

So You Want to Send a Resolution
to the April 13-16, 2011
CUPE BC Division Convention



INTRODUCTION

CUPE BC's annual Division Convention is the supreme authority for CUPE BC. Delegates attending convention make decisions about policies that will guide the Division. They decide whether or not our constitution will be amended.

All this is done through resolutions that are debated on the convention floor. Every year more than 100 resolutions are put forward. Not all of them make it to the convention floor.

This document attempts to outline how the resolution process works and to provide some advice to help in the drafting of resolutions.

WHO CAN SUBMIT A RESOLUTION?

Resolutions can be submitted to the CUPE BC Convention by an affiliated organization. The CUPE BC Executive Board and all committees appointed by Executive Board can also submit resolutions.

DEADLINES

If your local or other affiliated organization want a resolution to get to the convention floor you have to pay attention to deadlines.

For the 2011 Convention resolutions must be received in the Division office by Saturday, February 12, 2011

Resolutions submitted after this date are considered "late resolutions." That means that they go to the bottom of the pile and will not be debated until all other resolutions have been dealt with.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

After the resolution deadline has passed resolutions on emergent issues may be submitted to the CUPE BC Executive Board for consideration. If the Executive accepts that it is really an emergency, then it would be added to the list of resolutions.

DOTTING THE “I”S, CROSSING THE “T”S.

Resolutions submitted to Convention must be signed by the President and Secretary of an affiliated organization, or by the Chair of a committee appointed by Executive Board. CUPE BC will NOT accept resolutions via email.

*Make sure your resolutions
are properly signed before
sending them in*

WHAT MAKES A GOOD RESOLUTION

Remember, the most important part of your resolution is the “CUPE WILL” (in traditional language, BE IT RESOLVED) clauses. This is the only part of your resolution that will make it into the CUPE BC policy book. The “CUPE WILL” clauses have to be able to stand alone without the “BECAUSE” clauses.”

Try to keep your resolutions to the point. Ideally, most resolutions should not be longer than 150 words.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR RESOLUTIONS?

All resolutions submitted for the CUPE BC Convention are referred to one of two committees: the Resolutions Committee or the Constitution Committee.

The Executive Board appoints these Committees. They are made up of CUPE members with convention experience and are advised by one or more staff representatives.

As their names suggest, the Constitution Committee deals with resolutions that would amend the CUPE BC constitution. The Resolutions Committee deals with all other resolutions.

The Resolutions Committee

The Resolutions Committee receives all resolutions not dealing with the constitution. The resolutions are then sorted into subject area groups (for example, Health and Safety, Young Workers). Resolutions are presented to the Convention grouped under these headings.

The Resolutions Committee examines each resolution to see if it is properly written. If there are minor problems the Committee has the authority to make changes to the resolution on a “minor amendment sheet” which is presented to the convention. Some examples of these sorts of problems are outlined later in this paper under the heading “Problems with Resolutions.”

The Committee looks at all the resolutions to see if any of them are substantially the same or if they are complimentary to one another. If they find such resolutions they will combine them into “composite resolutions.” Please note that if plain language resolutions and traditional resolutions are combined to form a composite resolution, the Resolutions Committee will present the composite resolution in the plain language format.

In the case of any minor amendments or composite resolutions, the body that sent the resolution is invited to respond to the suggested changes. If you have submitted a resolution to convention, please check upon registration if you are requested to meet with the Resolutions Committee regarding sign off of any minor amendments. **Please note:** if the submitting body is not able to meet with the Resolutions Committee in a timely manner, the CUPE BC Secretary-Treasurer may be required to sign off on any minor amendments suggested by the committee.

Finally, the Resolutions Committee establishes the priority for sending each resolution to the Convention floor. Some of the things that have affected a resolutions priority in the past have been:

- Whether or not more than one local, affiliated body or committee has supported the resolution demonstrating widespread support.
- Whether or not the purpose of the resolutions is easily determined from reading it.
- Whether or not there are already resolutions in the policy book dealing with the same issue (particularly in recent years).
- Whether or not the Committee considers the issue to be extremely important to the Convention.
- The Convention agenda and the relevance of a resolution to a speaker or a report.

A recommendation of concurrence does not indicate whether the Resolutions Committee supports or doesn't support a resolution. The Resolutions Committee is required by CUPE policy to recommend concurrence unless a resolution is improperly formatted or violates the CUPE constitution.

The Constitution Committee

The Constitution Committee goes through much the same process as it deals with resolutions that would affect the Division constitution. In some respects, however, constitutional resolutions are trickier.

First of all, because of the importance of constitutional resolutions they require a two-thirds majority to pass. Ordinary resolutions require only a majority of votes cast. An amendment to the CUPE BC Constitution cannot conflict with the CUPE National Constitution.

A resolution amending the constitution must include the exact language in the constitution that is to be changed. It must show how the actual new clause will appear

A resolution to amend the constitution must be set out in specific wording outlining what words of the constitution are to be amended (see Constitutional Resolutions under section “Problems with Resolutions”).

If the wording is not correct, the Constitution Committee can simply treat it as an ordinary resolution and refer it to the Resolutions Committee. If it is passed as an ordinary resolution it may be treated as “policy” but it does not affect the constitution.

WHAT IF YOUR RESOLUTION DOESN'T COME TO THE CONVENTION FLOOR?

Because of the volume of resolutions, not all of them make it to the Convention floor. Policy resolutions that don't make it to the floor are referred to Executive Board and either passed or rejected. Constitutional resolutions that don't make it to the floor are not referred to Executive Board because only Convention has the power to change the constitution.

Plain Language

At CUPE BC's 2006 convention delegates passed a resolution encouraging people to use a plain language format for their resolutions. While either the traditional format or the plain language format is acceptable, plain language is easier to understand. It helps people participate more fully in the convention.

The following are examples for your information:

Plain Language	Traditional Language
<p>CUPE BC Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage all chartered organization to use the recommended format for resolutions; and 2. Encourage chartered organizations to keep resolutions at 150 words or fewer. <p>BECAUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventions run more smoothly when resolutions are worded and laid out correctly; and • The Resolutions Committee needs proper signatures to know the resolutions come from a chartered organization; and • CUPE has to print and process more than 100 resolutions. 	<p>WHEREAS properly worded and set up resolutions allow for a smoother CUPE convention; and</p> <p>WHEREAS resolutions must contain the proper signatures if the Resolutions Committee is to know they are truly resolutions submitted by chartered organizations; and</p> <p>WHEREAS CUPE has to process and print more than 100 resolutions:</p> <p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all chartered organization be urged to follow the recommended format; and</p> <p>BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that chartered organizations be urged to keep within a 150 word limit.</p>

PROBLEMS WITH RESOLUTIONS

The following are a number of example resolutions that contain problems along with ways that those problems might be corrected.

Abbreviations

Frequently, people writing resolutions will make heavy use of abbreviations. These abbreviations often relate to some area where the resolution's writer may have special knowledge. Just as often, other people don't have a clue what the abbreviations mean. Resolutions with obscure abbreviations always end up on the Minor Amendment Sheet.

The Wrong Format	The Right Format
<p>CUPE BC WILL</p> <p>Oppose the globalization agenda of the WTO and the IMF.</p> <p>BECAUSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other unions such as the BCGEU and the IWA have taken a strong stand against the WTO's evil trade agenda, and • The IMF has supported this agenda of globalization 	<p>CUPE BC WILL</p> <p>Oppose the globalization agenda of the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund.</p> <p>BECAUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other unions such as the BC Government and Services Employees' Union and the International Woodworkers' of America have taken a strong stand against the World Trade Organization's evil trade agenda, and • The International Monetary Fund has supported this agenda of globalization <hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> <p><i>Note that CUPE has been left as an abbreviation. This is a CUPE convention. We know what it means.</i></p>

Style Guide

It is important that the wording of our policies be consistent and clear. Wording that is not clear will need to be changed and the Resolution will end up on the Minor Amendment sheet. To avoid this, please use the following format for commonly used expressions:

The Wrong Format	The Right Format
The government The Liberal government	The BC Liberal Government <i>or</i> The federal Conservative Government
CUPE	CUPE BC <i>or</i> CUPE National <i>or</i> the National Union

The All Important “CUPE WILL” (BE IT RESOLVED) Clause

At the end of the day, all of your “Because” (Whereas) clauses are going to disappear. The only thing that goes in CUPE’s permanent policy book is the “CUPE WILL” clause. That means that your “CUPE WILL” clauses must be able to stand-alone and be understood. “Because” clauses are useful to state your arguments, but they are not included in the policy book.

