

# Welcome New Employees

## Remember your first day on the job? Not exactly a day at the beach.

That's why one of your foremost tasks is to welcome new employees. You do this whether your shop is open or union, public or private. Some local unions have created a "welcome packet" for this purpose. (If yours has one, good. But don't use it as a substitute for getting to know the new worker.) If you don't have a packet, then you'll be winging it. (The next few pages contain some capsule info about dues payments and union membership--usually the first things you'll be asked about--as well as a few SEIU factoids to help you out.)

If yours is a union or agency shop (that means new employees must join the union or pay a fee), then the new worker may be hostile to the union. This doesn't let you off the hook. It just means you'll have to grit your teeth and put forth an extra effort to be friendly and helpful. Here's a checklist of some things you might want to include in your conversation:

- Get to know each other. Ask where they worked before, where they live now, do they have a family? Hobbies? Sports? Start off by listening.
- Offer information: where the vending machines are (and what not to buy), where to go for happy hour, what the boss is like, who runs the football pool, how you get in on ride-sharing.
- Give the new worker a welcome packet if you have one. If not, be sure they receive a copy of the contract and explain its important provisions to them.
- Explain some of the main benefits provided by the union contract, not the benevolence of the employer: wages, health care, holidays, a voice on the job.
- During the conversation, remember that you want the employee to begin identifying with the union. Whenever the worker has a problem, you are the person to see, not the supervisor. The union is the members, the people right there all around you--not some unknown outsiders. If you get these two ideas across, you've done your job.
- If your union is doing its job, there'll be a meeting coming up you'll want to invite the new worker to attend. In fact, why not take them with you? They'll feel more at ease with someone they know. (Remember your first one?)
- Make sure the worker has a wallet card with your name and phone number, and encourage them to call if they have any problems.