

# WHAT DOES THE SKILLED TRADES COUNCIL DO FOR YOU?



**REPRESENTING SKILLED TRADES  
WORKERS ACROSS CANADA**

***[uniforskilledtrades.ca](http://uniforskilledtrades.ca)***

***[trades@unifor.org](mailto:trades@unifor.org)***



**unifor**  
theUnion | lesyndicat



## Message from Dave Cassidy, Unifor Skilled Trades Council Chair

The Unifor Skilled Trades Council's purpose is to create a promising future for our more than 50,000 Skilled Trades members throughout our great country.

Our members across the trades in multiple sectors are united in our shared objectives and challenges. Together, we are a strong voice in our union, in our workplaces and in setting government policy.

Delegates and members of the Executive Board of the Unifor Skilled Trades Council are made up strictly of rank-and-file Skilled Trades workers. Our work includes developing policies and bargaining language that support and advance the rights and interests of skilled tradespeople while centred on the protection of wage and qualification standards.

There is a saying I like to use: 'skilled labour isn't cheap and cheap labour isn't skilled.' We stand at the gate protecting against forces that are trying to drive down our wages and dilute our qualifications in an effort to eliminate good-paying Skilled Trades jobs.

Workplaces that rely on cheap, under-trained labour are dangerous and pose a real threat to the health and safety of workers and our communities. Lowering wages and standards exploits individual workers and harms our economy by reducing wages for everyone.

The National Skilled Trades Council and our Area Councils will continue our fight for Skilled Trades workers by securing quality wages, benefits, and working conditions while advocating for more apprenticeships and skilled trades training opportunities.

Our fight is critical in preserving our skills for today so that they may be passed down to future generations tomorrow.

Unifor Skilled Trades members are leaders in our workplaces and their communities. I am incredibly proud of the social commitment that Skilled Trades members have made, donating their highly skilled labour to relief projects across North America, assisting the disadvantaged, advocating for social justice, and literally building a better world.

It is an absolute honour for our Council to stand up for our Skilled Trades members from coast-to-coast-to-coast for the simple fact that when our Skilled Trades are thriving, our union and our communities thrive.

## **VISIBILITY**

Visibility as a distinct Skilled Trades group within Unifor

## **UNITY**

Working together for common interests and common goals

## **VOICE**

A clear expression of the Skilled Trades vision to Unifor Council, National Executive Board, government bodies and agencies, etc.

## **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONFERENCE**

To debate and set our bargaining goals as Skilled Trades

## **POLICY**

Council meetings set Unifor Skilled Trades Policy

## **JOURNEYPERSON CARD**

Union recognition of bonafide journeyperson status

## **SEPARATE RATIFICATION**

The right to vote separately on Skilled Trades issues.

Unifor represents more than 50,000 Skilled Trades and Apprentices. Following the process outlined in the union's Constitution, these members can apply to negotiate the Skilled Trades program into their Collective Agreement and begin to have an effective voice on Skilled Trades issues in their union.

The National Skilled Trades Council and its Area sub-councils are the voice for the Skilled Trades members in Unifor.

## **WHAT IT COSTS FOR A TRADESPERSON TO JOIN THE SKILLED TRADES COUNCIL**

It costs just one-half hours dues once per year to belong to the Skilled Trades Council and National Council. 60% stays with your local Area Council, and 40% goes to the National Council. Not one penny goes to the National Union.

## **BENEFITS OF JOINING THE UNIFOR SKILLED TRADES COUNCIL**

Strengthening the identity of the Skilled Trades and building solidarity within the union has gone hand in hand since the formation of the union.

Our union is truly different than other industrial unions. As a result, we have a Skilled Trades Department, with a Director of Skilled Trades and one staff.

The Skilled Trades, through the work of the Council, have the opportunity to have separate skilled trade's representation, protection of skilled trades' demands, and the right to apply for separate ratification under Article 17:14 of the Unifor Constitution.