If your “CUPE WILL” clauses do not stand alone they will either not be moved forward by the Resolutions Committee or they will be amended and will go on the Minor Amendment Sheet.

The Wrong Format	The Right Format
CUPE BC WILL Take action on this issue BECAUSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BC Liberal government has begun a campaign against working people, and • This campaign has been to reduce wages and destroy workers’ rights. 	CUPE BC WILL Oppose the BC Liberal government campaign to reduce wages and destroy workers’ rights. BECAUSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BC Liberal government has begun a campaign against working people, and • This campaign has been to reduce wages and destroy workers’ rights.

Hitting The Right Level

Remember, the resolutions we are talking about are for the CUPE BC Division Convention. There are some things the Division can do, but there are some things that belong to CUPE National. CUPE BC can recommend changes to National, but a National Convention, not a Division Convention, must make those decisions.

The Wrong Format	The Right Format
<p>CUPE BC WILL</p> <p>Hold a national health and safety convention within two years.</p> <p>BECAUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety is a critical issue for all workers, 	<p>CUPE BC WILL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recommend to CUPE National that a national health and safety convention be held within two years. 2. Submit a resolution at the National Convention calling for a health and safety convention <p>BECAUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health and safety is a critical issue for all workers, <hr/> <p><i>Note: this resolution goes further and suggests concrete things that CUPE BC can do.</i></p>

Other Tips

It is important to be as clear as possible in the wording of a resolution - for example:

- Use the term “BC Provincial Government” or the “Federal Government” rather than just “government”.
- Use the term “CUPE BC” or “CUPE National” rather than just “CUPE” or “Union”.
- Know that different words have higher levels of priority or direction – for example: “demand” is a much more forceful term than “urge” or “lobby”. Your word choice should be determined by the message that you are wanting to convey.

Constitutional Changes

Most resolutions to CUPE BC are policy resolutions. They set general policy directions for the Division and they pass with 50 per cent plus one vote.

Constitutional resolutions are different. They change the fundamental framework of the way we operate. They require a two-thirds vote to pass and they must be very specifically constructed. Constitutional resolutions must set out the exact language they want as an amendment in the constitution.

If the exact language isn't set out, then you really don't have a constitutional resolution, you have a policy resolution. Policy resolutions are easier to pass, but they don't change the constitution.

Sometimes the Constitution Committee will rewrite your resolution for you, but you shouldn't count on this.

The Wrong Format	The Right Format
CUPE BC WILL Create a standing committee on golf. BECAUSE • Golf is a matter of great concern to the CUPE membership	CUPE BC WILL amend section 5.6 (a) of the CUPE BC Constitution by adding a new subsection 8. reading as follows: 5.6 (a) 8. Golf Committee. BECAUSE • Golf is a matter of great concern to the CUPE membership

Another example would be the following, this time using traditional language, which is also acceptable.

The Wrong Format	The Right Format
<p>Whereas there are too many “emergency” resolutions at convention,</p> <p>Therefore be it resolved that convention only discuss an emergency resolution if the topic has been in the National Enquirer in the week before convention.</p>	<p>Whereas there are too many “emergency” resolutions at convention,</p> <p>Therefore be it resolved that section 4.15 of the CUPE BC Constitution be replaced with a new section 4.15 with the following wording:</p> <p>4.15 The Convention in session may accept emergency resolutions <u>if the topic of the emergency resolution has been discussed in the National Enquirer in the week before convention.</u> Such resolutions must be signed by the submitting delegate(s), and must deal with a specific incident occurring at the time of the Convention.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Underlining is included for illustrative purposes only.</i></p>

COPE-378

P:\2011\Convention\CONVENTION CALL MAILING\Resolutions Guide ver 2009.doc