CUPE 38 Connection

CUPE 38 Connection brings you the latest updates, collaborative events, and resources to strengthen our community.

Join Our Next Meeting

Date : Tuesday, March 24, 2026
Time: 7:00 p.m. MST
Location : Virtual via Zoom
Agenda : Regular business
RSVP : office@cupe38.org or call 403-233-2700

CUPE Local 38 Elections

Elections will be held at the Regular General Meeting on April 28, 2026. Positions up for this year's election are as follows:

- President – two (2) year term
- Treasurer – two (2) year term
- Chief Steward – two (2) year term
- Recording Secretary – one (1) year term
- Trustee – one (1) year term
- Executive Board – five (5) Executive-at-Large positions; two (2) year terms

To be eligible for nomination to any of these positions, members must have attended at least 50% of the Regular General Meetings in the 12 months preceding the Regular General Meeting at which elections are held.

Additionally, members wanting to be considered for election must attend the April Regular General Meeting in person. If not in person, a written declaration can be submitted to the CUPE Local 38 Office at office@cupe38.org. The declaration must indicate your intent to run for a position and your willingness to accept the position if you are nominated.

To be eligible for nomination to the offices of President, Chief Steward, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, or Business Agent, a member must declare their intention at the March Regular General Meeting. This declaration can be made in person at the March meeting or by submission of a written declaration duly witnessed by another member to be read at the March Regular General Meeting.

Repetitive Strain Injury: The Silent Injury

Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) is one of the most common workplace injuries facing workers today. It develops gradually, often without immediate warning, and can leave lasting damage when muscles, tendons, or nerves are damaged by repeated motions or prolonged exposure. These injuries most often affect the hands, wrists, elbows, shoulders, and forearms, and symptoms usually develop over months or years. Workers may first notice pain, stiffness, tingling, numbness, swelling, or weakness, especially during or after repetitive tasks.

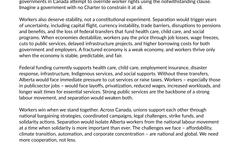
RSI is not simply a personal health issue. It is a workplace safety issue. Many of the jobs our members perform involve repetitive movements, such as typing, lifting, operating equipment or tools, or working in awkward or fixed positions. When employers fail to provide proper equipment, adequate staffing, or safe work design, the risk of RSI increases significantly. Medical guidance consistently shows that repeated use of a body part, combined with poor ergonomics, vibration, cold environments, or insufficient rest, can lead to these injuries. Left unaddressed, they can worsen over time and lead to chronic pain or long-term disability.

RSI is an umbrella term that includes conditions such as tendinitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, and bursitis. These injuries affect workers across sectors – office staff, custodians, tradespeople, library workers, and frontline public service workers alike. While early action can help prevent long-term damage, workers are often encouraged, implicitly or explicitly, to "push through" discomfort. That approach only increases the risk of serious injury. Workers should report symptoms early, request ergonomic assessments or modified duties, take regular breaks to rest affected muscles, and seek medical attention if symptoms persist or worsen.

Employers have a legal responsibility to provide a safe workplace and to accommodate workers to prevent injury. This includes ensuring ergonomic workstations and proper tools, maintaining adequate staffing levels, offering training on safe work practices, adjusting duties when injury report symptoms, and providing warm, safe environments where cold exposure is a factor. These are not optional measures. They are obligations under occupational health and safety law.

Our union's strength begins with workers speaking up about the conditions that put their health at risk. Where ergonomic concerns, staffing shortages, rate concerns (about unsafe work design, and insist on proper accommodations, it creates the pressure needed for real change. Employers are far more likely to act when workers make it clear that repetitive strain injuries are not an acceptable cost of doing the job. By sharing experiences, supporting one another, and refusing to stay silent about pain or unsafe practices, workers help hold safer workplaces for everyone and ensure that long-term health is treated as a priority rather than an afterthought.

