

New To The Guild – The Canadian Media Guild at aptn

Welcome to the Guild

So you landed yourself a job at aptn only to find out that you're automatically involved in a union – the Canadian Media Guild. Uh-oh, you think, as visions of picket lines creep into your head. That pervasive stereotype pops into your head: some burly guy hovering over you, making sure you're keeping up your end of the "Solidarity Forever" chant. Well, it isn't necessarily so.

The total number of times the Guild has gone on strike at aptn since the first Guild bargaining unit at aptn was certified in 2002 is – zero. Zip. Nada. The fact is strikes or lockouts are rare. They're the last resort in securing better working conditions or protecting hard-earned rights negotiated in previous contracts. The Guild is keen to maintain its record of no strikes at aptn – but not at any cost.

The Guild is a strong, united – what's the word? – union. And to keep up our strength into the future, the Guild needs the support and involvement of members like you.

This guide is designed to answer some of the questions you might have about the Guild – and to help you find your place in it. It came together after a series of meetings with new members across the country. We listened to your concerns – and came up with a list of questions you wanted answers to – from issues like union dues to claiming overtime to getting ahead and dealing with conflicts in the workplace. If we've missed a few or have a question that isn't covered in this guide – tell us. We'll fix it. This is your guide: your input helped create it and your comments will ensure it evolves to meet the needs of new members. It's the same with the Guild. New members bring new ideas – and that can only help the Guild better respond to the needs and aspirations of one of the most flexible workforces in Canada.

NOTE: INFORMATION IN THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED TO ASSIST MEMBERS IN UNDERSTANDING THEIR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO SERVE AS AN INTERPRETIVE DOCUMENT. PLEASE REFER TO THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT FOR THE ACTUAL LANGUAGE.

You And The Union

#1. Why do I need a union?

A lot of people think of unionized workplaces as having three sides: the employees, the employer and the union. In reality there are only two. The union is the employees. A union is a democratically elected group that represents the employees' interests to the employer.

But why a union? Why not just deal one-on-one with the boss? Having a unionized workplace gives employees a say and reduces the chances of arbitrary and unfair decisions by managers that affect your career and livelihood. When it comes to negotiating things like salaries and benefits, pensions, severance provisions in the event of downsizing, or even scheduling, it helps a lot to have a union speak to the employer on behalf of you and all of your colleagues.

As a member of the Guild, you have the right to choose a bargaining committee to negotiate with the employer on issues that you care about. A collective bargaining agreement is essentially the rule book that the employees and the employer agree to use to govern their relationship.

The Canadian Media Guild has a history of dealing effectively with employers. We have helped improve salaries, benefits and working conditions. More importantly, the Guild tries to obtain fair collective agreements without major confrontations.

The Guild is run by its members. It is also financed by the membership in the form of dues. Union dues are set by the membership and are fully tax-deductible. The money is used to finance union activities at the local and national levels.

#2. Why do I pay union dues?

When you start working for aptn - either in the Editorial or Operations departments - you begin a relationship with the Canadian Media Guild. Federal labour laws recognize the Guild as the exclusive bargaining agent for the Editorial and Operations units at aptn.

The Guild collects dues to fund things like contract negotiations, representing you in arbitration or grievance procedures, training members, and maintaining national and regional offices.

You pay 1.55% of what you earn at aptn in union dues - up to a maximum of \$1,500 a year.

Your dues are more like an insurance premium than a tax. They will pay your benefits during a lockout or strike. And they can be claimed as a tax credit, reducing the amount of income tax you pay.

#3. I Haven't signed a union card. Should I?

You aren't a member of the union until you've signed a card. Signing a union card allows you to vote in Guild elections and run for an elected position in the union - and to collect strike or lockout benefits should that ever become necessary.

#4. Does joining a union mean I'll go on strike?

More than 98% of collective agreements in Canada are negotiated without a work stoppage. The Guild had never gone on strike at aptn.

#5. What can the union do for me?

The Guild is there:

- To help if the terms of your employment are being abused.
- When you have a question about whether you are being paid properly.
- If you need to talk to someone - confidentially - about how to handle a sensitive work-related issue.
- To help you in the fight to get your job back, if you were unfairly or illegally let go.
- To make sure management respects the terms of the contract.

#6. Who is my union rep?

