

Guidelines on Labour Market Conflicts

For Sveriges Ingenjörer's
Local Union Representatives

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1 General

A labour market conflict is a natural part of a bargaining round and can arise when the parties do not agree in negotiations on wages and general terms. Industrial action may not be taken during a period of agreement when a collective bargaining agreement is in effect. During that period there is industrial peace. It is only when the period of agreement has ended that industrial action may be taken. The measures may vary, but the most common are blockade, lockout or strike. How many are affected by the measure or what industrial action is proposed varies from case to case. It is always the central union that decides on these measures. As a member of the union, you are obliged to participate in the conflict measures that the union proposes. The local organization has a number of tasks in the event of a labour market conflict, which this handbook describes in more detail. Here you can also read more about the roles in the local conflict organization.

Remember to always study the strike notice in the event of difficulties with interpretations! These instructions in the event of a labour market conflict should be viewed as a complement to the strike notice. Please contact Sveriges Ingenjörer's Advisory Services¹ in cases of ambiguity.

<https://www.sverigesingenjorer.se/anstallning/allt-om-anstallning/konflikt-och-strejk/>

- FAQ for members
- The strike notice (when notice has been given)
- Instructions in the event of a labour market conflict (when notice has been given)
- Form to be used when applying for strike pay (with instructions)

<https://www.sverigesingenjorer.se/inloggat/mina-uppgifter/kontaktuppgifter/>

- Form for members to provide their private mobile phone number and e-mail address

<https://www.sverigesingenjorer.se/anstallning/allt-om-anstallning/konflikt-och-strejk/>

- FAQ for local union representatives
- Guidelines on labour market conflicts (this document)
- Posters etc. to be used by the conflict committee
- Form in case of a breach of the rules on labour market conflicts

1.1 Co-operation between Sveriges Ingenjörer and other trade unions during a labour market conflict

When a labour market conflict is concerted between Sveriges Ingenjörer and other trade unions it is also important to have a close local co-operation regarding questions of conflict routines, pickets, the handling of requests for exemptions, joint union member meetings, meetings with all employees etc.

During the 2016 labour market conflict on the Almega collective bargaining area, the efforts were co-ordinated with Unionen's conflict committee.

1.2 Other professional associations

The conflict also applies to members of other professional associations, as all tasks for employees on strike are subjected to so-called blockade measures.

Should any member of another professional association have any questions regarding the conflict, they are to be referred to their respective professional association for further instructions.

1.3 Other trade unions, neutrality

Members of other trade unions for whom the employer has an applicable collective bargaining agreement are to work as usual. However, they are to remain neutral *i.e.* they are to manage and perform their regular tasks but not undertake to perform any task that under normal circumstances

¹ Sveriges Ingenjörer's Advisory Services, tel 08-613 80 00.

would be performed by a white-collar employee that is a part of the on-going conflict. If any issues arise such members should turn to their work supervisor for further instructions.

1.4 Recruit members!

Prior to a labour market conflict there is a lot more focus on collective bargaining agreements and the union's role in negotiating fair conditions of employment for their members.

Use the abovementioned to add weight to the commonly used arguments for becoming a member! Anyone who becomes a member up until the industrial actions break out are entitled to strike pay.

At <https://www.sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/allt-om-medlemskapet/> you will find commonly used arguments and useful materials concerning the union membership.

2 Checklist of actions to be taken

2.1 Appoint a conflict committee or, at smaller companies, a conflict representative responsible for the contact between members, the trade union and the company's management.

2.2 Create a list of contacts of the people that are a part of the local conflict organization: name, role in the conflict organization, mobile phone number, and e-mail address.
N.B – the mobile phone number and e-mail address used cannot belong to the employer that is the subject of the conflict!

We also require a private e-mail address where we can send material regarding the conflict.

Please send the contact list to us using the following e-mail address:

konflikt@sverigesingenjorer.se.

2.3 Establish connections with other trade union's respective conflict committees to plan and coordinate the conflict.

2.4 Do a thorough review of which employees that possibly should be exempted from the conflict in the event a conflict breaks out (please refer to the strike notice).

2.5 Call for a general member meeting. During the meeting, inform the members of the following:

- The scope and purpose of the labour market conflict
- Which employees the conflict applies to
- The status of the negotiations
- Which groups are exempted
- The local conflict committee's assignments and composition
- The exact time and date when the conflict starts and how to find out when the conflict ends (see section 11)
- Gather the members private mobile phone numbers and e-mail addresses and ask the members to also register these at <https://www.sverigesingenjorer.se/inloggat/mina-uppgifter/kontaktuppgifter/>
The members should also check that their current employer is correctly registered in our membership registry ("[Din Sida](#)")

2.6 Consult with Unionen or other trade unions on how you are going to inform non-members. The easiest way to do so is most likely to call for an information meeting with all employees.

Non-members are not entitled to attend a members-only meeting.

In larger companies it may be appropriate and might even be necessary to arrange meetings for one company section at a time.

2.7 Please follow the information at <https://www.sverigesingenjorer.se/medlemskap/allt-om-medlemskapet/>. Also keep close contact with our central office which can provide you with additional help and advice.

It is imperative for a successful conflict that each member follows the instructions provided by their trade union and the local conflict committee!

Be factual and correct when speaking with members and representatives of the employer. Remember that after the conflict is over the relations in the workplace should go back to normal.

If it is unclear how the conflict committee/representative should operate, or if other local issues arise; contact Sveriges Ingenjörer's Advisory Services immediately for further help.

3 Local conflict committee (conflict representative)

3.1 Assignments

1. Be responsible for the flow of information to members before, during, and after the conflict together with the board of the local union branch.
2. Make sure the rules of the conflict are followed within the company.
3. Where applicable, instruct pickets about the scope of the conflict and which employees are exempted from it.
4. Work together with Unionen's conflict committee on matters regarding the carrying out of the conflict.
5. Arrange for a place where the local conflict committee can operate from.
6. Make sure the employer has received the strike notice, including appendices.
7. Together with the board of the local union branch inform the employer of the following:
 - The conflict applies to all tasks put under blockade regardless of an individual employee's union affiliation.
 - Any attempt to pressure an individual will be met with countermeasures. Make it clear to the employer that if the employer does not respect the rules of the conflict, for example by letting non-members perform tasks put under blockade, we will consider escalating the conflict.
 - The names of executives that have been exempted from the conflict. The exemptions can be found in the strike notice.
 - Any applications for exempting personnel are tried by Sveriges Ingenjörer's central office. A form is handed over to the employer organization as an appendix to the strike notice.
8. Give statements on any applications for exemptions when requested by the central office's exemption task force, see below under headline 5 "Local exemption group" for more information. The conflict committee/representative shall keep notes on any applications for exemptions and the impact of any approved exemptions.

4 Local information group and/or local information group on-call

4.1 Assignments

1. Follow Sveriges Ingenjörer's central office's instructions and information which can be found at www.sverigesingenjorer.se.
2. Responsible for assisting and providing advice to individual members using the central office's instructions, together with the conflict committee (conflict representative).
3. Plan, produce and distribute information to the members (plan for two possible scenarios: either if the members are still at the workplace, e.g. during the strike notice period or when enacting an overtime blockade, or if the members are not at the workplace e.g. during a strike or lockout).
4. Plan and hold member meetings.

5. Stay connected with local union representatives of other trade unions.
6. Interpret the strike notice and, if needed, assist the conflict committee (conflict representative) by consulting with Sveriges Ingenjörer's Advisory Services.
7. Be responsible for all contacts with the press, together with the conflict committee. Please remember to always contact our Head of Press Relations Alexander Orlinge (08-33 74 29, 070-962 47 33) if you are approached by any press.

