



USW LOCAL 9346 News & Updates

If you wish to unsubscribe, please do so using the unsubscribe link at the bottom of this email. Please note that if you unsubscribe, you will not receive ANY emails from USW Local 9346 in the future unless you ask us to re-subscribe.

Upcoming Events

General Membership Meeting - Our next scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 5:30pm at the Union Hall located at 111 Centennial Square, Sparwood.

Safety Rep Meeting - June 24, 2025 at 4:30pm at the Union Hall

Shop Steward Meeting - September 8, 2025 at 4:30pm at the Union Hall



Bargaining Committee

We would like to thank everyone who put their name forward to run in our Bargaining Committee Elections held last month and to everyone who cast their ballot. This is an important process and your participation is appreciated.

Your Bargaining Committee will be:

President - Scott Liddle

Grievance Chair - Dave Puszkas

Safety Chair - Frank Roesger

Plant Rep - Scott Dyck

Maintenance/Warehouse Rep - Scott Davis

Operations Reps - Ray Banga and Stewart Hyder

The committee will go through training in the fall and then surveys will be going out this fall/winter.



Women of Steel - Bus Stop BBQ's

The Women of Steel would like to thank everyone who supported our Bus Stop BBQ's over the last week. We made a profit of \$3257.53 and the proceeds will go towards our Back to School Backpacks Campaign which provides backpacks and the needed school supplies to needy kids in Sparwood, Fernie, Elkford and the CNP.



Apprenticeships

In order to be considered for an apprenticeship, you need to write an assessment exam. Exams are held at the College of the Rockies in Fernie. Elkview will also pay for Math upgrading if you need it. Also, the exam has been revised recently and aligned better with Industry Standards.

We have received the updated Apprenticeship Exam Date poster from EVR. Click the link below to view.

[APPRENTICESHIP EXAM POSTER](#)



Union Assistance Plan - Beneficiary Cards

The Union Assistance Plan is a program run out of our United Steelworkers District 3. If you belong to this program, a benefit of \$2500 is paid out to your beneficiary immediately upon your death. If you see \$0.70 coming off your paycheck once a month called **'Union Dues USW Assist Vol.'** then you belong to this program. (If you do not belong and want to sign up, please come see Sarah at the Union Hall.) You will have also signed a yellow beneficiary card and we keep these at the Union Hall.

A lot of our members forget about this benefit and forget to keep their beneficiary cards current. We can only pay out to the beneficiary listed on your beneficiary card. If your life situations change over the years, please make sure you are also coming in to the Union Hall to check/update your beneficiary cards.



Shop Stewards and Safety Reps Needed

Shop Stewards Needed:

Operations - B and C Crew
Maintenance - All Crews
Plant - C and D Crew

Safety Reps Needed:

Maintenance - All Crews except E Crew
Plant - D Crew

If you are interested in becoming a rep, please call the Union Hall at 250-425-0131 or stop in during business hours (111 Centennial Square Sparwood, M-F 8:30am - 4:30pm)



Congratulations to our Retirees



Todd Donkin retired January 17, 2025 after being on site for 24 years. He was a Driller.



Dale Sprlak retired on February 3, 2025 after 47 years on the claim. He started February 3, 1978. He was a Heavy Duty Mechanic.



Gene O'Hearn retired April 15, 2022 but came and got his jacket in February pictured above.

Retiree's Not Pictured...

Ron Blumhagen retired October 7, 2024
Raymond Poelt retired January 9, 2025
Henry Georgie retired January 20, 2025
Russ Zuffa retired February 7, 2025

We wish all of our Retiree's health and happiness in the next chapter of their lives.

Messages from your Local Union Executive

President's Message

Brothers, Sisters, and Friends:

With the announcement of the cutting of 140 staff positions within the valley and the drop in coal price we figured it might be cause for concern for some people. One must keep in mind that when we were under the Teck regime that they were a fairly staff or top-heavy company as we like to say. Glencore is just trimming the fat. To a company the size of Glencore this is strictly a numbers game and what their profit margins look like, and we feel this is something that Teck should have done years ago.

