Basic Guide to Workplace Forums

Workplace forums may be formed when there are more than 100 workers. They promote the workers' interests by consulting and making joint decisions. Employers must provide relevant information to workplace forums.

Application

The Labour Relations Act applies to all employers, workers, trade unions and employers' organisations, but does not apply to:

- members of the:
  - National Defence Force;
  - National Intelligence Agency; or

See

- Labour Relations Act

Applies to all workers and employers and aims to advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democracy of the workplace.

Formation

A majority trade union (1 or more trade unions whose members are a majority of the workers employed) may initiate a workplace forum by applying to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) if there are more than 100 workers.

Functions

The functions of a workplace forum are to:

- promote the interests of all workers (not only trade union members);
- enhance workplace efficiency;
- consult with the employer; and
- take part in decision-making.

Rights

A workplace forum has the right to be consulted by the employer on:

- restructuring and new work methods;
- partial or total plant closure;
- mergers and ownership transfers;
- retrenching workers;
- job grading;
- criteria for merits and bonuses;
- education and training;
- product development plans;
- export promotions; and
- health and safety measures.

Full-Time Members

Where 1,000 or more workers are employed, workplace forum members may elect 1 full-time member.

A full-time member's pay must be equal to his pay before they became a full-time member.

When a worker stops being a full-time member, they must return to their previous post or to a higher post.

Joint Decision-Making

Unless otherwise agreed in a collective agreement, an employer must consult the workplace forum before applying:

- disciplinary codes and procedures;
- workplace rules of conduct;
- measures to monitor unfair discrimination; and
- changes to rules of social benefit schemes.

If an employer and a workplace forum disagree, the issue may be referred for arbitration or to the CCMA in writing.

Employer's Duties

An employer must provide all the information that will allow a workplace forum to consult and make joint decisions effectively.

An employer may not provide information that:

- is legally privileged;
violates any law or court order;
may harm a worker or the employer; and
is personal to a worker, unless the worker allows it.

**Related Links**

- [Basic Guide to Agency Shop Agreements](#)
  - The Labour Relations Act allows for an agreement requiring the deduction of fees from non-union workers
- [Basic Guide to Closed Shop Agreements](#)
  - The Labour Relations Act allows for an agreement requiring non-union workers to join the union
- [Basic Guide to Collective Agreements](#)
  - The Labour Relations Act provides for agreements that alter conditions of employment
- [The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA)](#)
  - Visit the website of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA)