



# Memorandum

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**XO/06/21**

**To:** National Board of Directors

**From:** Chris Aylward, National President

**Date:** March 10, 2021

**Subject: Rules of Order, Statement on Harassment, and Related Information for Virtual Conventions**

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The purpose of this memo is to provide the National Board of Directors with information in support of our virtual conventions.

## **Health and Safety**

PSAC is not sanctioning any in-person gatherings of members to participate in the upcoming virtual regional conventions. Members must respect the public health directives issued by the relevant municipal, provincial/territorial and federal health authorities regarding restrictions on in-person gatherings. PSAC will not place members and their families at any additional risk, nor will PSAC be held responsible should a member (or members) elect to violate this instruction.

Individual requests for accommodation will be addressed by PSAC. Such requests will be treated in compliance with the relevant COVID-related public health directives.

## **Convention Stipend**

Delegates attending the virtual regional conventions will receive a \$50 per day stipend for each full day (as defined in the convention agenda) they participate in their regional convention. This flat-rate stipend is provided to assist delegates with out-of-pocket expenses relating to their participation, including ordering lunch from a local restaurant. This stipend will not be pro-rated, will not be payable to observers, and will not establish a precedent for other virtual union events.

## **Rules of Order and Statement on Harassment**

At the February National Board of Directors meeting, revised rules of order and statement on harassment for virtual regional conventions were discussed and passed.

Attached are copies of both documents, which are to be used across our union for our upcoming cycle of virtual conventions and conferences.

The standard PSAC rules of order and statement on harassment were adapted to reflect the virtual environment of our events. The changes made to these documents are outlined below.

Amendments to the Rules of Order:

1. All delegates are muted on the convention platform, and un-muted when recognized by the chairperson. Rule #3 therefore requires that delegates line up at the virtual microphone. Rule #9 confirms that a delegate remains muted on the platform until the point of order has been decided.
2. There will be a dedicated microphone on the convention platform for delegates wishing to raise a point of order or question of privilege, as confirmed in rule #7. This microphone will be separate from the microphone used for resolution debate, because there is no ability for a delegate to jump the microphone queue and declare a point of order or question of privilege in the traditional manner.
3. Rule #8 confirms that delegates experiencing technical problems or who have a question concerning convention are not to utilize a point of order or question of privilege. Instead, the convention platform will include help buttons to connect delegates with dedicated staff assistance.
4. The virtual platform includes a chat function which allows delegates to connect with each other and form chat groups. Rule #11 confirms that the chat function will be closed during resolution debates, voting, and during all elections.
5. Rule #12 confirms that the convention platform cannot be used for campaigning, save for speeches delivered in advance of an election and during an all-candidates debate.
6. In the virtual environment, standing votes are not possible. Rule #25 explains that when a show of hands vote is inconclusive, a secret ballot vote will be utilized. The tally from the show of hands vote will be visible to the convention chairperson. The secret ballot will employ electronic online voting.
7. Prior to conducting a secret ballot, Rule #25(g) requires the chairperson to call out “tile the vote”. The vote remains tiled until all votes on the matter are complete, the final results announced, and the matter concluded – as confirmed in rule #26.

8. There are no separate tiling guidelines for virtual conventions. Delegates are to have identified any accommodation requirements in advance (for example, on their registration form), in order for their accommodation needs to be addressed.
9. Rule #27 confirms that only delegates, observers, authorized staff, invited guests, and those providing accommodation assistance are permitted on the convention platform, and that all participants must be registered. It is not possible to enter the virtual convention platform without registration.
10. It will remain possible to record against the outcome of a vote. Rule #29 outlines that delegates will record their dissidence on the convention platform following the announcement of the vote result.
11. As it is not possible to spoil a ballot when utilizing electronic voting, the requirement for the Chair of the Nominations Committee to announce the number of spoiled ballots has been removed from rule #32.
12. Rule #33 has been amended to confirm that candidates for office may address convention delegates once for a maximum of three minutes. The same rule applies to caucus elections. A candidate cannot address delegates for each ballot and/or if they are running down for positions being elected by the same delegate group. With the use of electronic voting, the right to a scrutineer has been removed.
13. Rule #35 confirms that convention quorum is a clear majority of accredited delegates, and that the chairperson is able to test the convention floor to determine quorum as required.
14. For matters not addressed by the rules of order, rule #36 confirms that a ruling from the PSAC National President will govern, replacing Bourinot's rules of order. *Reminder also that chairpersons are to employ the PSAC Rules of Order booklet for further guidance.*

#### Amendments to the Statement on Harassment:

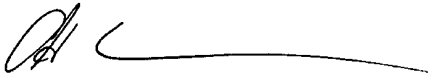
1. The first paragraph now includes recognition of staff and non-staff support persons as being entitled to be free from discrimination and harassment, including personal harassment, and that the PSAC Constitution confirms this right.
2. The second paragraph has been added to address the virtual environment, inclusive of content, debate, images, and discussion that must be respectful and not offensive in tone

or nature. It is also clearly stated that conflict, in and of itself, does not constitute harassment, which is then further described in this paragraph.

3. The third paragraph confirms that whenever possible, members are expected to engage in a respectful dialogue to resolve harassment. As always, early and informal resolution processes are strongly encouraged. Should such processes be unsuccessful, the appropriate process outlined in harassment policies, guidelines, applicable collective agreements, and PSAC Constitution and Regulations will be engaged.
4. Anti-Harassment resource persons are to be identified for each event, with their name(s) and contact information made known to the event participants.

Please address any questions regarding these documents to my attention.

In solidarity,



Chris Aylward  
National President

c.c.: Regional Coordinators  
Regional Political Communications Officers  
Suzanne Brandon  
Gaëlle Felix

.../attach.