A BASIC GUIDE TO ESTABLISHING A

LABOR - MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/FORUM

For further information, contact:

Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
2100K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20427
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www.fmcs.gov

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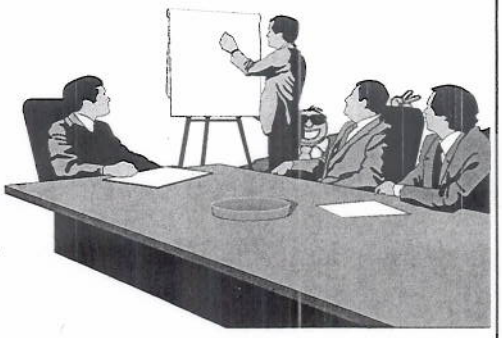
LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (LMC)



WHAT IS A LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE?

A Labor-Management Committee (LMC) is a tool used by labor and management to improve the work place. The LMC is union members and managers meeting periodically to discover, discuss and resolve issues or problems that are not typically covered by a collective bargaining agreement or "contract". **THE UNION LEADERS AND TOP AGENCY MANAGEMENT MUST BE COMMITTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE LMC.**

A basic formula for success is:

- **WILLINGNESS** to recognize that problems may exist
- **DESIRE** to improve the current situation
- **COMMITMENT** to allocate resources (time and energy)
- **EXPECTATION,** realistic in nature

Is a LMC a cure-all, ***NO*****.....** Long-standing problems will not generally be solved by quick or easy solutions. However, LMC does provide the forum to tackle these problems.

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STARTING YOUR LMC

COMMITTEE SIZE

The number of representatives on the committee can vary according to the size and structure of the establishment. However, the representatives of each party should consist of responsible leaders. The Committee should be composed of an agreed upon equal number of representatives of each side. The union members should include the local union leadership, the chief steward and representatives of major departments and shifts. Management members must include site management and line supervisors. Additional members can be included as required. In the future, it may be helpful if the committee is supplemented with rotating members, each serving for a short period of time. This practice allows more people to participate in the committee and can introduce a "fresh outlook" on issues and/or solutions. Rotation also affords the opportunity to bring to the meetings the "habitual gripers" who can disrupt an orderly process of operation. Many times the "griper" can make a valuable contribution by offering constructive suggestions. The increased communications between the parties, as a result of the LMC, will lead to a better Labor-Management relationship; and will be invaluable in reaching solutions to mutual problems.

LMC MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES

The first order of business is establishing the frequency, dates, location and duration of meetings. Once the Committee is in place, monthly meetings should be sufficient. Meetings should be limited to one and one-half hours. (These limits can be modified by the mutual agreement of the parties). However, the meeting time provided should be strictly adhered to and not extended unless an emergency exists.

CHAIRING THE COMMITTEE

Initially, Commissioners of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service may Facilitate the meetings and assist the chairpersons. It is suggested that co-chairs (one representing labor and one management) be appointed and rotate the chairing of meetings.

MINUTES

A recording secretary should be appointed at the first session. Accurate minutes should be maintained and posted so that the union members and members of management are kept up to date on the activities of their committee. A bulletin or newsletter may be developed by the committee.

AGENDA

An agenda or list of topics to be discussed by the committee should be distributed to each member of the committee within a reasonable period of time, but, in no case less than five (5) days prior to the meeting. This allows all members of the committee ample time to prepare for the session. It is generally advisable to limit the agenda to three or four items per party. The items should be listed in the order that the submitting party prefers the issue to be addressed. Topics not on the agenda shall not be discussed but shall be placed on the agenda for the following meeting. (This rule may be waived by the mutual agreement of the parties in extraordinary situations). The agenda shall include the topic and a brief description of the issue.

SUBJECTS FOR A LMC

There are hundreds of topics successfully handled by LMCs. A partial list of these areas of discussion includes:

- Communications: Improving within Plant and/or Company
- Safety and Health Issues
- Product Quality Control
- Elimination of Excessive Waste
- Morale of Workers
- Working Conditions
- Productivity
- Causes of Grievances
- Training
- Absenteeism
- Skills and Knowledge of all Employees: Improving and Utilizing them
- Suggestion Systems
- Policies, Rules and/or Regulations
- Job Design
- Supervisor / Steward / Employee Relationship
- Job Satisfaction

THE "FORBIDDEN" ISSUES

There are certain issues that are better handled by collective bargaining, I & I, or contract enforcement including:

- ▣ Any topic covered by the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement or any topic that proposes any change in the language of your current contract.
- ▣ Active Grievances

THE LMC IS NOT DESIGNED TO BY-PASS THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE OR ANY ASPECT OF THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT.

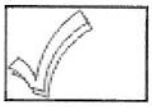
THE ADVANTAGES

.....FOR THE UNION

- A channel of communication to top Agency management.
- An avenue to express employee complaints that lie outside the normal grievance procedure.
- An opportunity to resolve minor problems before they become significant grievances.
- A chance for input on operational problems and management plans that affect employees' work schedules, job assignments and working conditions.
- Recognition, by management, of the union as a viable, responsible organization with a constructive role beyond that of simply processing grievances.
- A means of strengthening communications with the membership.

