

You Ought To Know

ISSUE: 29

What do I need to know about the upcoming local IBEW elections?

Across the Province, many IBEW Locals are holding elections in 2026. Below are a few key points to keep in mind when you talk about elections with your IBEW member employees.

You may undertake generally acceptable actions such as the following. But bear in mind that they can be construed as an unfair labour practice **if** the employer uses coercion, intimidation, threats, promises or undue influence.

- You can encourage them to attend Local Union meetings – but not pay or reward them in any way to do so
- You can advise them of the candidates (see below example)
- You can encourage them to vote – but not tell them to vote for a specific person

We are aware of the following IBEW rules regarding Local Union elections:

- The use of Union funds or employer funds to promote a particular candidate (including anything of value) is strictly forbidden.
- Employers should not allow time during working hours to vote. Voting must be done on non-working hours when Union members are not being paid by an employer.
- Candidates cannot meet with contractor associations prior to an election.
- Contractors (employers) and those holding management positions, who are members of the Local Union, are prohibited from voting in the Local Union election. If you have questions about your eligibility to vote, please contact your Local Union, which will put you in touch with the election judge.

Here is an example of factual information that you can share:

Local ... has three candidates running for Business Manager: name, name and name. These are the key aspects of their platforms (ONLY if you are aware from reliable sources of information):

Name:

Name:

Name:

Please attend Local Union meetings and educate yourself on each of the candidates before casting your vote. Business Managers are typically elected for a three-year term and represent your Local Union on numerous committees and during collective bargaining.

When is a layoff an actual layoff?

An employer-initiated layoff is generally only for shortage of work. If a contractor is planning to lay someone off due to a shortage of work, they need to follow the requirements set out in Clause 903.

- Employees receive a minimum of one hour's notice with pay. They can leave the job at the time they are notified.
- They receive their wages and ROE at the time of layoff (note that there are a few exceptions set out in the Clause).

If an employee asks for a layoff, they are voluntarily terminating their employment and it should be treated as such. If an employee is going to trade school or taking parental leave, for instance, they are not being laid off by the employer. There is no requirement to provide one hour's notice since it is an employee-initiated leave. The contractor must inform the Business Manager of the interruption in work. Clause 707 was expanded in 2022 to require a contractor to notify the Business Manager of any interruption in service, including a layoff, leave of absence, termination or resignation.

How can I share information with my employees about things I have learned in the YOTK?

There are a couple of ways:

- In January, we launched Toolbox Talks, which are materials for contractors to use when speaking to their employees. They revisit key information shared in YOTK over the years that we feel is particularly important for ECAO member contractors and their employees. You can find these on our website under [Education](#).
- You can also share issues of YOTK with your employees. Share hard copies or read key points from the issues aloud to your teams during meetings. Everything in the YOTK is based on facts, written in an easy Q&A format, relevant and shareable. You can find current and past issues of YOTK on our website under [News and Media](#).

The first Toolbox Talks is about compensation, specifically things that are included in the total package and how your employee's base rate is determined. It's important stuff, and of significant interest and relevance to your teams. We are also in the process of creating short videos to share similar information using our social media channels.

We're just getting started with this initiative, and we welcome your feedback on their usefulness, and your ideas for content for future Toolbox Talks.

Why do contractors decide not to bid on jobs?

In 2023, we reached out to our contractors to ask them why they chose not to bid on jobs within the previous 6-9 months. You can see the top 4 reasons why jobs were not bid in the chart below out of 94 responses. We know that it costs money to bid on a project, and that cost varies based on contractor and project size. We have been hearing more about the lack of workers in certain areas of the province and it's raising concerns about our contractors' ability to meet their contract requirements for jobs they do bid on and win. Our next issue will provide more guidance on that topic.

How to share your reasons for not bidding:

We learned a lot from our 2023 survey, but there is much more to learn as our market and industry evolves. Please share information with us at ECAO. Patryk Wrobel, our Labour Relations Analyst, has been reaching out to contractors with a short phone survey to gather updated information. We encourage those who determine whether to bid or procure work falling within the scope of the Principal Agreement to participate. All responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Our findings, which will be shared with all ECAO members in a future YOTK, will be presented in aggregate, and will not name contractors or identify jobs.

For those interested in learning more about the survey or to receive a copy of the questionnaire ahead of time, contact Patryk directly at pwrobel@ecao.org. We thank all of you in advance for your participation.

