

# HOW Can the Professional & Healthcare **HELP YOU** Division

## Resolving workplace issues

Professional & Healthcare Division staff are available to help you with on-the-job issues and problems, such as being assigned work at a higher title without a pay increase and unsafe or unhealthy working conditions. Call the **Professional & Healthcare Division at 212.815.1040** to get the name and phone number of your DC 37 representative who will work with you and the appropriate DC 37 department to resolve your workplace issues.

## Becoming active in your union

Do you want to become more active in your local? Would you like more information about how you and your co-workers can get more involved? The Professional & Healthcare Division can help.

Call the Division at **212.815.1040** for information on becoming more active and organizing your co-workers. If you would like us to come to your workplace to speak about the union at a meeting of members, the Professional & Healthcare Division can arrange that, too.

## Addressing your questions and concerns.

The Professional & Healthcare Division is striving to increase the flow of information between members and their union. A **Professional & Healthcare Division** representative may visit your work location to speak with members, answer questions, and hear your concerns. Open communication helps strengthen our union and build unity. Please feel free to raise your questions and concerns with your union representatives. Our job is to serve you.

## Professional & Healthcare Division

- Local 154 NYC Amalgamated Professional Employees
- Local 371 New York Social Service Employees
- Local 375 Civil Service Technical Guild
- Local 420 Municipal Hospital Employees Union
- Local 436 United Federation of Nurses and Epidemiologists
- Local 768 NYC Health Services Employees
- Local 1189 NYC Psychologists
- Local 1407 NYC Accountants, Statisticians & Actuaries
- Local 1757 NYC Assessors, Appraisers & Housing Development Specialists
- Local 3005 NYC Health Department Technical Professional Employees
- Local 3621 Uniformed EMS Officers Union, FDNY
- Local 3778 New York City Police Department (NYPD) Technical Professional Employees

## Professional & Healthcare Division

**Main Line: 212.815.1040**

District Council 37  
Henry Garrido, Executive Director



# SAFEGUARDING YOUR JOB

As a member of District Council 37, you can help protect your job security by understanding your union contract, knowing your agency's rules and regulations, and following the basic principles outlined in this brochure.



District Council **37** **AFSCME  
AFL-CIO**

## Professional & Healthcare Division

125 Barclay St. New York, NY 10007  
212.815.1040 | [www.dc37.net](http://www.dc37.net)

## These Dos and Don'ts are based on the grievance experience of DC 37 Union Representatives and Shop Stewards.

Use these to safeguard your job security.

# DOs

**Call your Shop Steward first, as soon as you have a problem.** Many people have lost their cases due to mistakes they would never have made if they had called their representative and gotten experienced advice. Any written statements you make may be used by management against you. Call your union FIRST.

**Use the correct procedure to resolve your problem.** Some problems should be grieved, some have to be appealed through the appeal procedure, some have to be handled through a labor-management meeting, and some can only be solved by changes to your contract.

**Write down all the facts immediately,** including exact details and names of witnesses relating to your case. If you don't, you'll learn quickly (and sadly) that your memory is not as good as you thought.

**Understand the need for documentation to support your case.** Your opinion or version of your case is not necessarily enough to win. In most cases, it will simply be your word against management's. The testimony of independent witnesses and written documentation have far more credibility and weight as evidence.

**Keep a copy of any document you give to management concerning a grievance or an appeal.** If possible, have the person accepting your documentation initial and date both the original and your copy.

**Know your opponent.** In order to help your case, examine it from management's perspective. What will their argument be?



**Know exactly what your witnesses are going to say before they appear on your behalf.** Many members have been highly surprised when their own witnesses failed to back them up at a hearing.

**Obey the time limits for filing grievances or appeals.** If you don't, management will challenge them and it is possible you will lose your case.

**Keep your record clean.** The biggest problem that our Stewards see is excessive absenteeism. Management can, and will, use this record against you should you become involved in a disciplinary action, regardless of whether the case involves absenteeism.

**Understand that the union does not file grievances against individual people, but against violations of the contract or rules.** We are not out to "get" supervisors. We only want the contract enforced and the rules obeyed.

**Own a copy of the contract, the personnel rules, the employee handbook, and your job description.** Read them carefully, and regularly reread them until you know them. Call your union Steward if there's anything you don't understand.

**Check your personnel file once a year.**

**Understand that your union membership is not an insurance policy against any and every action on your part.** You have a responsibility to obey work rules, be on time, and not be insubordinate to your supervisor.

# & DON'Ts

**Participate in disciplinary interviews without union representation.** If someone outside the normal supervisory chain of command wants to meet with you, ask the purpose of the meeting, and if it may lead to disciplinary action. Say that you wish to be represented by the union.

**Attend a disciplinary meeting without a union Representative.** If management insists that you meet without giving you adequate time to contact your union Representative, listen to what the investigator has to say, but **DO NOT** respond except to say that you wish to have a union Representative present. Denial of your right to representation is grievable.

**Refuse to sign a written counseling, disciplinary action, or performance evaluation report.** Your refusal may be used as evidence of an "attitude" problem. Your signature merely acknowledges that you have received a copy of the report. Make sure that you are given a copy. If you are going to respond, you need to know how long you have to submit the response. If you need help, call your union Representative.

**Refuse to carry out an order or assignment from your supervisor.** Obey the order, then grieve it or appeal it.

**Take management's word for what the contract or rules say.** Check it out yourself. If you have any questions, ask your union Steward or Representative.

**Resolve your problems with management without your union being involved.** Protect the rights of yourself and others. We have had far too many cases where supervisors made commitments to employees in private that they later broke, with no evidence to prove that they had reneged on their promises. What you agree to today may come back to haunt you tomorrow, and may set a precedent that can hurt other employees in the future.