All press releases and press conferences are written and arranged by our central office.

4.2 Sources of information for the local conflict work

- <https://www.sverigesingenjorer.se/anstallning/allt-om-anstallning/konflikt-och-strejk/>
- E-mails from Sveriges Ingenjörer's central office.
- Direct contact with Sveriges Ingenjörer's central office (mainly through the Advisory Services).
- Media.

4.3 Organization of local information for the members

- Distribute different areas of responsibility within the committee: member information, press, connections with printing services etc.
- Fliers.
- Member meetings.
- Notice-boards.
- The regular or a temporary meeting place for union meetings?
- Telephone chains.
- The person or persons in charge of information distribution and contacts with the media.

4.4 Producing information material

- Use the member's or the local union representative's expertise.
- Forms of writing: Short yet concise, the most important issue first, comprehensible, where can I find more information?
- Different aids *e.g.* technical solutions.
- Where can the information be published (produced or printed)? In a closed Facebook-group?
- When applicable, how do you distribute produced material?
- Short yet concise, the most important issue first and always with a reference to one of the local union representatives.
- Try to find a contact from the local press before the situation escalates – Also, please discuss the situation with Sveriges Ingenjörer's Head of Press Relations beforehand.

4.5 If you are interviewed

- Find out what the interview will be about and how fast the journalist needs his or her answers taking into consideration eventual deadlines and broadcast times.
- Do not allow the journalist to pressure you into an interview. If you do not have time for an interview, or if you feel unsure, ask if you can get back to the journalist or refer him or her to someone else. Use that time to consult with your colleagues over who is the most suitable to respond. Call Sveriges Ingenjörer's Head of Press Relations.
- Prepare yourself for the interview and read up on the facts. Write down a few key points as support with important facts or things you wish to highlight.
- Give the journalist straight and clear answers. Repeat your and Sveriges Ingenjörer's message. Do not give an impression of hiding something.
- Use words and expressions that are easy to understand. Assume that the journalist has little or no knowledge of matters concerning trade unions.
- Stick to facts and avoid speculating. Always assume that what you say could be quoted or broadcasted in different media channels.
- Feel free to be active during the interview if the journalist seems to lack knowledge of the issue, but do not lecture the journalist.
- Do not try to influence the journalist.
- Remember that all journalists aren't trying to set you up.

- Usually the interviews aren't broadcasted live and therefore can be changed afterwards. Always ask to see the written-out version of the interview or have it read to you. You have the right to have any quotes made by you corrected – nothing more.
- The individual's right to anonymity in publishing information– no one may try to research a journalist's anonymous sources.

5 Local exemption group

5.1 Assignments

(if a local exemption group has been formed, otherwise these assignments are performed by the conflict committee)

- Give the group's opinion on applications for exemptions when requested by the central office's exemption task force.
- Keep the employer informed of the exemption application procedure.
- Keep the person/persons responsible for the flow of information informed of any interpretations of exemptions.
- Inform "pickets" of any exemptions that have been approved.
- Manage exemption cards.
- Inform the conflict committee of any actions which can be construed as an attempt by the employer to circumvent the conflict.

5.2 General information on the management of exemptions

The matter of exempting persons from the conflict is first and foremost of interest to the employer. The local union branch should therefore refrain from actively participating in any such matters during the course of the conflict.

The local union branch cannot decide upon any exemptions. Such decisions can only be made by Sveriges Ingenjörer's central office in order to ensure a consistent decision-making of who is exempted or not and to ensure consistency between Sveriges Ingenjörer and other trade unions with a central co-ordination on managing exemptions.

The employer may under no circumstances take part of the local union branches' statement regarding an application for exemption. The statements are intended to be used for internal union purposes only.

The process of handling the employer's applications for exemption cannot be expedited by contacting our central office, since it would be deemed to be mitigating the effects of the conflict for the benefit of the company. Telephone calls or personal visits to the exemption task force's central office in order to affect the process will not be accepted.