If you have any questions, concerns or comments feel free to contact us. All matters will be handled in strict confidence. You can email the aptn Branch directly at cmgaptn@gmail.com

aptn Branch President

Vincent Proteau
204-947-9331 x256 - vproteau@gmail.com

aptn Branch Vice-President

Derek Christianson
204-947-9331 x316 - dchristianson@aptn.ca

aptn Branch Vice President

Bruce Spence
204-947-9331 x310 - ndncarman@hotmail.com

aptn Branch Secretary / Treasurer

Cheryl McKenzie
204-947-9331 x304 - oshki_kikotowin@hotmail.com

#7. What is the collective agreement & where can I get a copy?

The collective agreement sets the ground rules for your job at aptn on things such as your working conditions, pension and benefits, your rights if you receive a lay-off notice, and what you can expect to be paid.

Among a lot of other things, it spells out the kinds of steps you can take if your supervisor or a co-worker is not treating you fairly or appropriately.

You can get an old-fashioned paper copy from the Guild office or from your nearest Guild rep. Or you can view and download a electronic copy from this website. You can right-click on the link at the top right corner of the page and save it to your computer.

#8. How come sometimes aptn says the collective agreement means one thing and the union says it means something else?

Language is a funny thing. My half-empty glass is your half-full bowl. Even after employees and managers agree to put certain words in a contract, we don't always agree on what that language means when a real-life situation comes up later. Sometimes it takes a third party to sort things out.

Your boss may ask you to do something that he/she believes is covered under the contract. You may not agree. You can check with the Guild and if we determine that aptn is violating the language of the contract, we can take the appropriate steps to make sure your rights are respected.

#9. How can I find out about union events?

That is exactly what this website is designed to do, keep all our members informed and up to date from across the country.

The Canadian Media Guild's website at www.cmg.ca is also updated regularly. Plus, once every two years the CMG holds a convention and members like you become delegates and help set priorities for the Guild.

#10. What are the Guild's priorities?

The Guild is here to help you establish a career that will allow you to enjoy a decent quality of life, without having to constantly worry about whether you'll still have a job tomorrow. But Guild staff and activists work on all kinds of issues that members have said are important, such as making sure that someone is always available to help a member in need.

Paperwork and Policies

#11. How long is probation?

New employees shall be subject to a probationary period of six (6) months, which may be extended at the discretion of aptn for a further six (6) months. During the probation period your performance in the job will be discussed at approximately three (3) month intervals. If corrective action is required, aptn may prepare a plan to address the specific circumstances.

#12. Does aptn have a "file" on me?

You bet. Just like any large corporation, aptn has files on all people who work for it. It mainly contains your employment history, rate of pay, annual leave allotment, etc. By law, you are allowed to look at your file any time.

Your file could also contain other material such as disciplinary letters, if you've had a major run-in with your boss. If it ever comes to that, you will be informed that a letter is being placed in your file. And as long as there's no further infraction, that letter must be taken out of your file after two years.

You do have the right to challenge such a letter by requesting a meeting. You have the right to bring along a union rep to the meeting.

Pay, Hours, and Benefits

#13. How do I get paid?

The vast majority of aptn employees are paid through direct deposit. Some freelancers may still be paid by cheque.

#14. How do I know if I am being paid enough?

Pay scales are available in the collective agreement – Article 12 General Salary Provision in the aptn Unit collective agreement. If you have questions about what you are being paid, talk to a member of your local Guild executive.

#15. Do I have to sign a contract?

Only if you're on a contract. Temporary and permanent employees don't sign contracts.

#16. Do I get breaks?

All of us are allowed a meal period of one (1) hour without pay and two (paid) 15-minute breaks during the day. Full details on meals and breaks are available under Article 16 - Meal Periods And Coffee Breaks in the aptn Unit collective agreement.

#17. When is the end of a shift the end of a shift?

If you're a daily scheduled employee, your shift has a defined ending time. Anything beyond that is overtime.

#18. Am I allowed to claim overtime?

See answer to 17 above. If you work beyond your scheduled daily hours or in the case of weekly scheduled employees, longer than the work week you can and should claim overtime. Working for free reduces the value of work of all employees. Also, you may create a false impression that aptn has enough staff when it does not, and contribute to an atmosphere where free work is expected.

Remember, you should generally obtain your supervisor's approval before working overtime.

#19. How do I claim overtime if I've been told overtime is a "problem"?

Contact your Guild rep. Your supervisor is violating the collective agreement if he/she wants you to work for free.

#20. What do I do if I am asked to work overtime at the last minute?

This one's up to you. If you're a reporter, you realize there will be times when your story will go beyond your shift. You will probably want to see it to the end. However, if you're ready to head home and enjoy an evening with friends, you might not be anxious to hang around to take on a new assignment that will keep you late into the evening.

