Slide 1: Welcome

- Introduce yourself.
- Introduce representatives of the Local Union, District Council, or Regional Office. Thank them for their attendance and their support to make our union stronger. Allow them the opportunity to make a few remarks if appropriate.
- Welcome training participants and thank them for taking the time to attend the training, and thank them for serving as stewards for our union.
Slide 2: Class Overview and Goals of Training

- The training today will focus on the role of union stewards, review qualities of good stewards, overview available resources, discuss the importance of knowing your union contract, grievance filing, and legal protections.
- Remind participants that the training is interactive and their participation, including asking questions, sharing stories, and offering best practices will benefit all in attendance.
Slide 3: Introductions

- Have each participant introduce themselves by name, how long they have been a Laborer, how long they been a steward, and what was the circumstances that made them become a LIUNA steward.
Role of the Steward

Member Point of Contact

- To most members, YOU are the union!
- Value of first impressions
- You are the contact for all workplace issues
- If not you, than who?

Slide 4: Role of Stewards

- The LIUNA steward plays an important and vital role in the union workplace. For many members, they are the most recognizable face and voice of the Local Union. Some of the most important roles of the steward include:

- Member Point of Contact
  - When members have questions, or problems, or other job issues, YOU are the union to them.
Slide 5: Contract Administration

- It is important that all the rules of the Collective Bargaining Agreement are followed by both the employer and the Union.
- Be familiar with your contract, know the grievance procedure, and work to enforce its rules and language.
- Be mindful of the Duty of Fair Representation. Treat all members equally and fairly.
- Most issues in the workplace are settled informally. If you need help, contact your Local Union leadership.
Role of the Steward

Member Communications

- Union meetings: when, where, etc.
- Union position on matters
- Politics: why important to them
- Volunteer and social activities
- Status of bargaining, grievances, disputes, etc.

Slide 6: Member Communications

- You should communicate to members the importance of being an active union member, including attending meetings, volunteering, being politically active, and being good unionists in their communities.
Slide 7: Tips for Member Communication

- Remember that you might be the only person a member knows or is comfortable talking to. Make time to hear them and their concerns.
- If you say you will get back to people, do it.
- You don’t have to know everything. Be honest, and say, you don’t know. But find out and get back to people.
- Some workplace issues are sensitive. Be respectful of each member’s privacy and dignity.
- Educate them on their responsibilities to keep good notes, paystubs, follow the terms of the contract.
Slide 8: Union Communications

- Important to let Business Manager and Field Reps. know what is happening in the workplace. Problems among members and bad supervisors and managers should be discussed with the Local Union.
Slide 9: Tips for Union Communication

- Local Union officers and staff are there to help you succeed. Let them know how you are doing and what is happening on your jobsite. Give them an honest assessment.
- Deal with small problems before they become big problems.
- Admit mistakes and ask for help when needed.
- Be prepared to provide a report, either in writing or verbally, either monthly, weekly, or as needed.
Slide 10: Internal Organizing

- The steward should welcome, educate, and signup new members. They should also encourage all members to take an active role in their union.
The LIUNA steward needs to know the union contract that they are working under. They also need to keep good records. Stewards should also strive for good communications and positive relationships with the employer.

**Stress Duty of Fair Representation.** Stewards have a legal obligation to represent all workers in the union fairly, regardless of their membership status, race, religion, nationality, age, or gender.

Stress good record-keeping. It can mean the difference between winning or losing a grievance, and defending yourself against DFR charges.

**EXERCISE:** Divide the class in half.

Have half of the group brainstorm a list of GOOD steward qualities and have the other half brainstorm a list of BAD steward qualities. They can record their responses on a piece of paper or a flipchart.

