



Union of Health and Environment Workers

POLICIES

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**POLICIES
OF THE
UNION OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT WORKERS**

Table of Content

POLICY 1	1
ON ABSENCE OF THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT FROM THE OFFICE.....	1
POLICY 2	1
FAMILY CARE	1
POLICY 3	2
NATIONAL OFFICE – BILINGUALISM	2
POLICY 4	2
NATIONAL LOCAL PRESIDENTS’ CONFERENCE.....	2
POLICY 5	5
COMPONENT REGIONAL CONFERENCES.....	5
POLICY 6	8
UHEW INTERREGIONAL CONFERENCE	8
POLICY 7	11
UHEW WATER POLICY	11
POLICY 8	13
SINGLE USE PLASTICS	13
POLICY 9	14
CAPITALIZATION OF PURCHASE	14

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Union of Health and Environment Workers (UHEW) policies are documents produced to assist in the interpretation of our By-laws and Regulations. Policies are decided by the National Council and will be added, amended or deleted as the National Council deems appropriate.

All reference to Union of Health and Environment Workers hereafter, will be referred to as the Component.

POLICY 1

ON ABSENCE OF THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT FROM THE OFFICE

In times where the National President is to be absent from the office in Ottawa due to any leave, or combination of leave, and this timeframe exceeds five consecutive working days, the National Vice-President will assume the role Ottawa during the above-mentioned time period (By-law Section 8 Sub- section 2) and shall be paid acting pay calculated from the date on which they commenced to act.

In the event that the National Vice-President is unavailable, the National President, prior to their absence, is to call in a member of the (Advisory Committee/ National Council/). Acting pay would be compensated at the base level of the current remuneration of the National President as per UHEW Regulation 6.

POLICY 2

FAMILY CARE

This Component has opted to follow the PSAC Family Care Policy in effect at the date of adoption of this Policy.

The National Council as with all of this Component's policies reserves the right to adopt at any time a Family Care Policy that is different from that of the PSAC.

POLICY 3

NATIONAL OFFICE – BILINGUALISM

This Component is a national union responsible for offering effective, quality representation to our members. Our services reflect the fact we have members located right across Canada. That is why we are pleased to offer members services and information in English and French in respect of the needs of the two official language communities. The objective of the Component is to serve members in the official language of their choice.

Therefore, all of the following measures are in place at this Component:

- All bulletins and other printed information to any part of the membership from the National Office shall be published in both official languages and distributed to individuals, where possible, in the official language of their choice.
- All web postings will be in both official languages.
- All emails will be in the official language of choice of the recipient.
- All correspondence relating to the Component's Triennial Convention shall be produced in both official languages.
- The main sessions of our Triennial Convention will have simultaneous translation available.
- All National Council meetings of this Component will, when necessary, have simultaneous interpretation.
- All training offered by the UHEW Component (simultaneous translation or training in both languages).

POLICY 4

NATIONAL LOCAL PRESIDENTS' CONFERENCE

In the spirit of co-operation, the Component wants to build stronger Locals that are connected to their membership, their Component, and to the PSAC. A means to achieve this objective is a National Local Presidents' Conference which would bring together Local Presidents and the National Council. The Local Presidents' Conference is not a decision-making body, Resolutions adopted at the Conference will be referred to the National Council for consideration and action.

There is to be a high education content to the Presidents' Conference with the majority of time being given to workshops, seminars. An opportunity will also be provided to discuss issues brought forward by Locals, as well issues of general interest and importance to the membership.

The following will apply:

Frequency

Once every three years to be held the year prior to the Component's Triennial Convention.

Duration

Two and a half days, dates to be determined by National Council

Location

To be decided by the National Council

Attendance

- Each local shall be granted one participant seat for the Local President or their alternate.
- The National President shall chair the Conference as a participant. The National Council will attend this Conference as participants.
- Each local may be offered the opportunity to bring Observers at no cost to the Component.
- The limiting factors will be ability of the selected conference facility to accommodate the number of observers requested and equitable selection process that will allow each Local who wants an Observer to have (one each) before any Local is allowed multiple Observers.