Coal prices have always been up and down we have seen them as high as \$350 US dollars per ton and as low as \$70 US dollars per ton. I believe that Companies have gotten so use to seeing coal prices on the higher end when it drops, they believe that they are losing money. There are lots of factors that contribute to coal prices like Market conditions, Coal quality, Transportation costs, is coal being sold at spot market prices or is it being sold in a locked in contract and what the Canadian dollar is worth.

Right now, is the best time to be a Unionized employee or to be thinking about joining a Union because we are seeing contractors and staff who are all NON – Union being laid off. We have our rights protected by our CBA. If we get hit with layoffs it must be done by Seniority, and you have guaranteed recall rights non-Union employees do not have these rights. Also, our CBA states that they cannot terminate without just cause unless they lay off – which again has to be done by seniority.

With your bargaining committee elections now over - this is the time to start considering what you feel are important issues to bring to the bargaining table for example, shift schedules, or benefits. Now that the committee is elected there is some barging education that needs to be done and in the late fall you will see the bargaining surveys come out where you can express what you feel is important to you in these next negotiations.

Some have asked why we are starting to get our committee together this far in advance? Our reasoning for this was in January of 2025 we asked the company to start bargaining in November 2025 exactly one year before our contract runs out. We were told by the Company, and I quote:

"Commencing formal bargaining this far in advance does not align with our current operational strategic priorities. Bargaining too early introduces challenges, including forecasting economic conditions, operational needs, and regulatory environments that may shift significantly closer to the actual expiry date."

This tells me that Bargaining is not a concern to the Company at all, and that they feel the need to waste more money on a failing autonomous program that should have never been allowed to be continued with and that should be very alarming to you.

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result and that's exactly what is going on with the Autonomous program. The company throws insane amounts at it, they want to speed up the trucks even more with the hope that they start to produce more and that we don't have any more collisions or course outs.

With bargaining being on the radar now, maybe its time to start putting away a little bit of money every payday for the next 16 months so if things at the bargaining table take a turn for the worse you have a bit of a buffer to fall back on. Of course, this is just a suggestion and everyone is free to do what they think is best for their families.

I would like to welcome Scott Dyck from the plant, Scott Davis from maintenance, Ray Banga and Stu Hyder from operations to the Bargaining committee.

Lately, we have had a lot of issues with people getting into trouble for trying to do jobs they are not trained on. Honestly, there is a very simple fix for this - just say NO. If you have never done the job in question before or if you are not checked out on doing a certain job you have the RIGHT to say NO. Do not let Supervisors tell you it will be fine or push you to do a job that you feel is unsafe. If this happens, you immediately call for a Shop Steward or a Safety Rep – you have the right to refuse unsafe work - this is your legislated right and cannot be denied. The same can be said about running equipment if you are untrained - just say NO this isn't a job where you can just try and push through without proper training trust me when I say it will come back to bite you in the ass.

As always feel free to stop by the Hall to have a coffee and voice your concerns.

In Solidarity,

Scott Liddle
President
scottl@usw9346.ca

Vice President's Message

Labour Union

- an organization of employees formed to bargain with the employer
- an organized association of workers, often in a trade or profession, formed to protect and further their rights and interests.

Most of you would think this is common knowledge. For many of us it is, but there are a lot of people amongst us that don't understand the importance of having a strong united union. Generations before us fought hard for fair and just treatment from their employers that sought to take advantage of their hard-working employees.

This was accomplished by men and women of past labour unions standing strong and united to fight for the working conditions that so many of us take for granted today. Good wages, health benefits, and most importantly, a safe work environment.

Over time that culture has been eroded and the men and women of today are distancing themselves from the united work force and asking themselves what's in it for me, instead of what can we accomplish together for the greater good of everyone.

Sometimes some of us are not going to benefit from the issues that are up front and center at that time. Some of us might have to sacrifice a little more than others in certain battles but staying united means we stay strong, if we fight together in time, we all will get the benefits we are trying to achieve. If we are divided, we are weak in the eyes of the company. Which means easily defeated.

