

STEWARD POLICY

Preamble

Stewards are official representatives of the Institute. As such, they are the vital link between the union and the membership. It is important they are aware of their role and responsibilities.

1. **Effective Date**

October 1, 2016

2. **Policy Objectives**

The objective of the Steward Policy is to outline the selection, renewal, and removal process, as well as the roles and responsibilities of stewards and to ensure that the steward program runs efficiently and effectively.

3. **Policy Requirements**

(a) The Steward's Role

As representatives of the Institute, stewards are responsible for ensuring the flow of information to and from the membership. They act as the employees' representative within the workplace by assisting in the handling of complaints and grievances. Stewards represent the Institute at formal and informal consultation meetings with the employer. They also act as a referral agent and a guide to the members requiring union service.

(b) The Institute's Commitment

Recognizing the importance and contribution of stewards to the vitality and strength of the organization, the Institute commits, to the best of its ability, to provide support, training, resources, and recognition to its stewards.

(c) The Steward's Commitment

Stewards undertake a personal commitment to serve the Institute and promote the rights of its members, with honesty and integrity and to the best of their ability. A member wishing to become a steward agrees to take the Basic Steward Training Course at the earliest possible opportunity and will be appointed as a steward upon completion of such training.

(d) Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of stewards are as defined in the Institute Regulations. In addition, Stewards have the responsibility to advise their respective regional office of any grievance and/or other recourse filed on behalf of members or of their involvement in any informal discussions and/or mediation with the employer.

(e) Eligibility

Only Regular Members can be stewards.

(f) Waiting Period

Members applying to become a steward who is currently involved in any conflicts with their employer or any other member may have their application held in abeyance until the conflicts are resolved. Decisions on whether to postpone an application will be made by the President who will inform the member of this decision. Review of the application will proceed when the member advises the Institute that the situation has been resolved. Stewards in waiting can attend one (1) Steward Council in their region prior to attending basic steward training. **(BOD – January 2014)**

(g) Nomination Procedure

Members wishing to become Stewards must fill out the Steward Application Form, which can be obtained from PIPSC Offices or from the PIPSC Web site. The applicant must seek the endorsement of a minimum of three (3) Regular Members.

Upon completion of the Basic Steward Training Course, the applicant must agree in writing to the Guidelines for Appointment of Stewards as attached in Appendix A.

Members applying to become stewards will have until the second December 31 following the date on which their application was submitted to complete the basic steward training course. Should they not complete the training within that time frame, their application will be cancelled and, should the member still be interested in becoming a steward, he/she will need to reapply. **(BOD - December 2009)**

(h) Appointment Process

The Steward Coordinator will verify that the applicant has completed the Basic Steward Training Course and has signed the Guidelines for Appointment of Stewards prior to submitting the request for appointment to the President

The President of the Institute appoints and renews appointments of all Institute Stewards. These appointments are made on the basis of the recommendation from the Group Executive, taking into consideration the comments received from the appropriate Sub-group, Region, Branch Executive, and regional staff and any other consideration the President deems appropriate.

The appointment takes the form of a certificate confirming the status of the Steward and the issuance of a Steward Identification Card. A letter confirming the appointment of a new steward is sent to the Head of Human Resources in the employing department or separate employer. Copies of this letter are sent to the member, the appropriate PIPSC Regional Office, the Regional Director, the Group President, the Chief Steward, the President of the Departmental Consultation Team and Treasury Board (when required).

(i) Term

Stewards are appointed for a three (3) year term. All terms end on the third December 31st following appointment.

(j) Interruption of Stewardship

Stewards on extended periods of leave (for more than 90 days) will see their stewardship interrupted for the duration of the leave. Under exceptional circumstances, Steward may wish to maintain their stewardship during this period. In such cases, stewards will send a written request, including the reasons why they wish to maintain their stewardship, to the PIPSC Steward Coordinator who will submit the request to the President.

(BOD – August 2015)

(k) Renewal Process

Prior to the end of their term, Stewards will complete a renewal form. A copy of the form will be sent to the Sub-group, Regional and Branch Executives, and regional offices who will advise the Steward Coordinator of any comments on the renewal taking into consideration the Guidelines for Renewal of Stewards as attached in Appendix B. Copies of the renewal forms and comments received are sent to the Group Executive who makes the final recommendation to the President.

Failure by a Steward to return the renewal form will result in the non-renewal of stewardship. If such a situation should occur, the member will need to reapply to become a Steward.

(l) Steward Appeal Roster

(BOD – October 2016)

Decisions made under the authority of the President to not approve a steward's application or renewal request shall be communicated in writing to the applicant and will be referred to a Stewardship Appeal Roster, which shall consist of a maximum of twelve (12) members selected from amongst Regular and Retired members and appointed for a term of three (3) years.

Roster members shall be selected by the Chair of the Training & Education Committee after consultation with the Executive/Management Committee further to a call of interest. The following criteria shall be used to select members of the Roster:

- Have recently made a demonstrable contribution to PIPSC members as a steward for at least three (3) years;
- Demonstrate a willingness to advance the interests of the Institute and its members;
- Present and open mind and possess the ability to apply principles of fairness;
- Possess effective written and verbal communication skills
- Is capable of engaging peers and staff in constructive dialogue to determine the merits of an appeal;
- Does not hold a position on the Board of Directors or office as President or Vice-President of a constituent body

Once selected, the Roster shall select a Chair who shall be responsible for appointing panels of three Roster members to dispose of appeals as they arise. No member of a panel shall hear appeals dealing with potential stewards from their own Group (or former Group if Retired).