Why Alberta Separation Would Harm Workers – And Why Our Rights Depend on Staying United



Across Alberta, working people are feeling the pressure of rising costs, growing political polarization, and government that seem more interested in picking fights than solving problems. In moments like this, some voices promote the idea of Alberta separation as a simple solution. But for workers, separation would create uncertainty, weaken public services, separation is not a path to prosperity for most Albertans. It is a direct threat to our rights, our stability, and our future. This conversation isn't about partisanship. It's about protecting the fundamental rights that workers rely on every day.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms remains one of the strongest legal protections available to working people. It guarantees freedom of association, which forms the foundation of collective bargaining. It protects freedom of expression, which is essential for picketing, advocacy, and collective action. It protects mobility rights, allowing workers to move freely across provinces for employment, and equality rights, which shield workers from discrimination. These protections are not handed to us. They were won through decades of struggle. The Charter has repeatedly upheld them in landmark Supreme Court decisions affirming the right to join a union, the right to bargain collectively, and the right to strike.

If Alberta were to separate, the Charter would no longer apply unless a new Alberta constitution chose to replicate it. There is no guarantee it would. Even if it was, would that be enough? The goodwill of whichever government happened to be in power to protect rights that are currently constitutionally entrenched. That is not a gamble working people should ever be asked to take.

Today, unions in Alberta operate within a national legal framework that protects collective bargaining, the right to organize, the right to strike, and fair labour standards. These protections exist because workers across Canada fought for them. If Alberta separates, workers would lose all of that would destabilize overnight. A new Alberta government could rewrite labour laws without constitutional limits, restrict or ban strikes, undermine collective bargaining, weaken public-sector unions, or reduce workplace safety standards. We have already seen provincial governments in Canada attempt to override worker rights using the notwithstanding clause. Imagine a government in Alberta with no constraint at all.

Workers also deserve stability, not a constitutional experiment. Separation would trigger years of uncertainty, including capital flight, currency instability, trade barriers, disruptions to pensions and benefits, and the loss of federal transfers that fund health care, child care, and social programs. When economies destabilize, workers pay the price through job losses, wage freezes, cuts to public services, delayed infrastructure projects, and higher borrowing costs for both government and households. A fractured economy is a weak economy, and workers feel it first when the economy is stable, predictable, and fair.

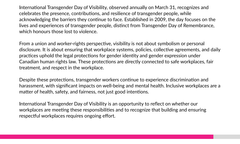
Federal funding currently supports health care, child care, employment insurance, disaster response, infrastructure, Indigenous services, and social supports. Without these transfers, Alberta would face immediate pressure to cut services or raise taxes. Workers – especially those in public-sector jobs – would face layoffs, privatization, reduced wages, increased workloads, and longer wait times for essential services. Strong public services are the foundation of a strong labour movement, and separation would weaken both.

Workers win when we stand together. Across Canada, unions support each other through national bargaining strategies, coordinated campaigns, legal challenges, strike funds, and solidarity actions. Separation would isolate Alberta workers from the national labour movement at a time when solidarity is more important than ever. The challenges we face – affordability, climate transition, automation, and corporate concentration – are national and global. We need more cooperation, not less.

Separation doesn't just divide Alberta from Canada. It divides workers from each other. It shifts the conversation away from real issues like low wages, safe workplaces, strong public services, affordable housing, and pension security, and replaces them with constitutional chaos. Workers deserve better than political distractions. We deserve a government focused on improving our lives, not tearing up the country.

Alberta separation is not a solution. It is a threat to everything workers have fought for: Charter rights, union rights, economic stability, public services, and national solidarity. The labour movement has always stood for unity, fairness, and collective strength. Separation undermines all three. Workers built this province, workers keep it running, and workers deserve a future grounded in rights, stability, and solidarity – not uncertainty and division.

Easter Sunday: Statutory Holiday Reminder



As we approach the Easter weekend, we would like to remind members how the Easter Sunday statutory holiday is treated under CUPE Local 38's Collective Agreement.