The Chairperson of the Skilled Trades Council Executive is an officer and a voice for the Skilled Trades on the National Executive Board, as guaranteed in the Constitution.

## **SKILLED TRADES BARGAINING AGENDA**

Through the Skilled Trades Council, the Skilled Trades Bargaining agenda covers a wide range of issues including:

- Special Skilled Trades wage increase
- Elimination of wage disparity between trades
- Improved tool allowance
- Skilled Trades pension adjustment
- Definition of Journeyperson in the Collective Agreements
- Apprenticeship language
- New technology language
- Work ownership language
- Skilled Trades Training Committees
- Job descriptions/Guidelines/Demarcation

## UNIFOR SKILLED TRADES A PROUD HISTORY

The Skilled Trades Council has and always will be the voice for the Skilled Trades members in our union.

The history of the Skilled Trades Council dates back to 1938, when the United Auto Workers (UAW) formed the first Trades Council in Detroit.

In 1958, the UAW abolished the American arm of the Skilled Trades Council. In Canada, the Canadian Skilled Trades Council successfully fought to continue to be recognized.

At one time, Skilled Trades had no representation on the union's National Executive Board (NEB). The first recognition we received came in 1994 under CAW President Buzz Hargrove.

At the 2013 founding Convention of Unifor, the National Skilled Trades Council was enshrined in the Constitution.

The Chairperson of the National Skilled Trades Council Executive is automatically the representative for Skilled Trades on the National Executive Board.

The delegates and the Executive Board of the Unifor Skilled Trades Council are rank-and-file Unifor Skilled Trades workers. Quebec has a recognized position on the Executive Board.

The Chairperson is duly elected to the position by Skilled Trade delegates to the National Skilled Trades Council as per the Council bylaws, which are approved by the National Executive Board.

Area sub-councils across Canada continue to grow in strength, with the opportunity to form new Area Councils where there are a sufficient number of Skilled Trades members to support it.

The Skilled Trades Council meets three times per year, rotating the meeting locations between Area Councils across Canada.



## SKILLED TRADES COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS THAT HAVE TURNED INTO BARGAINING GAINS

**1987** – One half hour dues per year referred to the Constitutional Convention. Issue of a wage differential between Skilled Trades and non-trades

**1990** – Improved wage differential, special Skilled Trades increases

**1993** – Pension differential between Skilled and non-skilled established

**1996** – Work ownership for Skilled Trades established, and apprenticeship numbers

**1999** – Apprenticeship numbers, 85-point pension, increased pension differential, and a new fund for a Skilled Trades Union Education Program (STUEP) at the Unifor Family Education Centre in Port Elgin, ON

**2002** – Apprenticeships, SPA training replacements, New Technology Committees

**2005** – TSSA certification, wage and pension improvements, LOA for International and Canadian relief work, Katrina, Habitat for Humanity, and AFN projects across Canada (Social Commitment). Skilled Trades Coordinators

**2015** – Paid time off for relief work and Canadian Community Fund established

**2016** – The first Skilled Trades Bargaining and New Technology Conference took place. The Skilled Trades Council Executive updated the Skilled Trades Policy manual. This manual contains the Policies and Procedures of the National Union, affecting Skilled Trades.

**2020** – 5% and 10% shift premiums were reinstated, the 20% differential (Wage & Pensions) was re-established. Added a Special Skilled Trades Wage Adjustment.

All these gains made by the Skilled Trades over the years evolved from resolutions that were discussed and debated by the Skilled Trades Council Delegates. It was the Skilled Trades Bargaining Committees from the many different local unions that turned these resolutions into success at the bargaining table.

The Skilled Trades Council does not bargain Collective Agreements. The Skilled Trades Council supports the process leading up to bargaining, by providing Skilled Trades Resolutions and attending and participating in the Skilled Trades Bargaining and New Technology Conference. Once the resolutions have been discussed, debated, and passed at the Conference, they then go to the National Canadian Council and are endorsed by the whole union.