With less than 15 months away from our current contract expiring its time we start standing together against the little battles that will make us stronger for the larger battles yet to come. The first step is to stop letting management chip away at the current collective bargaining agreement. Some of the stuff they get away with may seem to be little things but when enough people are ok with giving into managements tactics and others are not, that's the division that makes us look weak and unorganized.

The most important first step is to build the lines of communication between all members. We still have a lot of senior members that know and understand the ins and outs of being in a labour union, but we have many more new members that this is all a very different work environment for them. Please if you are one of the few that can help educate the ones that don't know, reach out to them. For the ones that don't know and are feeling intimidated there is always someone out there to help, Shop Stewards, Safety Reps and the Executives down at the hall. All these people can help or point you in the right direction to someone that can. Only if we all work together will we once again build a strong union that demands to be treated with respect from our employer. The respect that we all deserve!

Thank you and if for any reason anyone of you feels the need to reach out to me, I'm available at rayb@usw9346.ca

In Solidarity,
Ray Banga
Vice President

Safety Chair's Message

Dear Union Members,

I'm pleased to share that a new group of Safety Representatives has successfully completed their Level 1 & 2 Safety Rep Training, marking an important step forward in strengthening our workplace safety culture.

Please join me in welcoming the following individuals to their new roles.

New Safety Representatives

Operations

- Kattilyna Keohane – A Crew
- Richard Samy – A Crew
- Dylan Delorme – C Crew
- Harley Varty – D Crew

Maintenance

- Patrick Scott – E Crew

Plant

- Jomina Julian – A Crew
- Brian Flint – C Crew
- Ray Woodbury – C/D Crew

Additionally, we're pleased to welcome back Peter Waugh (C Crew, Ops) to the Safety Rep list.

Their commitment to safety, continuous learning, and representing their crews is truly commendable. As Safety Representatives, they will play a vital role in identifying hazards, promoting safe work practices, and acting as key points of contact for their teams on all safety-related matters.

I encourage everyone to take a moment to connect with them, offer support, and collaborate as they step into this important role. Strong communication between workers and Safety Reps is essential to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and respectful workplace for all.

On behalf of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee and the United Steelworkers Local 9346, welcome aboard, and thank you for stepping up.

If you're interested in becoming a Safety Rep yourself, feel free to contact the Union Office at 250-425-0131 to learn more about the process and upcoming training opportunities.

In solidarity,

Frank Roesger

Grievance Chair's Message

Siblings,

In the last few years, we have seen an unprecedented increase in hiring as well as a major increase in movement through job postings and lines of progression. In the past when someone was hired at the mine it was standard that they would be hired on as a haul truck driver and would not move from this position for years. Today's this has shifted to new hires coming on site every 2 weeks and moving jobs within 6 months and in some cases, moving through several jobs within one year. We no longer live in a world where a few junior employees would spend time in one area, gaining experience and working with a majority of senior employees, but instead a vast majority of Junior employees working for short periods in an area, without the experience of senior employees to learn from. As this is the new culture at the mine, we need to realize that the experience we used to lean on of senior employees is shrinking and because of this it is going to be more difficult for newer members to gain the knowledge necessary to succeed. It is no secret that the training department is strained with the influx of people being hired, as well as the training needed when people move between jobs.

Mining is a dangerous job, and having people who are not fully trained, unsure of safety protocols, or in the worst cases; not even aware that what they are being instructed to do is unsafe, is bad for everyone. We need to collectively take a step back and ensure that when you are being asked to do a job that it is something that you are trained and qualified to do, that you know the risks associated with the task, and that you know how to mitigate these risks and ultimately work safely. This starts with having the courage to stand up and say when something is not right, ask for what you need before you start, and inform someone if you need more training prior to doing a task. This goes for situations from being asked to run a piece of equipment without a logbook to doing a job you are not fully qualified to do. The answer must be, prior to getting the job done, that you have everything you need to do the job safely. That means all proper forms filled out, logbook, take 5 etc. all proper training prior to starting a job and never working under pressure to get the job done when any of these aspects are missing.