#21. Do I have to say yes to overtime?

Generally speaking, you should not be forced to work overtime, but you should also give a good reason if you can't stay on beyond your normal working hours. Working longer hours should be voluntary but, in some circumstances, management may schedule overtime or ask employees to work it. If you are not able to work overtime, you should tell your supervisor, who should look for other volunteers.

Getting Ahead

#22. Can I get more money if I change from temporary or contract status to permanent?

Normally, you will continue to be paid what you were receiving before converting to permanent, unless the job you've been hired for is in a higher classification.

If you become staff, you may actually be taking home less money after deductions because you'll be contributing to benefits such as the aptn Pension plan and Long Term Disability Insurance.

However, there are long-term financial and job security benefits to being on permanent staff. First of all, you have access to a defined-benefit pension plan for when you retire and to long-term disability insurance if you get sick or injured and you are unable to work.

#23. When do I qualify for a raise?

When you begin a new job at aptn, you normally receive the starting salary for that position, unless your supervisor has agreed that your past experience means you should start at a higher level within that pay band.

On the anniversary of your hire, you will automatically be bumped up to the next level within that pay band until you hit the maximum.

Your pay will also increase every year by the amount stipulated in the collective agreement. So, if you're just coming in, you could be in for two pay raises a year until you hit the maximum in your pay band.

#24. How do I get any other raise?

It doesn't happen that often, but you may be able to negotiate a salary above the amounts negotiated by the Guild for your pay band. It's totally at the discretion of your supervisor.

Your manager can also – in rare cases – try to have a Discretionary Salary Adjustment approved for you. These types of deals increase your base salary beyond the Guild-negotiated amounts and, therefore, improve benefits like pension and life insurance.

#25. How can I get feedback and assistance to improve?

aptn and the Guild have agreed on the value of mentorship, training and professional development programs that develop and maintain the skills of employees. On an annual basis, employees shall identify training needs or education opportunities that will advance required skills in their present positions and / or provide opportunities for career development. You get together with your supervisor and together work on what you want to accomplish within the goals and mandate of your department and aptn as a whole.

It's a good opportunity for you to ask for the training you think you might need to do your job better. For details of the program, check your collective agreement – Article 4 Mentorship, Training and Professional Development in the aptn Unit collective agreement.

#26. What is a temporary upgrade?

You get a temporary upgrade – which means a few more dollars – when you fill in for someone who does a more senior job than you. For instance if you are a reporter filling in as a producer or a switcher operator filling in as the director.

If you are to perform work for at least one (1) day in a more senior job, you be paid an upgrade of ten (10%) percent above your basic rate. If the upgrade lasts for a period of four (4) weeks or longer, you will be temporarily promoted to the higher classification and will be compensated at a rate within the salary range which ensures that you receive compensation at least ten (10%) percent more than your basic rate so long as such temporary rate does not exceed the maximum for the higher classification. For details on this, check your collective agreement – Article 13 Temporary Upgrading in the aptn Unit collective agreement.

#27. What is backfill?

Backfill is the person aptn hires to fill in for you when you're sent off to do a certain job for a certain period of time.

#28. What is a secondment?

A secondment is when you are released from your regular duties to do another job for a specified period of time.

#29. Where are the job postings?

Most jobs are also posted on the internet at <http://www.aptn.ca/corporate/careers.php> where the general public can see them.

Training

#30. How can I get access to training and what kind of training does aptn do?

aptn recognizes the value of mentorship, training and professional development for all its employees and offers training opportunities to both union and non-union employees to develop and maintain the skills of its employees.

For details on training with aptn, check your collective agreement – Article 4 Mentorship, Training and Professional Development in the aptn Unit collective agreement. For more information and assistance on how you can get access to training through aptn, speak with your Supervisor and contact the aptn Human Resources department.

#31. Do I have to pay for training myself?

You won't have to pay for any course that aptn offers whether it's onsite or at some other facility. If you decide you want to take a course outside aptn that you feel will help you do your job better, submit your request with your Supervisor and aptn Human Resources will review your request and inform you if it meets their professional development guidelines. Where approved, such training, including any leave required, may be funded in whole or in part by aptn.

#32. What if I am temporary and they tell me to take company training on my day off?

Taking a course offered by aptn is treated the same as putting in a day of work – you must be paid. If your supervisor tells you not to claim the hours on your timecard, contact your Guild rep.