Mandate

The mandate of the Local Presidents' Conference will be one of education. The Conference shall also serve to bring forward Local issues of importance as well as Convention Preparation. The Local Presidents' Conference can become a platform for

Component Convention business as the Component Triennial is the PSAC National Convention.

Agenda

Two months prior to the conference, a call out letter will be sent to Local Presidents seeking agenda items. The proposed agenda shall be supplied to the Local Presidents at least three weeks prior to the National Local Presidents' Conference so that the participants can be prepared to discuss the agenda items. The proposed agenda shall be the first order of business at the National Local Presidents' Conference and Local Presidents in attendance shall prioritize the agenda items to reflect their wishes.

Chairperson

The Local Presidents' Conference shall be chaired by the National President.

Funding

All costs for participants to the Local Presidents' Conference shall be covered by the Component, including loss of wages which will be compensated as per Regulation 2 of this Component.

POLICY 5

COMPONENT REGIONAL CONFERENCES

(updated April 2026)

As directed by the Triennial Conventions of this Component, the National Council herein outlines the rules and procedures that will govern Regional Conferences.

1. The Component Regional Conference is to be a meeting of the Regional Vice-President, the alternate, and three participants (Local President, Local Vice-President and another member of the Local decided upon) from the Locals of the Region:
 - discuss and become familiar with the organization of the PSAC and the Component Union;
 - to allow national and local officers to share their experience, problems and ideas;
 - improve the communications link with the National Office of the Component;
 - become familiar with the Acts and Regulations which govern labour relations in the Public Service
2. The Regional Conference is not a policy-making or advisory body.
3. The cost of Regional Conferences shall be borne by the Component. The Component will be responsible for the cost of meeting rooms, accommodations, travel, loss of salary and allowances in accordance with the Component's Regulation 2. All expenses are subject to the approval of the National President. At least one month prior to a Regional Conference, the RVP(S) will prepare a budget for the Regional Conference and submit it to the National office on the approved spread sheet supplied
4. Conference arrangements, including locality of the Conference, shall be the responsibility of the Regional Vice-President. Selection of the site for the Regional Conference should be based on the following criteria:
 - The locality within their Region which is most accessible to the majority of delegates both in terms of geographical and financial considerations, preference should be given to locations where the Component has a Local presence;
 - Where Conference facilities are available at an acceptable price and quality.

5. UHEW Regional Conferences may be held once between Conventions; No Regional Conference to be held in a Convention year.
6. The duration of Regional Conferences shall be at least one (1) day, and up to two and half (2.5) days, exclusive of travel time. The Regional Vice-President(s) concerned shall determine the length of the Conference based on the number of participants, the number of items on the agenda and the training needs for their Local(s)
7. Regional Conferences may be held in conjunction with other regions, with the approval of the National President.
8. Regional Conferences may be held in combination with a regional training Initiative
9. Regional Conferences shall be planned 6 months in advance. Regional Vice-Presidents and the National President shall consult on the most appropriate time.
10. Regional Conferences shall be chaired by the Regional Vice-President of the area concerned. Where regions combine conferences, Regional Vice-Presidents will co-chair the Conference.
11. If a Local delegate is unable to attend, the Executive of that Local shall nominate an alternate from among the members of the Local.
12. The topics of discussion at the Regional Conferences will be established keeping in mind the educational and informational needs of the Local officers.
13. In establishing the agenda for the Regional Conference, delegates are encouraged to submit items for discussion.
14. At least two months prior to the Conference, the Regional Vice-President of the area concerned, shall give notice of the Conference to all Locals, indicating time and place, soliciting agenda items and confirmation of the names of the delegates attending.
15. The National President and upon their delegation another Staff Officer, shall attend all Conferences.

16. Locals may send observers at the expense of the Local. It is understood that the Component will not be liable for any expenses incurred by such observers.
17. The Regional Vice-President is authorized to rent a suite for the Regional Conference and one of the following team building options for the participants:
 - a. Rent a hospitality suite up to two (2) days, during their UHEW Regional Conference;
 - b. Organize a one-time event with a budget equivalent to the total cost of a hospitality suite.

