

# CWA Canada Intern Handbook

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[emergingmediaworkers.ca](http://emergingmediaworkers.ca)



This booklet was written by the steering committee of CWA Canada Associate Members, a free union membership for student, emerging and precarious media workers.


Designed by Zviko Mhakayakora.

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# Welcome To The Newsroom!

Congratulations on being hired as an intern!

It's a great opportunity for you to sharpen your skills and make connections in the industry. You're also bringing energy and new ideas to this company, and they are benefiting by getting to work with you. An internship should be a positive and fulfilling experience for everyone involved. This guide will provide you with all the information you need to get the most out of your experience in the newsroom.

# CWA Canada

The employees at this media workplace are members of CWA Canada, this country's only all-media union. We have 6,000 members at media outlets and newspapers across the country, including VICE, CBC, The Canadian Press, APTN, the Ottawa Citizen/Ottawa Sun, the Halifax Chronicle Herald and the Victoria Times-Colonist.

If you're a paid intern, you may be considered a member of the union for the duration of your

internship. Check with the union representative in your workplace (or the person who handed you this guide!) about whether you are a member, and if so, what rights you have according to the collective agreement that has been negotiated between the union and the employer.

All interns, whether you are paid or unpaid, are welcome to join CWA Canada as an associate member. Joining is free and gives you access to supports that will help

make a career in the media more accessible, through mentorship, training, and networking opportunities. By becoming an associate member you will also be joining a network of media workers across the country who are fighting for better working conditions in the sector.

You can find out more and join today at:

[www.  
emergingmediaworkers.ca](http://www.emergingmediaworkers.ca)

# Your Rights As An Intern

At workplaces represented by CWA Canada there are two types of internships:

1) **Unpaid student internship:** an unpaid internship arranged through an accredited post-secondary institution. Student internships should be short in duration, supported and monitored by faculty of the school, and include a mentor in the workplace. They are learning opportunities for students, not free work opportunities for companies.

2) **Paid internship: a paid, short term employment contract.**

If you've been hired as an unpaid intern, but not through your university or college program, get in touch with us right away. You should most likely be considered an employee under the law and be entitled to at least minimum wage.

According to Canadian law, unpaid student interns and paid interns have different rights in the workplace. You'll find details about your

rights in the Employment Standards Act, Human Rights Code and Occupational Health and Safety Act of the province in which your internship is taking place.

If your internship is at VICE, CBC, The Canadian Press, Shaw, Thomson Reuters or Zoomer, your workplace is federally, and not provincially, regulated. You can therefore find details of your employment standards, human rights, and health and safety standard in the Canada Labour Code.

# Employment Standards

## *Paid and Internships*

As a paid intern, you're legally considered an employee, and therefore you are entitled to all the rights and protections granted to employees in the jurisdiction in which your internship is taking place.

The specific rights that employees have vary from province to province and are detailed in the Employment Standards Act of each province.

If your internship is at a federally regulated

workplace (see above) your employment standards can be found in the Canada Labour Code.

While the specific details vary slightly by region, each employment law sets out standards around public holidays, vacation pay, overtime pay, minimum wage, limits on hours of work, benefits, termination notice and more.

On top of basic employment standards, you may have additional rights and benefits laid out in the collective agreement that has been negotiated between the union and the employer. Get in touch at the phone numbers or email addresses below to confirm details.



## Minimum Wages\*



\*As of May 2017

## *Unpaid and Internships*

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As an unpaid student intern, you aren't covered by employment standards, but since your internship is happening through your school, they should ensure your internship is safe, fair, meaningful and meets the criteria set out by your course.


If you have any concerns about your internship -- if you aren't being treated fairly, trained or mentored--your course instructor or internship coordinator should be there to support you. Let them know what

is happening, and ask that they give you guidance and/or take action to fix the situation.

If you have any concerns that you feel your course instructor is not adequately addressing, get in touch with us at the contact information **provided on page 18.**

# Human Rights

Both unpaid student interns and paid interns, in all jurisdictions, are covered by a human rights code that prohibits discrimination based on grounds such as age, race, place of origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and family and marital status.



# Occupational Health and Safety

Paid interns and unpaid student interns in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and the federal sector are covered by an occupational health and safety act. This sets out rights and duties of all parties in the workplace and establishes procedures for dealing with workplace hazards.

Your rights under this act include that employers must provide safety equipment, information and training around hazards in the workplace. You also have the right to refuse dangerous work.

If your internship is taking place in a province where unpaid interns are not explicitly covered by health and safety legislation, that doesn't mean your employer should take advantage of this by putting you in unsafe situations or by not giving you adequate training or equipment.

Remember that no internship is worth getting injured or killed for, and to always put your safety first, even if that means walking away from the internship.

If you have any questions or concerns about health and safety please don't hesitate to get in touch with us using the contact information **provided on page 18.**

# How To Make The Most of Your Internship

## Get A Contract

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At the start of any job, you should always get a written agreement between you and your employer that outlines the responsibilities of both parties and details of your work, such as your tasks, pay and hours of work. If you aren't offered a contract, you can follow up with an email outlining and confirming what you agreed to verbally. And remember, you have the right to at least try to negotiate for working conditions that you think are fair.

### **Here's what to cover in an email or contract:**

**1) The scope of the internship:** Outline your responsibilities, what tasks you will perform, and the skills and experience you will gain.

**2) Expected hours of work and length of contract:** How many hours will you work per day or week, and the end date of the contract.

**3) Who your mentor will be:** Who will train you, answer your questions,

and share daily guidance and constructive feedback.