Each group will then report their lists to the entire group. Ask for additional qualities from each group and discuss accordingly. Have the group prioritize the most important or useful good qualities.
Slide 12: Good Qualities

- **GOOD:** honest; good listener; good follow through; responsible, ability to resolve conflict; good problem solver; credible; assertive and decisive; ability to deliver tough or unpopular news; strong work ethic; committed to justice; equality; security; fairness; open; friendly; approachable; willingness to help others; good people skills; strong communicator; encouraging others; good verbal and written communication skills; thorough; organized; positive; motivated; enthusiastic; loyal; supporter, defender, and promoter of the union.
Slide 13: Bad Qualities

- **BAD:** doesn’t represent fairly; makes backroom deals; overpromises; doesn’t follow through; fails to speak or meet with new workers; misses deadlines; too close to contractors or other trades; doesn’t organize; lazy; fails to get settlements in writing, bad communicator with Local Union, doesn’t publicize victories, doesn’t keep good records; picks favorites; abuses title or position.
Tips to be a Good Steward

- Go to union meetings
- Participate in union functions
- Follow the contract
- Be “straight up”
- Register to vote and VOTE
- Support other unions’ causes
- Show union pride

Slide 14: Tips to be a Good Steward

- Review common sense tips and remind stewards to lead by example
- EXERCISE: Ask those that have been a steward for more than one year to report on challenges they have faced, how they handled them, and for tips or best practices to share with the group.
Slide 15: Problems on the Job Site

- **ASK:** What do you do when there is a problem in the workplace?
Slide 16: Handling Problems in the Workplace

- Determine if a grievance, job issue, or complaint
- Decide course of action to resolve: Talk to management, enforce contract, file a grievance, seek help from Local Union
Slide 17: What Would You Do?

- **EXERCISE**: Read each scenario and ask the group how they would handle. Discuss accordingly.

Determine if each of the following work issues is a Grievance or a Complaint. How would you address each issue?

1. **A member comes to you on pay day saying that their paycheck is short one hour of overtime pay.**
   - **Grievance**
   - The Collective Bargaining Agreement should clearly spell out compensation and hours of work, including overtime pay. The steward should investigate the issue with the member, including asking to see the member’s work log and notes. If there is missing pay, the steward and member should be able to resolve the issue with the bookkeeper or payroll personnel. If not, a formal grievance might be necessary.

2. **A worker comes to you saying that they should be paid more for what they do.**
   - **Complaint**
   - A common complaint among workers. Look at the employee’s job description. If the duties performed are spelled out, there probably isn’t a case for re-evaluation. If the worker is performing important duties that require additional skill or responsibility, there’s a chance the description should be rewritten.

3. **A member was fired when caught sleeping in the bathroom during morning break.**
   - **Grievance**
   - There is nothing wrong with sleeping on your own time. Workers are not stealing time paid for by the employer.

4. **Ask participants if there are other work issues they have addressed in the past that they want to discuss with the group.**
Not all complaints and job issues are a grievance. But you should try to fix or resolve all issues.

Remember that you have a Duty to provide fair and equal representation to all workers on the site.

A grievance is a violation of either the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the law, company policy, or past practice. Disparate treatment, or illegal discrimination, of workers is also a grievance.

Most grievances involve pay issues, discipline, or wrongful termination.
Some workplace issues can be informally handled by the steward talking to the supervisor or manager. When that doesn’t happen, the steward should collect all the facts pertaining to the issue or grievance. Interview the member and other witnesses and ask them all relevant questions. Keep good records of all information gathered. If the issue cannot be fixed informally, contact your Local Union about filing a formal grievance.
Know Your Grievance Procedure

- Know different steps
- Know and follow time limits
- Don’t miss deadlines

Slide 20: Know Your Grievance Procedure

- Grievance procedures generally provide for a series of steps:
  - Step 1: Meeting between steward and immediate supervisor
  - Step 2: Meetings between a Local Union Representative and workplace management
  - Step 3: Meetings between higher-up officials on both sides

- Every step of the grievance procedure will involve time limits at each step. It is important to follow them.
- Read your contract closely and learn the specifics of your grievance procedure.
Writing a Grievance

- Limit details to basic information
- Don’t limit contract violations
- Avoid personal opinions
- Don’t limit remedy or solution
- Consult with grievant
- Consult with Local Union official

Work within time limits!