When Regional Conferences are combined, the Regional Vice Presidents would combine the budgets of each region for the one-time event.

In addition, a sum of \$30 allowance per participant will be added to the budget for the hospitality suite supplies or a one-time event as determined by the RVP hosting their UHEW Regional Conference. No additional monies will be allocated for promotional items.

POLICY 6

UHEW INTERREGIONAL CONFERENCE

Objective:

To foster collaboration, the Component seeks to strengthen the relationships among Locals, their membership, their Regional Officers, and their Component. The most efficient method to realize this goal is through a virtual Interregional Conference that brings together all regions.

Mandate:

The main emphasis of the Interregional Conference will be on providing training and education for UHEW union activists through workshops and seminars aimed at:

- discussing and gaining an understanding of the structure of the PSAC and the UHEW Component;
- enabling national and local officers to exchange their experiences, challenges and ideas;
- familiarizing participants with the Acts and Regulations which regulate labour relations within the Public Service;
- establishing a network to address shared concerns and enhance communication among UHEW locals throughout Canada, while also connecting with the National Council.

The secondary emphasis will be placed on regional matters and concerns via discussions held in regional caucuses.

This conference is not designed to serve as a policy or decision-making entity.

Frequency

The Interregional Conference will be held once between UHEW Triennial Convention, occurring in the year preceding the Convention.

Location

The Interregional Conference is one where all participants will attend remotely.

The National Council will have the opportunity to attend in person, facilitating their ability to assist with and deliver the workshops and training.

Duration

The conference will span up to a maximum of three days, which will include a minimum of half a day dedicated to agenda items that address regional needs and issues. The specific dates will be established by the National Council.

Organizers and Regional Vice Presidents (RVPs) traveling to the conference location will receive additional time for travel.

The organizing committee will determine the duration of the Conference, taking into account the number of agenda items, the requirements for regional caucus, and the training needs expressed by attendees.

Attendance

Participants attending the conference will include Regional Vice Presidents (RVPs), their alternate RVPs. Each UHEW Local is entitled to three Local participants, who are members in good standing:

- Local President (or an alternate)
- Local Vice President (or an alternate)
- one additional member as determined by the Local executive (or an alternate)

Locals may send observers, but all expenses will be incurred by their Local and none will be incurred by the Component.

Chairpersons

The Interregional Conference shall be chaired by Regional Vice Presidents.

Funding

The expenses associated with the Interregional Conference will be funded by the Component; this includes the costs related to meeting rooms, lodging, travel, and any loss

of salary and allowances as stipulated in the Component's Regulation 2. All expenditures must receive approval from the National President.

Furthermore, since this is a virtual platform, participants will be granted a stipend per day for their participation. Verification of attendance at all daily activities will be conducted prior to the disbursement of payment.

Organization of Conference

The planning for the Interregional Conference shall commence six months before the event. The Regional Vice Presidents and the National President will confer to determine the most suitable timing.

Committee Composition

A committee will be formed consisting of at least five RVPs to oversee the organization and planning of the event.

Call out

At least three months before the Conference, the conference committee is required to notify all Locals about the Conference, specifying the time and location, requesting agenda items, and confirming the names of participants.

Participants attending the Interregional Conference are urged to propose discussion items so that the organizing committee can formulate the agenda and facilitate planning, including the possibility of inviting guest speakers and facilitators.

Agenda

Two months before the conference, the organizing committee will consult with the education committee for potential topics.

The subjects for discussion at the Interregional Conference will be determined with consideration for the educational and informational requirements of the National Component, alongside Regional and Local concerns.

The finalized agenda will be provided to the designated participants no less than three weeks before the Conference, enabling them to prepare for discussions on national agenda topics and region-specific agenda items during the sessions

POLICY 7

UHEW WATER POLICY

(updated April 2025)

A clean, healthy & sustainable environment is the corner stone to our future success and prosperity as a nation and water is key to this.

This component recognizes clean water as vital to life on Earth and easy access to safe, clean drinking water is a right that all Canadians should have.

Water policy in Canada is shaped by a combination of Federal, Provincial, and Territorial laws, along with various local regulations.

