

Industrial
union



Shop steward elections –

Rules for organising elections



CONTENTS

1§	4
2§ Election and term of office of shop stewards.....	4
3§ Mid-term election of a shop steward.....	6
4§ Duties of a shop steward.....	6
5§ Election date and announcement	7
6§ Candidacy.....	8
7§ Appointment of Election Committee.....	9
8§ Tasks of Election Committee	9
9§ Voting sessions.....	11
10§ Voting.....	11
11§ Voting rights	12
12§ Counting of votes	12
13§ Postal voting.....	14
14§ Announcement on newly elected shop stewards	14

SHOP STEWARD ELECTIONS

1§

Shop steward elections must abide by the electoral rules adopted by the Board of the Industrial Union and by any provisions of the collective agreement which deviate from these rules.

The provisions of the collective agreement shall take precedence. Any disputes shall be resolved by the Board of the Union.

(A list of collective agreements with provisions on the election of shop stewards is presented at the end of the rules)

2§ ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE OF SHOP STEWARDS

The term of office of elected shop stewards shall begin on 1 January on every odd-numbered year and last for two years at a time.

'Shop steward' refers to a chief steward and shop steward elected in the workplace by the members of a registered branch of the Industrial Union, and to the deputies elected to deputise for them during periods when, in accordance with a written declaration handed to the branch's employer, the deputies shall handle the duties of the shop stewards.

A shop steward must be a member of a branch of the Industrial Union, an employee in the workplace in question, and have knowledge of the circumstances of the workplace.

Only one chief shop steward – and the number of deputy chief shop stewards, and shop stewards and deputy shop stewards, agreed with the employer – shall be elected for each workplace.

The entire site in question is the chief shop steward's area of responsibility, whereas that of a shop steward is the part of the site agreed with the employer. The areas of responsibility for which the shop steward will be elected shall be agreed locally, and prior to the shop steward elections, on the basis of a proposal by the branch or shop floor employees in question, or by a person authorised by the branch.

This should take account of the number of employees within the area of responsibility and the shop steward's ability to meet with the employees, while taking account of shift work.

The area for which the shop steward is elected shall be defined on the basis of the natural boundaries determined by the production or functional aspects of the company. Among other issues, attention must be paid to ensuring that the shop steward's area of responsibility enables the handling of issues related to the negotiating system as well as possible. The responsibilities of the shop stewards and management, and the scope of their authority in employment matters, must be confirmed at the same time.

A chief shop steward with a partial release from his or her duties can also handle shop steward duties within the area of responsibility. A chief shop steward fully released from his or her duties cannot simultaneously serve as a shop steward. A shop steward must be employed in the area for which they have responsibility. If agreement cannot be reached on the election of a shop steward, the matter shall be submitted to the unions for consideration, in accordance with the negotiating system under the collective agreement.

Election of Group shop steward

The election of a Group shop steward can be agreed locally, within the group of companies in question, other than agreed in Section 2, Paragraph 5, Section 6,

subsections a, b and c, and Section 7, subsection a of these rules, but in compliance with the principles underlying the abovementioned provisions.

3§ MID-TERM ELECTION OF A SHOP STEWARD

a) If a chief shop steward, deputy chief shop steward, shop steward or deputy shop steward resigns from his or her position mid-term, a shop steward election shall be arranged in accordance with these rules by the end of the calendar month thereafter, in which a shop steward shall be elected to serve for the remainder of the term of office.

b) If the deputy steward does not declare his or her candidacy at the candidacy meeting, a deputy shop steward election need not be held. However, the notice of the meeting must include preparations for both sets of elections.

c) If the shop steward is elected as a full-time chief shop steward, the election of a shop steward shall be arranged for the shop steward's area of responsibility.

4§ DUTIES OF A SHOP STEWARD

Shop stewards are representatives of their branch and the Industrial Union in their workplace. They have the task of representing branch members in negotiations with the employer on issues related to collective bargaining, employment law and other matters concerning the employer/employee relationship.

As a branch representative, the shop steward must promote good labour relations as required by the collective bargaining system.

The shop steward must contribute to and maintain employer-

employee consultation and cooperation, passing information between the employer and employee and the employer and the branch.

In addition to the tasks mentioned in the shop steward agreement, the shop steward must promote the organisation of his/her workplace into a union branch which functions in the appropriate manner in the workplace in question. In addition, it is the duty of the shop steward to participate in the branch's activities in a manner which promotes the flow of information and cooperation between the workplace and branch.