Regarding *safety work* the principal rule is that for such tasks the employer shall apply for an exemption. However, the tasks may be carried out pending the processing of the application. Examples of safety work is *e.g.* necessary tasks due to an accident – a breakdown or similar – which can mean danger to people's life and health or which can cause severe damage to buildings, facilities or warehouses. The employer must in other words still apply for an exemption as soon as possible, but the safety work can be started pending Sveriges Ingenjörer's decision.

5.3 Applying for an exemption

Sveriges Ingenjörer provides a form on how to apply for exemptions to all employer organizations affected by the conflict as an appendix to the strike notice. Any company that wishes to apply for an exemption shall turn to their employer organization for an application form. The local union branch has no reason to have these forms available to the employer.

A complete application on our application form contains the following information: name, title/position, union membership, time, date and the number of hours applied for, the desired exemption, and the reason for exemption. Beyond the exemptions stated in the strike notice an application for exemption must be filed for each individual case. There are no general exemptions.

The company should send their application for exemption written out on the application form to the central office's exemption task force at konflikt@sverigesingenjorer.se. The task force will then contact you for a statement regarding the application. Applications for exemptions concerning life, health or security issues, *i.e.* safety work, are prioritized.

Decisions regarding exemptions are sent directly to the company from Sveriges Ingenjörer's central office. The conflict committee or any equivalent body are provided with a copy of the decision.

6 Local conflict compliance group

(if a local conflict compliance group has been formed, otherwise these tasks are performed by the conflict committee)

The group shall keep watch over the workplace to ensure that the employer or individuals do not breach the rules of the labour market conflict. In the event of a breach or a suspected breach the group shall make the employer aware of the incident/incidents in order to remedy the situation. The employer must then take steps to ensure the breach does not reoccur and inform the local union branch over which steps have been taken.

In the event of an interpretation of the strike notice it should be made clear to the employer that it is Sveriges Ingenjörer as an organization that interprets and provides instructions regarding our industrial actions. Inform the employer that if the breach/breaches continue or if our instructions are not met, the employer risks escalating the conflict at the workplace and/or extending the conflict to include other related companies and/or business units.

The group shall report any breach or suspected breach to the central office's conflict task force. The report shall specify what breach has occurred and who was involved, how the employer has acted, and who the local union branches' contact person is, together with that person's contact information. No form is required and the report is to be sent to the central office's conflict task force at konflikt@sverigesingenjorer.se.

7 Strike pay

The local union branch is not required to handle any member's request for strike pay. A FAQ for members regarding strike pay can be found at <https://www.sverigesingenjorer.se/anstallning/allt-om-anstallning/konflikt-och-strejk/>, including instructions on how to apply for strike pay.

Strike pay for local union representatives can be applied for in the same manner as for members. For any additional claims derived from the conflict the [usual travel claim form for local union representatives](#) can be used.

8 Pickets

Prior to any strike measures being implemented, a picket organization should be appointed by the conflict committee/representative. The picket organization in turn appoints the picketers and organizes the picket line.

The work on organizing the picket line must begin at the same time as the strike notice is given as there is only a short time, seven workdays, to get the organization in place. Pickets can be recruited among the members by using *e.g.* subscription lists (a template can be found at <https://www.sverigesingenjorer.se/anstallning/allt-om-anstallning/konflikt-och-strejk/>) at member

meetings. The picket organization must furthermore organize the communication among the pickets and between the pickets and the picket organization. (*e.g.* using private telephone numbers).

8.1 Picket instructions

The picket organization makes sure that all pickets receive a written instruction containing at least the following:

1. Be factual and correct when speaking to members, members of other trade unions, non-members or employer representatives. Please remember that after the conflict is over the relations in the workplace should go back to normal.
2. A picket is not allowed to physically hinder a person from entering the workplace nor has any formal right to demand that a person identifies themselves or to ask to see a person's identification.
3. Inform any white-collar employees that are affected by the conflict, *i.e.* both members and non-members, that there is an ongoing strike and blockade:
 - a. Members of the trade union/unions on strike, Sveriges Ingenjörer and others, have stopped working (are on strike).
 - b. Their tasks have been put under blockade.
 - c. If any tasks put under blockade are carried out it constitutes strikebreaking.
4. A member from any of the trade unions on strike that carries on working at a workplace where a strike notice has been given and where a strike has been initiated, and does not belong to the group of exemptions stated in the strike notice or has been granted an exemption, risks being excluded from their respective trade union.
5. Information on white-collar employees that are allowed to work despite the ongoing strike and blockade (a list of names should be established so the picket line does not have to enter into a discussion every time) which are:
 - a. Members of a trade union not participating in the industrial actions
 - b. Members exempted in sections 1-8 or 12 in the strike notice
 - c. A person that has been granted an exemption by the central office of a trade union participating in the strike (the exemption is to be presented or the picket line should have a register over which employees are allowed to continue working)
 - d. A person not employed by the employer, *e.g.* consultants.
6. Non-members may also participate in the strike on the same terms as members on strike (however, without receiving strike pay).
7. Please take note of everyone that enters a workplace put under blockade not covered by section 5 above, or members that breach the rules of the conflict. Pass along the information to the conflict committee/representative if one has been appointed.
8. Stay connected to and follow any instructions given by the picket organization and keep track on how the conflict develops.

9 Local initiatives to negotiations/agreements

Any local discussions with the employer which can result in a collective bargaining agreement are to be cancelled during ongoing wage bargaining or conflicts. It is important not to disrupt any ongoing negotiations between Sveriges Ingenjörer and employer organizations by striking local agreements that constitute binding collective bargaining agreements regardless of any national agreements being struck thereafter on a central level.

Any proposals from the employer pertaining to these matters should therefore be rejected accordingly. If any doubts arise, please contact Sveriges Ingenjörer's Advisory Services.

10 The applicability of the Act on the Position of Trade Union Representatives in the Workplace (“the Representatives Act”)

The way the Representatives Act (*sw. Förtroendemannalagen*) is applied during the strike notice period and conflict period is determined by the nature of the work carried out by the local union representatives. A local union representative is always entitled to time off for union-related work. However, they are not entitled to pay during time off for work connected with the conflict. This applies to both the notice period and the period during which the conflict is in effect. For union-related work at a local level not connected with the conflict, the standard provisions of the Representatives Act apply during the notice period and for normal working hours in the event of an overtime strike, *i.e.* local union representatives are entitled to paid time off. Regular union-related work during a period when the conflict is in effect (*e.g.* overtime ban or strike) does not entitle to pay. If you are unsure, please contact Sveriges Ingenjörer’s Advisory Services.

11 Cessation of the conflict

When the central office gives notice that the conflict has ceased, all members are to resume work without delay.

11.1 Sveriges Ingenjörer’s channels of communication

Information from Sveriges Ingenjörer that the conflict has ceased is planned to be broadcasted through the following channels:

- <https://www.sverigesingenjorer.se/anstallning/allt-om-anstallning/konflikt-och-strejk/>
Group text messages and e-mails to all members that have submitted their private contact information at <https://www.sverigesingenjorer.se/inloggat/mina-uppgifter/kontaktuppgifter/>
- Group text messages and e-mails to all local union representatives in the conflict committee, according to the list sent to the central office (section 2.2 under the headline “Checklist of actions to be taken”).

11.2 The conflict committee should use their own communication channels

The conflict committee is to use their communication channels to inform the members that they are to resume work.

11.3 Evaluation

As soon as possible after the conflict has ended you should evaluate the local conflict organization and the conflict as a whole. Please send any comments, suggestions and improvements to konflikt@sverigesingenjorer.se so that we can implement any improvements into our guidelines.