**4) Exit interview:** Make sure you have an opportunity to give and receive feedback at the end of your contract.

**5) Compensation:** You may not be getting an hourly wage, but there are other forms of compensation you can negotiate for, including honouraria, work expenses, per diems, transportation costs, software licenses, a reference letter, etc.

**6) Acknowledging contribution and credit:** Your name should appear on any work that you help produce.

Tip: Asking for a contract or putting the terms of your internship in writing is not just a smart idea, it is also professional. If you are following up with an email after an in-person conversation, try using language such as, “As we agreed on yesterday . . .” or “I’m just following up to confirm the internship details that we spoke about yesterday.” You can also put a positive spin on the email by also letting the employer know that you’re looking forward to working with them.

## *Keep Records*

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It’s always a good practice to keep records of any work contract, including: the job posting, your contract, hours you’ve worked, correspondence with your employer, and work you produce. Not only will this be helpful in keeping track of things you’ve accomplished throughout your internship, it will also be important information to have on hand in case you run into any issues or concerns.

# Tips For Leveraging Your Internship

1. Keep any clippings of work you produce, including PDF's of articles
2. Get contact information for people you work with
3. Write down your accomplishments and responsibilities
4. At the end of your internship, ask your mentor and/or supervisor for an exit interview and to act as references when you are applying for future jobs

# Find Out About Your Rights At Work

## **BC**

Employment Standards Branch: [labour.gov.bc.ca](http://labour.gov.bc.ca)

Human Rights Tribunal: [bchrt.bc.ca](http://bchrt.bc.ca)

Work Safe BC: [worksafebc.com](http://worksafebc.com)

## **Alberta**

Employment Standards: [work.alberta.ca/employment-standards.html](http://work.alberta.ca/employment-standards.html)

Human Rights Commission: [albertahumanrights.ab.ca](http://albertahumanrights.ab.ca)

Occupational Health and Safety: [work.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety.html](http://work.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety.html)

## **Saskatchewan**

Employment Standard: [saskatchewan.ca/work/employment-standards](http://saskatchewan.ca/work/employment-standards)

Human Rights Commission: [saskatchewanhumanrights.ca](http://saskatchewanhumanrights.ca)

Health and Safety: [saskatchewan.ca/work/safety-in-the-workplace](http://saskatchewan.ca/work/safety-in-the-workplace)

## **Manitoba**

Employment Standards: [gov.mb.ca/labour/standards](http://gov.mb.ca/labour/standards)

Human Rights Commission: [manitobahumanrights.ca](http://manitobahumanrights.ca)

Workplace Safety and Health: [gov.mb.ca/labour/safety](http://gov.mb.ca/labour/safety)

## **Ontario**

Employment Standards: [www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es)

Ontario Occupational Health and Safety: [www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs)

Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario: [hrto.ca/hrto/](http://hrto.ca/hrto/)

## **Quebec**

Labour Standards: [cnt.gouv.qc.ca/en](http://cnt.gouv.qc.ca/en)

Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse: [cdpdj.qc.ca/en/Pages/default.aspx](http://cdpdj.qc.ca/en/Pages/default.aspx)

CSST (health and safety): [csst.qc.ca](http://csst.qc.ca)





## **New Brunswick**

Employment Standards: [www2.gnb.ca](http://www2.gnb.ca)

Human Rights Commission: [gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/index-e.asp](http://gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/index-e.asp)

WorkSafe NB: [worksafenb.ca](http://worksafenb.ca)

## **Nova Scotia**

Employment Rights: [novascotia.ca/lae/employmentrights](http://novascotia.ca/lae/employmentrights)

Human Rights Commission: [humanrights.gov.ns.ca](http://humanrights.gov.ns.ca)

Health and Safety: [novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety](http://novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety)

## **PEI**

Employment Standards: [gov.pe.ca/labour](http://gov.pe.ca/labour)

Human Rights Commission: [gov.pe.ca/humanrights](http://gov.pe.ca/humanrights)

Occupational Health and Safety: [wcb.pe.ca/](http://wcb.pe.ca/)

Workplace/OHSActAndRegulations

## **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Employment Standards: [gov.nl.ca/lra](http://gov.nl.ca/lra)

Human Rights Commission: [www.justice.gov.nl.ca/hrc](http://www.justice.gov.nl.ca/hrc)

Occupational Health and Safety: [www.serviceni.gov.nl.ca/ohs](http://www.serviceni.gov.nl.ca/ohs)

## **Northwest Territories**

Employment Standards: [www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/employment-standards](http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/employment-standards)

Human Rights Commission: [nwthumanrights.ca/](http://nwthumanrights.ca/)

Occupational Health and Safety: [wscc.nt.ca/ohs-regs](http://wscc.nt.ca/ohs-regs)

## **Nunavut**

Labour Standards: [nu-lsco.ca](http://nu-lsco.ca)

Human Rights Commission: [nhrt.ca](http://nhrt.ca)

Occupational Health and Safety: [wscc.nt.ca/ohs-regs](http://wscc.nt.ca/ohs-regs)

# Contact Us!

We hope this booklet is a helpful resource during your internship. If you have any questions about your internship or your rights in the workplace, please don't hesitate to get in touch!

National office contact for interns and for more information about CWA Canada's associate memberships:

**Kayla Perry**  
**CWA Canada**  
**311 Adelaide Street E, Suite 101**  
**Toronto, ON**  
**M5A 1N2**

For questions and concerns about your current internship, please contact:

Local union contact (to be completed by local):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

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