Easter Sunday is recognized as a statutory holiday. Members who are not scheduled to work on Easter Sunday will receive a less day, equivalent to the number of hours worked during their last shift prior to the holiday.

Members who are required to work on Easter Sunday will receive double time for all hours worked, plus straight time pay for the statutory holiday.

It is important to note that Easter Monday is not automatically a day off. It is considered a regular working day, unless otherwise scheduled by the employer. Members who wish to take Easter Monday off must obtain prior approval from their supervisor to use their Easter Sunday less day.

International Transgender Day of Visibility

International Transgender Day of Visibility, observed annually on March 31, recognizes and celebrates the presence, contributions, and resilience of transgender people, while acknowledging the barriers they continue to face. Established in 2009, the day focuses on the lives and experiences of transgender people, distinct from Transgender Day of Remembrance, which honours those lost to violence.

From a union and worker-rights perspective, visibility is not about symbolism or personal disclosure. It is about ensuring that workplace systems, policies, collective agreements, and daily practices uphold the legal protections for gender identity and gender expression under Canadian human rights law. These protections are directly connected to safe workplaces, fair treatment, and respect in the workplace.

Despite these protections, transgender workers continue to experience discrimination and harassment, with significant impacts on well-being and mental health. Inclusive workplaces are a matter of health, safety, and fairness, not just good intention.

International Transgender Day of Visibility is an opportunity to reflect on whether our workplaces are meeting these responsibilities and to recognize that building and ensuring respectful workplaces requires ongoing effort.

Keeping Calgary's Water Public Protects Our City's Future

Calgary's water utility is one of the city's most important public assets, and keeping it under municipal control is essential to protecting affordability, accountability, and long-term resilience. Water is not a commodity that can be left to the whims of profit-driven operators. It is a public necessity that underpins public health, economic stability, and the wellbeing of every household and business in the city. When Calgary owns and operates its water system, decisions remain rooted in the public interest, shaped by transparent processes and accountable to residents rather than shareholders.

Calgary's publicly run model has delivered decades of reliable service, careful long-term planning, and steady reinvestment in infrastructure. Every dollar collected through water rates goes back into maintaining and upgrading the system, from treatment plants to underground pipes to emergency preparedness. This reinvestment is especially important in a growing city facing the pressures of climate change, population growth, and aging infrastructure. A private operator, by contrast, is obligated to generate profit, which often leads to higher rates, reduced transparency, and cost-cutting measures that undermine service quality and safety. Once a private contract is signed, communities frequently lose control over key decisions, and reversing privatization can be costly and difficult.

Keeping the utility public also protects the skilled workers who operate and maintain Calgary's water system. City workers bring deep knowledge of the infrastructure and the local environment, and they are essential to ensuring safety, reliability, and environmental stewardship. Public ownership supports fair wages, strong labour rights, and high safety standards, and it avoids the downward pressure on wages that can arise from outsourcing and contracting out skilled labour jobs. When equipment is kept in-house and our members voices remain part of decision making, the entire community benefits.

Climate resilience is another critical reason to maintain public control. Alberta is already experiencing more frequent droughts, extreme weather, and shifting water availability. A municipally run utility can prioritize conservation, environmental protection, and long-term planning without being constrained by profit targets. Public ownership allows Calgary to integrate water management with broader climate adaptation strategies and to invest in adaptation strategies in ways that private operators are neither mandated nor incentivized to pursue.

Water is essential to life, and access to safe, affordable water is a basic human right. Keeping Calgary's water utility under municipal control ensures that decisions remain transparent, equitable, and grounded in the needs of the people who rely on the system every day. It preserves the ability to make long-term investments, maintain strong labour standards, and provide oversight of one of the city's most vital resources. Maintaining public ownership is not only the safest choice – it is a commitment to fairness, responsibility, and the long-term wellbeing of Calgary's communities.

Stay Strong and See You Next Month!

Sincerely,

Your Executive Team

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