Many of our members work in areas where the Federal Government has a role in regulating water use and pollution, particularly in relation to transboundary water, such as rivers that cross Provincial or International borders. The Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) and the Fisheries Act are among the Federal laws that impact water management. The Canada Water Act is another important piece of legislation that provides the framework for Federal-Provincial cooperation in water management.

UHEW believes that the seventh-generation principle should apply to all decisions made regarding our air, land, water and ecosystems and we encourage all Canadians to be good stewards of our resources. This principle emphasizes the importance of long-term sustainability, environmental stewardship, and the responsibility of each generation to ensure that the world is left in a better state for future generations. The significance of clean water cannot be understated.

Government's role in water sustainability includes rebuilding and enhancing our country's capacity to deal with our freshwater challenges. Governments inactions do not arise from a lack of a mandate, it comes from a lack of political will.

Therefore, the Component will support and promote:

- That water is a public good, not a commodity and as such will oppose the export of water from Canada.
- The declaration and legislation of surface and ground water as a public trust. Under a public trust doctrine private water use would be subservient to the public interest. The public trust concept means water is a public resource owned by the people of Canada, with the government acting as a trustee responsible for taking care of the resource.

- The establishment of national enforceable drinking water standards.
- The development of water conservation strategies that benefit the Canadian economy, communities and the environment.
- Standards for industry and agribusiness which would include the enforcing of strict laws against industrial dumping, use of pesticides and discharge of toxins into waterways.
- The creation of a national public water infrastructure fund. Years of cuts in infrastructure funding have resulted in a municipal infrastructure deficit conservatively estimated to be in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Municipalities do not have the financial resources to alone fix and upgrade aging water pipes and sewars.
- Campaign against fracking or any other activity which may have negative impacts on the safety and security of the environment or waters.
- National enforceable standards for sewage treatment. Canada has no national standards for municipal sewage treatment and wastewater effluent quality. As a result, billions of litres of raw sewage are flushed into our waterways every year.
- Will continue to promote the use of Municipal tap water at all Union events (UHEW and PSAC) and therefore, support Municipal, Provincial & Federal standards that ensures drinking water is clean and of a high standard.

This Policy will be reviewed each cycle by the Environment Committee.

POLICY 8

SINGLE USE PLASTICS

(updated April 2025)

UHEW represents members working on the front lines of Environment, Enforcement, Health, Research and Measurement across Canada.

Each day our members see first-hand the impact of single use and limited use plastics are having on our environment. Both in the oceans and on land, we are reminded every day of the effects of our choices to use plastic instead of more environmental and healthy products.

Canada's Plastics Policy and National Plastic Waste Reduction Strategy focuses on addressing the environmental impact of plastic waste, particularly single-use plastics, and fostering a circular economy where plastics are reused, recycled, and managed sustainably. The Canadian Government has implemented several initiatives and policies over the years to tackle plastic pollution.

This UHEW Policy aims to reduce the use of single-use plastics within all Union offices, meetings, events, and activities. By adopting sustainable alternatives, UHEW commits to the environmental stewardship and supporting Canada's federal regulations on plastic waste reduction.

UHEW will promote to eliminate plastic pollution by limiting the use of Single-Use Plastics (SUPs) and others such as:

- Plastic cutlery (forks, knives, spoons),
- Straws and stir sticks,
- Plastic bags,
- Takeout containers and cups made from polystyrene or other non-recyclable plastics,
- Plastic water bottles,
- Promotional materials and merchandise.

Certain cases may warrant exemptions, such as:

- Accessibility needs (e.g., plastic straws for individuals who require them),
- Health and safety reasons where no alternatives exist.

By phasing out all single-use plastics from offices and events, UHEW encourages employees and members to use reusable, compostable, or recyclable alternatives.

UHEW will ensure all procurement and vendor purchases must prioritize sustainable packaging and materials.

This Component will actively promote the Policy to its membership, to all Components of the PSAC and PSAC.

This Policy will be reviewed each cycle by the Environment Committee.

POLICY 9

CAPITALIZATION OF PURCHASE

(effective January 1, 2023)

UHEW will capitalize all assets that are valued at \$2000 or more.