The Skilled Trades Resolutions are then used by Bargaining Committees and National Staff Representatives in negotiating for skilled trades programs across Canada. The Unifor Skilled Trades Department will provide assistance to these Bargaining Committees and National Representatives.

The Skilled Trades Area sub-councils provide resources and a forum for the Skilled Trades members to raise their specific skilled trade's issues, whether it is on training, contracting out, apprenticeship, trades certification or other government policy issues. The Council provides a forum to hold these discussions, and then move them to the National Skilled Trades Council meetings.

The National Skilled Trades Department participates in various Council meetings and provides all the delegates an up-to-date report of what is happening with the Skilled Trades across Canada

The Unifor National Union looks to the National Skilled Trades Council as a voice for the Skilled Trades. The Unifor National President and/or the designated senior National representative responsible for Skilled Trades also attend the UNSTC conferences held three times a year. Therefore, Skilled Trades issues are kept front and centre with the leaders in Unifor.

As you can see, the Council is important if skilled trades want their issues dealt with, either with a company between bargaining, raised at the government level, or to have policy set by the union to deal with specific skilled trades concerns.

## THE SKILLED TRADES COUNCIL DOES THE FOLLOWING

- Has active committees including Apprenticeship, Resolution, Bylaws and New Technology
- The Executive of the National Skilled Trades Council is also the Advisory Board for the National Executive Board on Skilled Trades related issues, or policy
- The Area Councils process Unifor Skilled Trades Council Journeyman cards, which ensure the tradesperson has completed a bonafide apprenticeship or meets the qualifications of a journeyman as laid out in the Skilled Trades policy manual
- The journeyman card provides preferential employment opportunities at other Unifor certified locations
- The Skilled Trades policy manual is a record of the policies of the Skilled Trades dating back to the UAW and CAW, and now enshrines policies developed by Unifor
- There is a Skilled Trades website which provides information submitted by delegates, along with job opportunities that arise across Canada. The website address is: [uniforskilledtrades.ca](http://uniforskilledtrades.ca)
- When the Skilled Trades delegates meet three times per year, it brings delegates from across Canada together, as a resource, to discuss, debate, and to network with other skilled trades in different sectors of our union
- The Council is responsible for assisting with the Skilled Trades Bargaining and New Technology Conference, which is put on by the National Unifor Skilled Trades Department every three years



## RESOLUTIONS AT THE SKILLED TRADES COUNCIL

The Council processes Skilled Trades Resolutions that are required to be presented in Collective Bargaining for Skilled Trades across Canada. Skilled Trades Resolutions arise from the Skilled Trades Area Councils, which have representatives on the Resolutions Committee at the Skilled Trades Bargaining Conference. The Resolutions are voted on by delegates at the Skilled Trades Bargaining Conference and if passed are adopted at the next Unifor National Canadian Council or Convention.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR THE SKILLED TRADES COUNCIL

The Unifor Skilled Trades Council, like any organization, is only as strong as its membership. In order to be an effective organization that unites Skilled Trades workers from all Unifor Locals we need maximum support and participation.

In other words - **WE NEED YOU!**

## UNIFOR SKILLED TRADES COUNCIL CONTACTS

### **DAVE CASSIDY, CHAIRPERSON**

c/o—Unifor Local 444  
1855 Turner Road  
Windsor, ON N8W 3K2  
Phone: 519-258-6400 ext. 444  
Fax: 519-258-0424  
Email: dcassidy@uni444.ca

### **RAY HAMEL, RECORDING SECRETARY**

c/o—Unifor Local 88  
364 Victoria St.  
Ingersoll, ON N5C 3K5  
E-mail: r\_ham29@yahoo.ca

### **JULIA ROOT**

#### **SKILLED TRADES ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

Unifor National Office  
115 Gordon Baker Road  
Toronto, ON M2H 0A8  
Phone: 1-800-268-5763 ext. 6543  
Email: trades@unifor.org

Produced by the Unifor National Skilled Trades Department

***uniforskilledtrades.ca***