The duties and powers of any shop steward elected for a separately agreed task shall be agreed with the employer in the workplace, in writing and as much detail as possible

5§ ELECTION DATE AND ANNOUNCEMENT

The election of a chief shop steward and other shop stewards shall be held on even-numbered years between November and December. If, for external reasons, an election cannot be held during the aforementioned period, permission to postpone the election must be sought from the central administrative unit of the Industrial Union.

The branch or its representative must agree with the local employer in question on the date of the workplace elections at least 14 calendar days before the elections. Members with voting rights in the workplace in question must be informed of the elections immediately, or at least 7 calendar days before the elections begin.

Election notifications are posted on the worksite noticeboard and in the manner determined by the branch. Notifications shall clearly indicate when and where the elections will be held and the names and numbers of the candidates in the random order in which they are drawn.

6§ CANDIDACY

a) Candidates for shop steward positions shall be nominated at a meeting convened for that purpose. The meeting shall be held no earlier than October and at least 14 calendar days before the shop steward elections. A notice of the meeting shall be posted on the workplace noticeboard, or announced in the manner determined by the branch, no later than 7 calendar days before the meeting.

b) Meetings, in which shop steward candidates are nominated, shall be organised in such a manner that

- the meetings are primarily held at the worksites
- all branch members of the Industrial Union on the work site, who are entitled to vote, shall have the opportunity to participate in the nomination of candidates
- all meeting invitations must mention the nomination of shop steward candidates, and the time and place of the meeting.

c) The shop-floor employees, and the chief shop steward or branch representative of the site in question, shall be invited to the candidacy meeting for the chief shop steward and deputy chief shop steward elections. The chief shop steward of the area of responsibility in question shall be invited to the area's candidacy meetings for shop steward elections.

d) Candidacy meetings for the shop steward's areas of responsibility must be held after the election of the chief shop steward and deputy chief shop steward.

e) If only one candidate is nominated for each of the shop steward positions in the candidacy meeting, such

a candidate shall be elected as the shop steward by a decision of the meeting. If more than one shop steward candidate is nominated, an election must be held.

f) The consent of the nominated candidates to the candidacy must be ensured.

g) The same person may not simultaneously stand as a chief shop steward and a deputy chief shop steward, or as a shop steward and a deputy shop steward.

h) If a nominated candidate withdraws his or her candidacy in writing, a new candidacy meeting shall be held if so requested in writing by at least one employee in the workplace who is entitled to vote.

7§ APPOINTMENT OF ELECTION COMMITTEE

a) The candidacy meeting shall appoint an Election Committee with a minimum of three members for elections.

b) When appointing the Election Committee, the meeting shall take account of the general opinions held by the membership.

8§ TASKS OF ELECTION COMMITTEE

a) The Board of the branch in question, the Workplace Committee and the Election Committee appointed for the elections shall be responsible for ensuring that

- elections are held in accordance with these rules
- the election documents are deposited in a mutually agreed place if the election is interrupted

- employees are given effective notification of the elections
- election Committees shall also be responsible for other electoral measures in accordance with the rules issued by the Union.

b) The Election Committee shall allocate numbers to the candidates in the random order in which the numbers are drawn. First, the numbers of the chief shop steward candidates will be drawn beginning from the number 2. For example, if there are 3 chief shop steward candidates, numbers 2, 3 and 4 will be drawn. After this, the numbers of the deputy chief shop steward candidates will be drawn beginning from the number 5. For example, if three candidates for the position of deputy chief shop steward are nominated, the numbers 5, 6 and 7 will be drawn for the candidates.

c) The Election Committee shall ensure that every place of election has the appropriate screening to ensure the secrecy of voting. A list of the shop steward and deputy shop steward candidates in the order in which their names are drawn and clearly displaying their election numbers must be placed in the screened voting booth and voting room. No other electioneering advertisements may be placed in the polling station or its vicinity.

d) Confirmation of the election results and their announcement at the worksite and to the Board of the branch in question. After the result has been confirmed, all electoral documents must be stored in a safe location for at least 30 days, so that they can be checked in case of complaints or anomalies.

9§ VOTING SESSIONS

Voting sessions shall held in the workplace or in the immediate vicinity thereof, using sealed voting slips so that all persons entitled to vote are able to take part in the election. The voting period must be long enough to enable all employees on shifts and all those on a day off work to exercise their right to vote.

The Union shall print the voting slips and candidate announcement templates.