Slide 21: Writing a Grievance

- Fill out a grievance form if your Local Union uses one.
- Answer three simple questions:
  - What happened, or failed to happen?
  - Why is the situation a grievance?
  - How should the employer correct the situation?
- Limit details to basic information.
- Don’t limit to contract violations.
- Avoid personal opinions and characterizations.
- Don’t limit the remedy to solution.
- Consult with the Grievant.
- Consult with Local Union officials.
- Follow all the time limits.
Slide 22: Weingarten Rights

- Union workers and all public sector workers are entitled to have a union representative present when a supervisor asks for information which could be used as a basis for discipline.
- Worker must ask for union representation before or during the interview.
- The steward is a witness AND an advocate during the meeting:
  - Prepare the worker for the meeting
  - Take good notes.
  - Stop the supervisor from harassing or abusing worker.
- Worker must request union representation.
Slide 23: Duty of Fair Representation

- The union has a legal obligation to represent all workers in the union fairly, regardless of their membership status, race, religion, nationality, age, or gender.

- Failure to investigate, pursue, or adequately present a grievance may lead to Unfair Labor Practice Charges.

- So that the union will not be held liable and assessed monetary damages for breaching its Duty of Fair Representation, the union representative must file, in a timely manner, a written grievance, investigate the grievance, and document the grievance. When this has not been done, or if it was done poorly, monetary damages can be assessed against the union.
Slide 24: Tools of the Trade – Available Resources

- Ask participants to think of the most important tools that stewards should always have handy. Write down and discuss accordingly.
Tools of the Trade

- Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Steward Training Manual
- Union contacts
- List of members of job site
- Cards/forms/paperwork/pen
- Filing system
- Union literature
- Electronic Resources

Slide 25: Tools of the Trade

- Collective Bargaining Agreement – MOST IMPORTANT
- Steward Training Manual
- Local Union contacts – who and how to call when you need help
- Benefit Funds information and contacts
- List of members on the jobsite
- Membership cards and/or forms
- Notepad and pen for taking notes
- Filing or tracking system for grievances and other issues
- Electronic resources of the International and Local Union
  - Websites
  - Social Media
- Union handouts – hats, pins, stickers, etc.
- Information on upcoming union events – meetings, picnics, political endorsements
- What else?
Know Your Contract

- Read it and keep a copy with you
- Common and recurring issues
- Most grieved sections
- Know and keep deadlines

26: Knowing your Contract

- The LIUNA steward should have copies of all agreements for the job sites they are serving as a steward.
- Read your contract. The more you know about the agreement you are working under, the less problems you will face.
- Teach the most important parts of the contracts and what sections of the contract are grieved the most.
- Know and stress deadlines
- Etc.
27: CBA Scavenger Hunt

- **EXERCISE:** Complete the CBA Scavenger Hunt and discuss accordingly.
- Discuss any additional issues, different local agreements, history or relationships with other trades, etc. that apply to your Local Union.
LiUNA! CBA Scavenger Hunt

Using your Local Union Agreement, answer the following questions. Note the relevant Article, Section, and page numbers so you can find it quickly in the future.

1. What are the grievance procedure time limits?
   Article: _________ Section: ___________ Page: ___________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

2. Is there a steward’s clause in the contract?
   Article: _________ Section: ___________ Page: ___________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. What are the provisions for overtime?
   Article: _________ Section: ___________ Page: ___________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. How long does your employer have to post a position vacancy?
   Article: _________ Section: ___________ Page: ___________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

5. Does a worker have to provide a note from their health care provider if they are absent from work because of illness?
   Article: _________ Section: ___________ Page: ___________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

6. Other: __________________________________________________
   Article: _________ Section: ___________ Page: ___________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________