

January 2026 Newsletter

To All UFCW Local 649 Members,

Best wishes for a prosperous new year! We trust that you enjoyed a safe and pleasant holiday season. As the calendar turns, we remain committed to collaborating with each of you as we continue to foster a safer, fairer, and more respectful workplace. The new year builds upon the momentum established by members who have actively participated, sought information, and supported one another. In alignment with this commitment, please review the following details regarding General Membership meetings for 2026.

First Meeting of the Year: Wednesday, February 18, 2026.

Multiple meeting times will be offered throughout the day at the hall to accommodate all shifts. Please note that exemptions will not be granted for evening or night shift staff. Members who attend this meeting will receive \$40, payable on their year-end assessment cheque. Scheduled times are 11:00 am, 2:30 pm, 4:00 pm, and 7:00 pm. *The addition of the 4:00 pm meeting is intended to better serve our membership.*

This format will apply to all four General Membership meetings in 2026. Members will receive \$40 per meeting, and an additional \$40 (totaling \$200) will be awarded to those who attend all four meetings or have approved exemptions for one or two meetings.

IMPORTANT: *All members are required to attend at least two meetings in 2026 in order to be eligible for the additional \$40 payment.* Exemptions are limited to two meetings per calendar year for reasons such as vacation leave.

BARGAINING:

Our current collective agreement is set to expire on October 31, 2026. Securing a fair contract that recognizes your dedication and hard work remains our primary objective for this year.

As negotiations progress, it is essential to reinforce that the union is comprised of its

members; its strength depends on collective engagement. Outcomes at the bargaining table result from both sound proposals and robust member involvement.

Your bargaining committee serves on your behalf and derives its effectiveness from the active participation, solidarity, and support of the membership. Employers gauge employee unity and engagement closely. When members attend meetings, ask questions, and maintain communication, it underscores the importance of the matters discussed during negotiations.

Bargaining can be a complex and time-intensive process; significant updates may not always occur frequently, which is a standard part of the proceedings. Maintaining focus, realistic expectations, and unity throughout is crucial. Disunity or disengagement weakens our position—solidarity is our greatest asset.

Every member contributes to this process, whether by staying informed, supporting collective decisions, or communicating with colleagues about the significance of this year's negotiations. The achievements we secure and the improvements we pursue affect all members now and in the future.

Please encourage any co-workers not receiving union updates to join the mailing list. Registration is straightforward and ensures everyone remains informed and engaged. Please contact Brant at the email address listed below to be added to the list or to update your contact information. We will be sending out increased communications throughout the year.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our union and to one another.

Stay informed, involved, and united.

In solidarity,

B. Palko

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