Instructions such as "just run it and we will get a logbook to you when we can" or being put on a job you know you have not received proper training for, cannot be present in our work and we must recognize when this is happening and not allow it.

Most people have a desire to come to work and do a good job, and being a production mine there is often a feeling of pressure to get things done. Never forget that rushing through a task is the quickest way to cause an incident, and I guarantee that following an incident the first questions asked will be if you had a take 5 filled out, a logbook completed, that you were fully trained, that you were familiar with the task etc. Unfortunately, there are times where members are pressured to do jobs without these necessary steps in place and then when something goes wrong, they are the ones who end up receiving discipline or worse.

There is no shame in asking for help or stating there is something we do not know. We must be the ones in charge of our own safety, and even better look out for our fellow co-workers and stand together to ensure no one is doing, or being asked to do something unsafe.

Do a take 5, complete a walkaround, fill out the logbook, ask for more training, request a JSA, ask for a safety rep, request to review an SP&P, and if necessary utilize your right to refuse unsafe work (article 4 of your CBA) and if anyone encourages you to skip any of these steps to "get the job done" remember these steps are there for your safety, and when people think that they can skip any of these as a "favor" to help get things done faster, the usual outcome is to blame the worker and the decision to discipline is rarely mitigated by saying "my supervisor told me to".

In Solidarity,

Dave Puszkas
Grievance Chair
davep@usw9346.ca

WCB Chair's Message

How to avoid problems with your WorksafeBC Claim.

Being injured or disabled from work can be a very stressful time. Dealing with WorksafeBC and the employer at the same time you are coping with your medical problems can be challenging.

Below are some tips that may help you avoid some common problems with the Claims process.

At the start of your claim make sure you report your injury to your employer as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in your claim being denied.

Seek medical treatment as soon as possible and tell your physician that it was a workplace accident. If you live in Alberta make sure your doctor knows that it is a WorksafeBC claim not Alberta WCB. Give your doctor a complete description of all your injuries and symptoms resulting from the accident.

File a claim with WorksafeBC as soon as possible. The easiest way to do this is by calling 1-888-WORKERS and filing a teleclaim. They will walk you through all the questions and record your answers. When you report your injury to WorksafeBC be sure to provide a complete description of when and how you were injured and all the body parts affected. You should let WorksafeBC know if you are missing time from work.

During the claim be sure to provide all information and complete all forms as requested by WorksafeBC. Follow up with your doctor on a regular basis and report on all of your injuries and symptoms so that your doctor can update WorksafeBC on your progress and potentially your needs for any diagnostic assessments, treatment, and medications.

There are some claim managers at WorksafeBC who are difficult to get a hold of. This can be very frustrating. Try to stay calm as emotional outbursts only make things worse. Your phone calls to your claims managers should be returned within two business days. If this isn't happening you should contact the Client Services Manager (your claim manager's boss). The best way to reach them is by calling the 1-888-WORKERS number and asking to be put through. If the Client Services Manager doesn't resolve your concerns, you can contact the WorksafeBC Issue Resolution Office at 1-800-335-9330 or you can contact me and I can help you through the process.

If you do run into difficulties with WorksafeBC, you should document your communications in writing and keep copies for your records as this could serve as evidence later, if needed.

When you receive Decision Letters from WorksafeBC make sure you are reading them very carefully even though they may be long. Pay special attention to long term wage rate decisions. If these are set too low, all of your financial benefits will also be too low, potentially for the whole life of the claim. Also pay attention to conditions they deem to have been "resolved".

You can challenge any decision regarding benefits on your claim but you only have 90 days from the date of the decision letter to appeal. It is very rare that they will accept late appeals. If you don't appeal within that time frame, the letter stands.

I can help you with any appeals you may want to bring forward and/or can look at any decision letters you wish to share with me to get advice.

I can be reached at the Union hall at 250-425-0131 or by email at admin@usw9346.ca

If you have any questions on any of this, please feel free to contact me.

In Solidarity,

Sarah Thompson
Office Admin/WCB Chair/WOS Co-Chair
admin@usw9346.ca

USW Local 9346 | P.O. Box 40 | Sparwood, BC V0B 2G0 CA

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!