



HOW TO READ THE UAW CONSTITUTION

What is the UAW Constitution?

The Constitution of the UAW is the supreme law of our union and is the Constitution of every affiliated subordinate body (local unions). It provides the foundation for the day-to-day operations of our great union, and equally important, it sets forth the rights, guarantees and responsibilities of all UAW members.

The Constitution can only be amended by a majority vote of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention, which is held every four years, or at Special Conventions. This is a democratic process, as members elect the delegates who represent them at these conventions, per Article 8 of the UAW Constitution.

The UAW's Constitution expresses our union's values and vision of a democratic society that embraces economic and social justice for all people. It unites us in solidarity and strengthens our union.

We are proud of our Constitution and our power to stand together and adopt and abide by these guiding principles that determine our union's path and its future.

Where can you get a copy of it?

An electronic version of the UAW Constitution is available at: <https://uaw.org/uaw-constitution-2/>. You can request a paper copy by contacting your Local Union leadership.

Who should read the constitution?

It's important that every member become familiar with the Constitution. Just like the U.S. Constitution, to protect the rights of union members and the union, you need to know what those rights entail! You should carefully study our Constitution and apply its principles in your daily life, both as a member of a great democratic union and as a citizen in a democratic society.

It's also vital that you read your collective bargaining agreement and local union bylaws. These documents address issues specific to your workplace and local union. By reading all three (your collective bargaining agreement, local union bylaws, and the UAW Constitution), you are educating yourself on how your union works. Education is essential to full participation in your union. Remember, knowledge is power!

When should you read it?

Members should read our UAW Constitution when joining in union. Members should also read our UAW Constitution after the Constitutional Convention is held, every four years, as amendments are made by a majority vote by the delegates. There are several situations where you'll want to consult the Constitution. If you don't always know where to look, there are a few options for navigating the UAW Constitution described in the next section of this document.

How do you read it?

Our UAW Constitution begins with a Preamble, which is an introduction to our union and core values. If you're a new member, you should pay extra attention to the Preamble and Article 6, "Membership" and Article 41 "Duties of Local Union Members". These democratic processes govern our union as protections for all members. They are designed to make sure you, as a member, have a voice.

The body of our UAW Constitution is broken down into Articles and Sections. An Article being a main subject and each Section underneath the Article a key point related to that subject.

Start by reading the Constitution front to back, but after reading each Article, flip to the very back of the Constitution to see if there is an interpretation for that Article. The interpretations are key clarifications. They represent the interpretations of our Constitution by the International Executive Board.

Pay special attention to the Ethical Practices Codes, found after the Articles.

There's a helpful table of contents in the front of the UAW Constitution. For example, if you're thinking about running for an elected position within your local union, the table of contents shows that Article 38 is titled "Local Union Officers" and Article 45 is titled "Stewards and Committeepersons." This would be a good place to start.

There is also a subject index towards the back of the book (between the Ethical Practices Codes and the Interpretations) that allows you to search by topic or phrase. The subject index is a great tool because it directs you to the article, section, and page number of the specific topic you're looking for. For example, you can look up "Local Union" in the index and you'll find a sub-topic of "Election of Officers".

What if you have questions about it?

You can seek assistance from your Constitution and Bylaws Committee and/or Local Union Leadership. When Local Union leaders have a question regarding the Constitution, they should contact their Servicing Rep or Regional Director.