In each appeal, the appointed panel's sole consideration shall be whether the President's decision to deny the steward's application or renewal request was made in bad faith, discriminatory or arbitrary conduct. In all cases, the panel shall issue reasons for its decision.

Where an appeal is granted, the panel shall issue its decision to the President, along with its recommendation. The President shall share the panel's decision and recommendation with the Executive Committee prior to issuing a final decision.

(m) Termination of Stewardship

- (i) Reasons
By-Law 12.6 identifies the reasons for the termination of stewardship.
- (ii) Process in Cases of allegations of misconduct.
The Institute's Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy shall apply in cases of allegations of misconduct against Stewards. (BOD – February 2014)

(n) Steward Awards

The Institute recognizes the significant role which Stewards play in the organization. Accordingly, each region nominates one member annually to receive its Steward of the Year Award, which is designed to honour a Steward who has gone above and beyond the scope of regular duties and has thereby made an extraordinary contribution to the Institute. Recipients are traditionally recognized at Regional or Steward Councils, in addition to being presented with an award at the PIPSC Annual General Meeting.

(o) Steward Training

Stewards have an obligation to undertake steward training provided by the Institute. Each region is responsible for providing training opportunities. Generally, the training consists of Basic Steward Training and Training Modules on specific topics offered each year as referred to in the PIPSC Training Policy and Training Guidelines. Stewards are also invited to attend annual Steward Council meetings where additional training may be available.

(p) Steward Protection

The Steward has official status in the workplace since the authority to appoint a representative of the members is contained in each of the Institute's Collective Agreements. Legislation provides protection to the Stewards in the performance of their steward duties and the Institute will support its Stewards should they be faced with employer retaliation.

(q) Expenses

Activities for which Stewards are entitled to reimbursement include but are not limited to authorized participation at Regional Stewards' Councils, training courses, consultation meetings, and other activities approved by the Board of Directors;

(r) Chief Steward

Each region may appoint or elect a Chief Steward in accordance with their regional constitution. In regions where there is no Chief Steward, the duties are carried out by the Director and Regional Executive.

The duties of the Chief Steward may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Coordinate the region's mentoring program;
Welcome new stewards;
- Report to the Regional Executive on changes in the region's steward list (additions, deletions);
- Play the role of intermediary between Stewards in the region's Branches in order to promote networking as well as connections between Stewards and Employee Relations Officers.
- Encourages Stewards to exchange information and tips on grievance representation, highlighting regional successes and best practices;
- Help co-ordinate group grievance campaigns at the regional level.
- Contribute to the preparation of the annual Steward Council;
- Help identify regional Steward training requirements and work in collaboration with the Regional Training Committee and the regional staff in establishing the regional training budget and program.

The Chief Steward's role should not conflict with the existing group structures and should not interfere or conflict with staff functions. The Chief Steward should work in close collaboration with the Institute staff.

(s) Mentoring Program

Each region has a mentoring program aimed at pairing new Stewards with more experienced Stewards who will teach the new Stewards what they need to know to effectively perform their duties.

Stewards who have taken basic training and advanced training modules and who have demonstrated an ability to perform their duties may volunteer to become mentors. Mentors require strong interpersonal skills and the ability to coach and motivate new Stewards. Mentors agree to help other less experienced Stewards by sharing their experiences and knowledge.

For more information refer to the Mentoring Guide for Stewards.

APPENDIX A GUIDELINES FOR APPOINTMENT OF STEWARDS

Unless previously grandfathered before April 2007, applicants must complete Basic Steward Training before becoming a Steward.

- Has indicated a willingness to take training in order to further develop and update steward skills.
- There is an identified need for a Steward either in a workplace, geographical area, due to a physical, gender, or cultural gap, to assist with succession planning, or other special conditions or circumstances;
- Has indicated an understanding of and is willing to advance and demonstrate the values and mission of the Institute as outlined in our Purpose, Mandate and Values.
- Has indicated a willingness to work within the structure of PIPSC and in collaboration with representational staff.
- Has indicated an acceptance to be the first contact with the membership initially and is willing to commit to representing the Institute's members in other activities in the future after having gained sufficient experience in areas such as: consultation, bargaining, representation, or other subcommittees.
- Does not have overriding personal issues with the employer that may jeopardize the credibility of representation for other members
- Understands the duties and role of a Steward as indicated through their signature on the completion form of Basic Training.

APPENDIX B GUIDELINES FOR RENEWAL OF STEWARDS

Has fulfilled some, not necessarily all of the following elements:

- Currently involved as a Steward
- Has fulfilled their role in a way that reflects the values and mission of the Institute as outlined in our Purpose, Mandate and Values.
- Has worked in co-operation with Institute staff and has sought advice at appropriate points in the handling of member workplace issues.
- Has demonstrated an interest in Institute activities such as participation or attendance at Branch, Sub-group, group meetings, the AGM, in sub-committees such as OHS, or EE
- Involved in Consultation or Bargaining
- Has provided information and/or advice to members as requested by Institute constituent body representatives and/or PIPSC staff.
- Has maintained a good relationship with members in the workplace and PIPSC staff
- Has demonstrated interest in further development of their Steward skills; (i.e. mentoring, Lunch and Learns, Training.)
- Has assisted new Institute Stewards