

Definitions

Adapted from the Teamsters [Definitions for Common Labor Terms](#)

Bad Faith Bargaining

Stonewalling and making unreasonable demands are considered bad faith actions that violate the act. The National Labor Relations Board is the federal agency that enforces the act; the board intervenes when the labor union or the employer cannot bargain in good faith.

Bargaining Unit

A group of workers who bargain collectively with the employer. The unit may include all the workers in a single location or in a number of locations, or it may include only the workers in a single craft or department. Final unit is determined by the NLRB, or agreed to jointly by the union and the employer.

Contract, or Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)

A multiyear, bilateral agreement between the labor union and the employer. A union contract codifies the terms and conditions of employment for union members, as well as the employer's obligations and responsibilities. Union members refer to their union contracts when they have questions about their wages, how much the company is paying for benefits or what steps to take when they disagree with their supervisor's decisions.

Good Faith Bargaining

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) governs the collective bargaining process by requiring good faith efforts from both the union and the employer. Bargaining in good faith includes scheduling bargaining sessions at mutually convenient times, coming to the bargaining sessions prepared to negotiate and refraining from behaviors or actions that intimidate others in the bargaining session.

Grievance

Any type of worker dissatisfaction including violations of the collective bargaining agreement, violations of law, violations of employer policies, violations of fair treatment, and violations of past practices. The definition of a grievance is usually part of the contract, and therefore may vary from one contract to another.

Information Request

A formal request made by the union to the employer in order to:

- Monitor the employer's compliance with the contract
- Investigate whether a grievance exists
- Prepare for a grievance meeting
- Decide whether to drop or prioritize a grievance
- Prepare for an arbitration hearing

Information Request, continued

Information requests must be made in good faith—not just to irritate the boss—but they can be used to strengthen almost any grievance. The scope of information the employer is required to provide is extremely broad. It includes all documents, data, and facts relevant to a grievance or contract interpretation issue. Information is considered relevant even if it only might be useful to the union or could lead to the identification of other useful information.

Informational Picket

Picketing done with the express intent not to cause a work stoppage, but to publicize either the existence of a labor dispute or information concerning the dispute. Picketing done with the express intent not to cause a work stoppage but to publicize either the existence of a labor dispute or information concerning the dispute.

Management vs. Member

Employees with management rights such as the rights to hire, fire, or recommend such action fall under management. The employees who are defined as supervisors under the NLRA are not permitted to become members of the bargaining unit. In organizing campaigns, most employers will try to enlarge the ranks of their supervisory personnel, thus growing the management. Members are non-management employees who qualify for the bargaining unit, and thus are represented by the union.

National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)

The NLRA is a federal law guaranteeing workers the right to participate in unions without management reprisals. It was modified in 1947 with the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act, and modified again in 1959 by the passage of the Landrum-Griffin Act.

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)

The “labor board” is the agency created by the National Labor Relations Act, 1935, and continued through subsequent amendment. Its functions are to define the appropriate bargaining units, to hold elections, to determine whether a majority of workers want to be represented by a specific union or no union, to certify unions to represent employees, to interpret and apply the Act's provisions prohibiting certain employer and union unfair practices, and otherwise to administer the provisions of the Act.

Shop Steward

Elected representatives of unit members that are employees of the workplace, rather than union staff. Shop stewards must be good at understanding the needs of the unit and representing their voice when in discussions with management.

Strike

Occurs when workers collectively agree to stop working in order to gain a concession from an employer. This usually happens after contract negotiations have broken down, and a majority of workers in the bargaining unit have voted for the strike. Both strikes and picketing are protected activities under the National Labor Relations Act under certain conditions and to varying degrees.

Unfair Labor Practice (ULP)

Those employer or union activities classified as "unfair" by federal or state labor relations acts. Under the NLRA, employer unfair labor practices (ULP's) include employer threats against protected collective activity, employer domination of unions, discrimination against employees for collective activity, and employer failure to bargain in good faith with union representatives. Union unfair labor practices include failure to represent all members of the bargaining unit and failure to bargain in good faith, secondary boycotts.

Weingarten Rights

The rights of employees covered by the NLRA to request union representation during investigatory interviews if they reasonably believe that the interview could result in their being disciplined. Weingarten rights also guarantee the rights of union representatives to assist and counsel employees during interviews which could lead to discipline.

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS FOR UNION MEMBERS

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting. Until my representative arrives, I choose not to participate in this discussion."