

On March 30/31st, 2016 I attended the COPE **Grievance and Arbitration workshop**, held at the Delta Chelsea hotel in downtown Toronto.

Day 1: We began the workshop with introductions, advised one another of our locals and positions therein.

We promptly began with the Grievance procedure from what information the grievance form should contain, interviewing the grievor, during which time discussions were had around what constitutes a grievance, the grievors disposition, the stewards disposition, type of grievances i.e., individual, policy etc. and dispute resolutions and grievance meetings right through to Arbitration. We watched two video's wherein members had approached their union steward with grievances and subsequently the stewards interaction with the employer. Both video's highlighted key points to think about when representing a member and dealing with the employer. A lot of discussion was had around what constitutes a grievance, collective agreement interpretation and several members shared examples and stories they've experienced. We also talked about stewarding and tips were given around steward conduct and interaction with members.

Day 2: We continued with the Arbitration process, spoke about Arbitrators and examined Minutes of Settlement. We watched an arbitration process and examined the role of the panel/participants which was very informative. We participated in group exercises i.e., examining situations wherein the grievor had been disciplined or terminated, discussed the article in the CA pertaining to the situation and gave opinions based on the information. The group role played a union/employer disciplinary meeting which was a lot of fun and extremely enlightening. The group exercises are especially valuable in not only observing the difference of opinions that are put forth, also the traits in personalities that arise when trying to negotiate a difficult situation.

A lot of other topics were covered; last chance agreement; past practice as well as current and past arbitration awards that received media attention.

This is the 2nd workshop I am taking with COPE and, as with the last, it leaves me wanting to take more (if not all) workshops. The facilitator again delivered an excellent workshop, was extremely knowledgeable, clear with ample handouts given to participants. This workshop personally took me through a huge learning curve in the 2 days I attended. I think most members should take this, involved in their union or not, the information and knowledge one gains is empowering, inspiring and enlightening.

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