A lockable and sealable ballot box must be used during the vote, and the first person to arrive at the polling station must confirm that the box is empty. After this check, the ballot box must be closed and locked. If the vote is interrupted, the ballot box must be sealed between the voting sessions and kept in a place determined by the Election Committee.

10§ VOTING

The vote is held in such a manner that the Election Committee verifies each member's voting rights. A list of employees drawn up by the employer on the basis of the union membership fee-collection agreement and checked by the chief shop steward, or a corresponding list of employees based on branch members in the workplace in question, shall be used as the list of eligible voters.

The Election Committee shall keep a list of those who have exercised their right to vote by entering the word 'voted' against the name of the member in question on the list of eligible voters, or marking the name in some other way determined by the Election Committee. After eligibility to vote has been verified, a voting slip shall be issued.

Voting shall occur in such a manner that, while in the screened voting booth, the voter writes the number of the candidate they wish to vote for in the circle on the voting slip

The voter may not mark the slip in any way other than writing the chosen number in the circle as described above. After voting in the screened booth, the member must take the folded voting slip to the Election Committee, which will stamp it. After this, the voter must personally drop the voting slip into the ballot box.

11 § VOTING RIGHTS

All official members of the Industrial Union have the right to vote if they:

- are employed by the same employer
- are subject to the collective agreement negotiated by the Industrial Union
- are represented by the shop steward.

Temporarily laid-off employees also have the right to vote.

A new member shall have the right to vote if he or she joined the branch of the Industrial Union in question prior to the beginning of the election.

12 § COUNTING OF VOTES

At the end of voting, at the earliest the ballot boxes may be opened after the last polling day and the expiry of the polling period announced in advance by the Election Committee. After the ballot boxes have been opened, all ballots will be counted and their number must be entered in the election minutes. An interim vote count cannot be held in a situation where voting is interrupted.

Thereafter:

1. The voting slips will be opened and clearly spoiled and unclear voting slips must be sorted from the others.
2. The rejected and empty voting slips must be counted and their number must be marked in the minutes and attached to the voting material.
3. Accepted voting slips shall be arranged in such a manner that votes given to the same candidate are gathered together and placed in bundles by candidate number.
4. The number of votes received by the candidates shall be marked in the election minutes.

Acceptable votes

The general principle for approving votes is that the will of the voter is clearly stated. *On the above- mentioned grounds, the following entries are accepted on voting slips:

- slips which have the candidate's number
- slips which have the name of the candidate in addition to the number.

Rejected votes

- slips on which the number entered does not appear on the list of candidates
- slips which have the name of the candidate only
- slips which have other markings
- slips which have not been stamped.

If the Election Committee members disagree about a decision to reject a vote and the voting slip in question would be decisive regarding the result of the election, the Election Committee can submit the issue to the Board of the union for its consideration.

In the event of a tie, the election shall be decided by drawing the names.

13§ POSTAL VOTING

Shop steward elections can be held as a postal vote if a substantial proportion of the employees eligible to vote work a long distance from their workplace or otherwise work in circumstances that would prevent the exercise of their electoral rights or are temporarily laid off.

A written application for permission to hold a postal vote must be sent to the Industrial Union's organizational unit, which can grant permission for a postal vote in accordance with the rules confirmed by the Board. Each postal vote permit must be applied for separately.

Electronic election

The organisation of a shop steward election as an electronic election requires written permission from the Industrial Union's organizational unit. An electronic election can be organised if the circumstances at the workplace are such that ballot box elections or postal elections cannot be justifiably organised. Electronic elections must be organised in such a way that election secrecy can be maintained.

14§ ANNOUNCEMENT ON NEWLY ELECTED SHOP STEWARDS

The following parties must be informed in writing of the elected chief shop stewards and shop stewards, using the form approved by the union's Board:

- the Industrial Union and the employer.

The employer must also be informed of when the deputies elected for the chief shop steward and shop steward will act as substitutes for the chief shop steward or shop steward.

A list of collective agreements with exceptional provisions on the election of shop stewards

- Collective agreement for the car sector and engineering
- Collective agreement for the tyre industry
- Collective agreement on the forestry and nursery sectors
- Collective agreement on the forestry machinery and peat sectors
- Collective agreement for media and print workers
- Collective agreement for communications staff
- Collective agreement for newspaper delivery staff

All interpretations related to shop steward elections shall be made on the basis of the Finnish-language version of the rules.