#33. Does the union do any training?

Yes. The Guild offers many courses such as Dispute Resolution, Facilitation and Mediation and The Art of Negotiation to all Guild members. Details are available in our [Training Section](#) of the aptn Branch website.

Problems at Work

#34. What can the union do for me if I have a conflict at work?

The Guild will work with you to help resolve the conflict. If the problem involves management and talking it through hasn't worked, there are processes such as filing a grievance or taking the problem to an arbitrator that the Guild will help you with.

#35. What do I do if another worker is harassing or bullying me?

aptn and the Guild won't tolerate sexual or discriminatory harassment in the workplace. If you feel that you have been harassed, contact the Guild and file a written complaint to aptn's Human Resources Department.

The Guild will guide you through the process. If you have been accused of harassment, the Guild will also represent you.

When one Guild member complains of being harassed (sexually or in other ways) by another member, the Guild has obligations to protect the legitimate interests of both parties while the complaint is being investigated and beyond.

In a conflict between two members, the Guild will assign a staff member to represent each side in the complaint, as soon as it is filed with the office. All complaints are referred to the Guild's Director, Human Rights and Equity, who will ensure staff representatives are providing the appropriate assistance to the members involved.

Full details of the Guild's policies in dealing with member-to-member conflicts – including sexual and personal harassment – are available on the Guild's website at

<http://www.cmg.ca/cmgpoliciesconflict.shtml>.

#36. If I am having a problem, when should I call the union?

The sooner you call, the sooner the matter can be dealt with.

#37. Will the union make a big deal out of it?

The union will do what is necessary to make things right. Sometimes that means just sitting down and talking with the people involved. Sometimes cases can only be resolved after a grievance is filed. But in all cases, the union will work with you.

#38. What do I do if I am stressed out?

Contact the Employee Family Assistance Program. The EFAP is available to all aptn staff, contract employees and their families. When you contact the EFAP resource centre, you will be put in touch with an EFAP counselor who will assess your problem and recommend what you should do next.

For access to the Employee Family Assistance Program website go to <http://www.humansolutions.ca>.

Workplace Politics

#39. If I stand up for myself about overtime or any other issue will I be seen as a troublemaker?

Maybe. But you have to decide what's worth fighting for. The union will help you protect your rights.

#40. If I mention the union or the collective agreement to my boss will he or she get angry?

The collective agreement outlines your rights as an employee. Reasonable people don't get angry when it comes to your basic rights. On the other hand, the Guild is there to deal with people who do get angry and try to erode your rights.

Looking Ahead

#41. What has the union done for me lately?

With apologies to John F. Kennedy, ask not what your Guild can do for you, but what you can do for your Guild.

A union, like all successful organizations, is mostly the sum of its parts. A union isn't a third party; it is the employees joined in common voice and cause. Our union, the Guild, allows workers to address workplace issues – such as pay, hours of work, health and safety, pensions and benefits – together. The goals and aspirations of the union should be the goals and aspirations of its members. What a union does for you is what you do for yourself and your co-workers. For more than a half-a-century people like you have given their time, energy and intelligence in order ensure secure jobs and rewarding careers. The Guild is your union and we encourage you to get and remain involved.

Who Do I Call?

Your first point of contact is normally your location president and members of the location executive. That group deals with the day-to-day affairs of the Guild in your workplace, including resolving disputes with local management, grievances, and dealing with layoffs. The location executive also organizes events for members and makes sure that information reaches members. Due to aptn's size, we only have one location, and that is in Winnipeg.

Our executive council of the Guild's aptn branch take up the duties of also being the location executive at this time. They also deal with national issues, such as bargaining, national grievance committee and national Guild policy related to aptn.

The National Executive Committee of the Guild deals with overall Guild policy involving all of our eleven branches. The NEC also oversees our national union education program.

The Guild's staff representatives across the country help the location units and the branch solve problems with management, negotiate agreements and make policy.

Normally, your first call – if you're having a problem that you want the Guild to look into – is to someone on your location executive. You can email the aptn Branch directly at cmgaptn@gmail.com

aptn Branch President

Vincent Proteau
204-947-9331 x256 - vproteau@gmail.com

aptn Branch Vice-President

Derek Christianson
204-947-9331 x316 - dchristianson@aptn.ca

aptn Branch Vice President

Bruce Spence
204-947-9331 x310 - ndncarman@hotmail.com

aptn Branch Secretary / Treasurer

Sandra Seidel
204-947-9331 x312 - singingstone74@hotmail.com

If you have brought up your issue locally and feel that you haven't received the help that you need, contact the national office. Tell us you've brought it up with your location executive – and let us know who you've already spoken with.

