

Orientation of new employees - Chapter 5

All new bargaining unit employees should receive an orientation by the Union Stewards soon after they enter on duty. The purpose of the orientation is to explain to the employees the role of the Union in the workplace. Simply put, you are describing to the employee who we are and what we do. Without the orientation, the employees may not know what the Union does, how to contact the Union for assistance, or even that there is a Union!

This chapter covers:

- Contractual requirement
- No solicitation of membership
- Who attends the orientation
- Details
- Agenda



Orientation PowerPoint presentation

Contractual Requirement

It is a contractual requirement to hold the orientation for new employees. Article 10, Section 3 of the Master Agreement states:

LOCAL PASSPORT OFFICE ORIENTATION SESSION:

Representatives of the Union shall be afforded a reasonable period of time to speak at local Passport Office orientation sessions, where scheduled, or otherwise to each new bargaining unit employee, to provide bargaining unit employees with an introduction to the role of the Union. Emergency and evacuation plans will be discussed during this orientation. The local Passport Office Union Representatives may request the names of the new bargaining unit employees from the Employer. In locations where there are no representatives available, the Union may designate a representative from another location to conduct the orientation via videoconference. Representatives of the Union shall also be afforded a reasonable period of time to introduce themselves to bargaining unit employees who transferred from another location. These orientation sessions for new and transferring bargaining unit employees will normally be scheduled within 10 days of the employee's start date at the location. There will be no solicitation of membership or union dues withholding during the Union presentation.

Question: Is attendance by employees at the orientation optional? The answer is "no". The Union has a contractual right to provide the orientation to the

employees. If a new employee does not wish to attend the orientation he/she must still attend. This is important for the employee to learn about his/her rights.

No solicitation of membership

The last sentence of the citation from Article 10, Section 3 above is key: **we may not solicit membership during the orientation**. Soliciting Union membership must be done on personal, non-work time, such as during a break or lunch. The orientation can be scheduled to end at the start of a lunch period or break so that a new employee can be invited to join the Union during the proper time period. For more information on recruiting new members, see Chapter 17.

Question: How is the orientation different than a membership drive? The purpose of the orientation is to explain the role of the Union to the employees so that they are aware of their rights and aware that the Union is a resource for employees. The orientation covers "representational issues" (see Chapter 4). In contrast, a membership drive is an effort by the Union to recruit employees to join the Union. This is "internal Union business" and may cover internal Union business topics such as benefits to joining the Union. Employees are NOT required to attend membership drives (see Chapter 17), which must be held on personal/non-work time.

Who attends the orientation

Question: Can managers or supervisors attend the orientation? It should go without saying that managers/supervisors/secretary/etc. (anyone not part of the bargaining unit) SHOULD NOT attend the orientation. If you have a Management official who wants to attend, politely explain that this is not the normal protocol for the orientation, as some employees might feel intimidated. If a Management official insists on attending, postpone the orientation and contact the nationwide Union officers (Union President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Chief Steward). This problem popped up a couple times in the past and we do not expect a reoccurrence.

Question: What if some employees have not received an orientation in the first 10 days? Some offices have in the past not always consistently conducted orientations (which was the motivation for creating this chapter!), and some have had months- or even years-long delays in arranging orientations. Remember, even during the very busiest time periods, when new employees come on board they are given a great deal of introductory information (health insurance, office policy, TSP, etc.) and learning about the Union is no less important. Insist that

the orientations be held. If you run into any problems, contact the nationwide Union officers.

For employees who did not receive the orientation when they came on board, even if it is months or years later they should still be provided with an orientation. However, you should act to ensure that this doesn't happen. A best practice is to keep a list of who received the orientation and on which date.

Details

Time needed: For a full orientation, it is suggested that you request 1.5 hours of time for the employees to attend. It may take less time if you are not going to use the DVD or other materials, or if you have a small group, or if there are very few questions. If you have a large group of employees, you may need to talk to Management about splitting them into more manageable numbers and conduct multiple sessions (this has been done before in some offices). If you run into any disputes over how much time you will need, contact the Local 1998 leadership (President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Chief Steward).

