com.

REGIONAL EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT (REVP)

The REVP is the highest democratically elected member of the union in the BC Region. The BC REVP chairs the PSAC BC Council and is the only full-time elected position on the Council.

The REVP sits on the PSAC governing board, the National Board of Directors, and the Alliance Executive Committee, which deals with the day-to-day operations of PSAC.

As a member of the BC Federation of Labour Executive Council, the REVP is also PSAC's connection to the broader labour movement in BC.

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HOW DOES MY CONTRACT GET NEGOTIATED?

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

PSAC has more than 300 bargaining units, each with its own collective agreement that deals with its specific working conditions. When a new group of workers unionize with PSAC, they either form a new bargaining unit, or join an existing one. Bargaining units can be as small as 10 members or as large as 70,000 members.

PSAC's bargaining teams include members elected by the bargaining unit and a PSAC negotiator. The team receives support in the form of: research, mobilization, legal and other bargaining support from PSAC staff. Our union has over 50 years of experience in negotiating collective agreements that meet members' needs in a wide variety of jobs and locations. Bargaining teams negotiate, but collective agreements only come into force once ratified (voted upon) by the Local membership.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Your collective agreement protects you in your workplace. It outlines your rights and responsibilities and lays out the rules for your working conditions; for example, hours of work and overtime, vacation leave, and pay and benefits. It also defines the employer's responsibilities. The collective agreement reflects a history of what members have demanded and won at the bargaining table.

Member participation is key to PSAC's success in negotiations, grievances, pay equity, or any other union activity. We all have to work together in solidarity to achieve the best outcome for all members. Activism can take many forms and it's an exciting way to participate in your union and our labour movement as a whole. PSAC collective action creates the necessary collective power to reach good agreements.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I HAVE PROBLEMS IN MY WORKPLACE?

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

If you believe your rights have been violated, speak to your Local steward or union representative about your recourse options. Before filing a grievance, there may be opportunities to solve the conflict outside of the grievance process by coming to an informal resolution with your employer.

FILING A GRIEVANCE

A grievance is the union's tool for making sure the employer follows the rules in the collective agreement. If you believe your supervisor or someone else has violated one of your rights outlined in your collective agreement, be sure to let a steward or Local Executive member in your

union know immediately so that they can help you file a grievance within the timelines stated in your collective agreement.

STEWARD/LOCAL EXECUTIVE

A steward or Local Executive member from your Local will help you through the grievance process in your workplace. The grievance process allows you to raise the issue directly with the employer and allows you and your union representative to gather additional information relating to the grievance.

COMPONENT OR REGIONAL OFFICE

If the steps of the grievance procedure do not resolve the issue at a Local level, a Component representative will be assigned. If you are a member of a DCL, then the grievance will be sent to the PSAC Regional Office to consider whether it will be referred to a grievance and adjudication officer. The information you gather throughout the grievance procedure is critical to PSAC's ability to assess the merits of the grievance and to decide whether it will take the grievance to a hearing.

GRIEVANCE & ADJUDICATION/ ARBITRATION

If the grievance is referred to a hearing, a PSAC grievance and adjudication officer will represent you at arbitration and/or before boards or tribunals.

PSAC will support you through the grievance process to protect your rights and the rights of all members. At any stage of the grievance process a settlement may be reached if both parties are satisfied with the outcome. Settlements may include back pay, a change that makes the workplace safer, or any other remedy requested, depending on what the initial grievance was based upon.

HOW CAN I GET TRAINING?

BASIC AND ADVANCED EDUCATION

Over the years, thousands of PSAC members have received the opportunity to expand their knowledge, develop skills, personal confidence and look at the world differently following their participation in the PSAC education program.

The program is truly comprehensive and offers opportunities for our members to receive union education on topics ranging from workplace issues to broader social justice and community issues. The courses offered vary in length from 45-minute workplace sessions to one or two-day courses and three to five day in-residence courses. We also offer an intensive Union Development Program for emerging leaders.

PSAC Education is based on adult participatory training methods and popular education. Our courses invite members to share their knowledge and experiences, reflect on new learning, take action and change their world for the better.

Talking Union Basics (TUB), our introductory course, introduces members to the PSAC and prepares them

for more advanced union education. It provides an historical and structural overview of the union, introduces participants to the collective agreement and gives them a chance for hands-on practice in problem-solving.

PSAC covers certain costs associated with courses, including reimbursing members for the wages they lose while taking courses and provides a Family Care Allowance for members who need it. Our courses are accessible. Check with your local steward, regional office or regional website to find out the schedule of courses and what is available to you.

For more information about PSAC education and to see a list of upcoming courses in BC, visit www.psacbc.com/education.

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HOW CAN I STAY CONNECTED WITH MY UNION?

PSAC communicates with its membership through various media including:

- Email
- Face-To-Face
- Telephone
- Social Media (i.e. Facebook & Instagram)
- Webinars
- Telephone Town-halls
- Meetings
- Town-halls
- Mail Correspondence
- Newsletters & E-Newsletters

WEBSITES

The PSAC National and PSAC BC websites provide members with national union news and links to regional and Component websites. PSAC provides members with tools to assist them in their advocacy work, such as contact information for Members of Parliament, draft letters in support of campaigns, and advice on various advocacy strategies and tactics.

National Site: www.psacunion.ca

Regional Site: www.psacbc.com

EMAIL

PSAC BC sends out a monthly email newsletter designed for members in the province, containing news, events, education opportunities, campaign and bargaining information. For links to more information and to sign up with your email address, visit psacbc.com/connect

SOCIAL MEDIA

PSAC BC provides up-to-date union news, as well as platforms for union advocacy through our own social media.

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/psacbc

www.facebook.com/psac.national

Instagram and X (Twitter):

@psacbc and @psac_afpc

COMPONENTS

The contact information for all the Components can be found at psacunion.ca/component-contact-information.

You can contact your nearest PSAC Regional Office if you do not know which Component you belong to, or if your Local is a DCL.

REGIONAL OFFICES

PSAC Regional Offices are there to help Locals with education, political action, Local development, negotiations, mobilization, strike coordination and more.

Our Offices in British Columbia are located at:

Vancouver Regional Office

200 - 5238 Joyce Street
Vancouver BC, V5R 6C9

(604) 430-5631 or toll-free: 1 (800) 663-1655

Victoria Regional Office

202 - 503 Park Place
Victoria BC, V9A 3P1

(250) 953-1050 or toll-free: 1 (866) 953-1050

Regional Executive Vice-President's Office

302-5238 Joyce Street
Vancouver BC, V5R 6C9

(604) 430-0191 or toll-free: 1 (866) 811-7700

NOTES



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www.psacbc.com •    [psacbc](https://www.instagram.com/psacbc)