Sometimes Guild members have issues that cannot be solved or questions that cannot be answered by location executives. If that's the case – again – feel free to drop the national Guild office an e-mail at info@cmg.ca or call 1-800-465-4149.

A full listing of the CMG contacts is available on the aptn Branch website at <http://www.cmgaptn.ca/contactus.htm>.

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The Guild at aptn

aptn Location Unit

The Guild is normally represented in each city by a location executive committee made up of elected volunteers. Due to aptn's size the Guild operates only one location at aptn at this time which is located in Winnipeg. Our location executive is duties are taken up by our branch executive. These folks are usually your first point of contact with the Guild. As issues will vary from location to location across the country we have established this website to bring all our members closer together to deal with any questions and concerns they have.

Whether it has to do with how you were hired, workplace safety or a manager who consistently expects you not to claim the overtime you're entitled to, your local reps are responsible for making sure the collective agreement is respected and adhered to in your location.

Your Location Unit is there to strengthen the Guild within the workplace by welcoming new members, developing a network of workplace representatives and making sure the lines of communication within all levels of the union are open.

Who are you going to call? You can email the aptn location executive directly at cmgaptn@gmail.com.

aptn Branch Executive Council

The Canadian Media Guild represents most non-management employees at several media outlets, not just aptn. Guild members at each of those media outlets belong to a separate branch within the CMG. Each branch elects an executive council every three years.

It is the aptn Branch Executive Council's job to enforce the collective agreement, ensure that the concerns and issues of the members are addressed, and to provide leadership in advancing the interests of Guild members at aptn.

The branch executive is also responsible for handling contract negotiations at aptn, setting up a national grievance committee and communicating with the membership. You can email the aptn Branch directly at cmgaptn@gmail.com.

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Sandra Seidel
204-947-9331 x312 - singingstone74@hotmail.com

CMG National Executive Committee

This is the senior executive body of the Canadian Media Guild. It consists of representatives of each branch of the Guild (aptn, CBC, Agence France-Press, The Canadian Press, Thomson Reuters, S-Vox, CW Television, CJRC Radio Gatineau, tfo, TVO, as well as freelancers). It also has several positions elected by all Guild members (including Director Education, Director Small Branches, Director Human Rights and Equity and others). Among other things, it is up to the NEC to:

- Develop national administrative policies and make sure they are followed

- Maintain a national communications network to inform all union members of union activities
- Approve a strike request from a branch before it is passed on for further approval and to approve all arbitrations and legal actions
- Develop relationships with other unions and national and international labour organizations

The NEC is headed by a president, who is the chief executive officer of the Guild. The president is paid by the Guild on a full-time basis while holding office. To get in touch with CMG NEC Committee, call the national office at 1-800-465-4149 or feel free to drop the national Guild office an e-mail at info@cmg.ca.

A full listing of the CMG contacts is available on the aptn Branch website at <http://www.cmgaptn.ca/contactus.htm>.

CMG Staff

The Guild maintains offices in Halifax, Ottawa, and Vancouver as well as its Toronto headquarters. Staff representatives across the country support the work of elected Guild officials and volunteers. They provide support on joint committees and assist with bargaining and contract compliance, as well as issues such as pension and benefits, and health and safety.

Staff in the national office include a membership coordinator, a travel coordinator who also arranges releases from work for union activities, a webmaster and a communications coordinator.

To get in touch with CMG staff, call the national office at 1-800-465-4149 or feel free to drop the national Guild office an e-mail at info@cmg.ca.

A full listing of the CMG contacts is available on the aptn Branch website at <http://www.cmgaptn.ca/contactus.htm>.

How Can I Get Involved?

There are dozens of ways you can participate in your union.

Some things don't involve a lot of time, but are very important to creating a real presence for the Guild where you work. This includes learning about your collective agreement and making sure it's being respected in your work area, informing others, and greeting new employees and making sure they know they belong to a union.

Your union always needs volunteers to join workplace committees, including grievance, bargaining, benefits and health and safety committees, as well as union committees, including local and national executives, human rights and advocacy events.

For more information on how to get involved, send aptn Branch an email at cmgaptn@gmail.com or contact the CMG National Office.



416-591-5333 or 1-800-465-4149

Fax: 416-591-7278

CMG Website: www.cmg.ca

E-Mail: info@cmg.ca