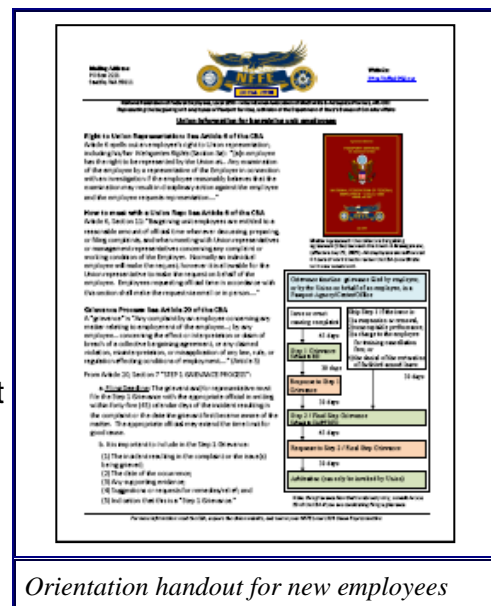
Equipment: Computer with internet connection, DVD player, projection screen, projector.

Materials: Handout, copies of the CBA, amendments to the CBA, copies of the FSLMRS (5 U.S.C. 71)

Handout: We have developed a handout for Union information that you can give to the new employee(s) at the orientation (included at the end of this chapter).

PowerPoint Presentation: A PowerPoint presentation to be used at the orientation that is linked on the website.

Extras (Optional): Snacks, candy (3 Musketeers), notepads, pens.

The image shows a handout titled "Orientation handout for new employees" with the FSLMRS logo at the top. It contains text about the employee's right to union representation, a timeline for the orientation process, and a list of items to be included in the orientation. The timeline includes: Step 1: Orientation (15 days), Step 2: Orientation (15 days), Step 3: Orientation (15 days), and Step 4: Orientation (15 days). The list of items includes: (1) The date of the orientation, (2) The date of the orientation, (3) The date of the orientation, and (4) The date of the orientation.

Agenda

Below is an agenda for how you can conduct the orientation. Using different media can be an effective way to communicate, especially the PowerPoint. The

website is filled with information about the Union, so showing it to the employees (via a projector hooked up to an internet-connected computer) helps direct them to answers to questions that may come up during and after the orientation.

#	Task	Tips
1	Start PowerPoint presentation	Set up ahead of time and test this out before employees arrive
2	Introduction – why we are here today (orientation to the Union, required by the contract); who I am (experiences on the job and with the Union); make it clear that the purpose of this meeting is not to solicit membership	Bring candy - Three Musketeers bars – “All for one, one for all” is one of the NFFE mottos) (okay, maybe not, but you get the idea here)
3	Distribute Master Agreement, including any amendments or supplements	Make sure that every new employee has a copy of the contract – this is vital!!! It is a good idea to also distribute copies of any local agreements (e.g., work schedules, parking, dress code)
4	Role of the Union: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • represent employees • negotiate contract • handle complaints/file grievances • Union/Management Council 	Use anecdotes from the local office Distribute handout to employees with Weingarten Rights
5	Accomplishments/History of NFFE Local 1998	Go to Internet, click on Union website, and make sure projector is working (if using it) - prior to starting orientation.
6	Local 1998’s part in NFFE, the IAMAW, and the AFL-CIO	Use graphic Explain where dues \$ goes (how we get our NFFE/IAMAW experts and where the arbitration money comes from)
7	Structure of Local 1998	Click on “Union Officers” page on website, distribute officer list
8	DVD: “The Government Employee”	Check DVD player/projector before starting orientation
9	Brief review of the Master	Click on “Contract” page on website or use hard copy as a

	<p>Agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table of contents • Orientation to the Union (Article 10, Section 3) • Deadline for grievance (Article 20, Sections 6 & 7) • Deadline for bargaining (Article 12, Section 9b) • Promotions (Article 15, Section 7) • Right to Union representation (Article 6, Sections 2, 3, & 4) • Respect & Dignity (Article 6, Section 7) • Corrective actions (Article 6, Section 17) • Discussing problems (Article 6, Section 12 & 15) 	<p>prop/demo</p> <p>Suggest employee open book and follow along</p>
10	Websites	<p>www.nffe1998.org</p> <p>www.nffe.org</p> <p>www.goiam.org</p>

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