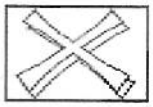
.....FOR MANAGEMENT

- A forum to review Agency conditions, quality problems, product development, customer requirements and other related matters that demonstrate the relationship of the employees' role in the success or failure of the Agency.
- An opportunity for advance discussion of operational problems, planning and scheduling, and other matters that have potential impact on employee work schedules, overtime schedules, layoffs, recalls, temporary transfers or new job opportunities.
- An open channel of communication for top Agency management to establish rapport with the union committee without becoming bogged down in day-to-day labor relations problems, including grievances.
- An opportunity for management to be responsive to constructive suggestions and valid complaints, demonstrating to the union and employees that management is sincerely interested in improving the workplace.
- A means of communicating with employees through their elected leaders.



THE DO'S

THE DON'TS



Once the labor-management committee has been set up, organized and procedural items have been agreed upon, the success of the committee depends on the parties. Based on past experience, federal mediators have identified some of the ***"do's"*** and ***"don'ts"*** that provide the framework for success.

DO keep the discussion centered on the issue involved.

DO keep personalities from becoming involved

DO hold all meetings as scheduled. Cancel meetings only in an emergency

DO be prompt in attending the meetings.

DO submit the agenda in advance to allow the opposite party sufficient time to investigate problems.

DO in submitting the agenda, identify all items to be discussed.

DO maintain an agreed-to procedure on recording and drafting the minutes, as well as methods of distribution.

DO maintain accurate minutes on subjects discussed at the previous meetings that have been "completed" or "resolved" as well as those items still "open".

DO be sure the committee concept is explained and understood by employees and supervisors.

DON'T start the first meeting with extremely difficult issues. ***DO*** get accustomed to this problem-solving technique by tackling rather minor problems first.

DON'T allow the meetings to become gripe sessions.

DON'T deal in generalities. Be specific about the problem and its suggested correction.

DON'T anticipate that you know the answer to a question before it has been discussed. **DO** ask questions to get the facts.

DON'T treat any issue on the agenda as unimportant. Each item on the agenda deserves thorough investigation and discussion.

DON'T delay in communicating solutions developed for serious problems, or the outcome of issues discussed.

DON'T start scheduled meetings late, or drag them on beyond the allotted time. This has often led to the failure of a LMC.

DON'T look for immediate results.

REMEMBER, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT LESS SERIOUS PROBLEMS BE DISCUSSED INITIALLY TO FAMILIARIZE EVERYONE WITH THE COMMITTEE AND THE PROCESS OF WORKING TOGETHER TO SOLVE PROBLEMS.

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Labor / Management Committee Bylaws

Purpose

To investigate, study and discuss possible solutions to mutual problems affecting labor/management relations.

Representation

Union — Five (5) members: President, Stewards, Officers , and two (2) Union Leaders.

Employer — Five (5) members: top management representatives, department head, two (2) Labaro Relationsrepresentatives, and one (1) other operating member from the departments working under the union contract.

The employer's Ageny Head and the National Representative of the union are ex-officio members.

Substitutes may be chosen by mutual consent, but it is recognized that a continuity of membership is required. The operating members from management and the two (2) representatives from the union, other than the president, business agent, and secretary-treasurer, will be rotated every twelve (12) months.

Date and Time of Meetings

Meetings shall be held once a month, and they shall be limited to one and one-half hours. At the first meting, a specific day and time shall be selected for future meetings. Every attempt shall be made to keep such a schedule, realizing that some flexibility is necessary.

Meeting Agenda

An agenda shall be submitted five (5) days prior to the meetings, to both parties. A topic not on the agenda shall not be discussed but rather shall be placed on the following month's agenda. The agenda shall include a brief description of each item to be discussed. Emergency items may be added to the agenda by mutual consent.

Discussion of agenda topics will be alternated, with the party occupying the chair exercising the right to designate the first topic.

Chairing

Responsibility for chairing meetings shall alternate each meeting between the union and management. Each party will determine whether their chair assignment will be permanent or rotate among their members.

Reporting

There shall be a Committee Secretary, not a member of the Committee, to record and distribute the minutes, prepare and distribute the agenda, and to be the recipient of subcommittee reports. Topics will be recorded as they are discussed. Any procedures or recommendations developing from these meetings will be communicated to the proper group; i.e., Operating Department, Joint Standing Committee, Negotiating Committee, etc. Drafts of the minutes of meetings will be submitted to each co-chair by the secretary for approval and submission to the other Committee members. All minutes, after Committee approval, shall be distributed to all employees; to labor, management and administrative staff.

General Guidelines

1. It is recognized that recommendations growing out of these meetings are not binding.

2. No grievances shall be discussed and no bargaining shall take place.

3. Topics that could lead to grievances may be discussed.

4. Each person wishing to speak shall be recognized by the Chair before speaking.

5. The Chair shall recognize a motion from either party to table a topic for further study.

6. All decisions made by the Committee, by itself and/or its subordinate entities, shall be arrive at by the process of mutual consensus. There shall never be a vote taken by the Committee or any of its subordinate entities.

7. Either party may initiate a request to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service for assistance.

8. Each topic shall be discussed fully and action reached before proceeding to another topic. Topics requiring further study may be tabled. Where mutually satisfactory decisions are not reached, the topic shall be canceled, reverting to its proper place in the labor/management relationship - for instance, grievance procedure, negotiations, etc.