



**COUNCIL OF NEW YORK
COOPERATIVES & CONDOMINIUMS**
INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

IN THE EVENT OF A STRIKE...

**Guidelines to help cooperatives and condominiums
prepare for a possible strike by
building service employees**

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FOREWORD

Most residential buildings in the city of New York are serviced by superintendents, handy persons, porters, elevator operators and concierges who are members of Local 32BJ of the Building Service Employees International Union. The four year contract covering the Union members who work in residential buildings in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island terminates at midnight on Tuesday, April 20, 2022. Buildings in the Bronx with employees who are members of Local 32BJ have a different contract, which expires on March 14, 2023.

Historically, successor contracts are negotiated by this expiration date (though generally at the 11th hour!) and go into effect seamlessly as the old contract expires. Occasionally, however, negotiations have broken down and the Union has called its members out on strike.

The first edition of this booklet was prepared by the Council of New York Cooperatives in 1982 to help its members plan for the possibility of a strike. The present edition contains modifications based on past experience.

The Realty Advisory Board on Labor Relations, Inc. (The RAB) is the bargaining representative for most of the residential buildings in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and beyond. The RAB negotiates with the union on behalf of its members, protected by a 'most favored nation' clause which guarantees to RAB members the most advantageous contract terms that are negotiated.

Since 1979 the **Council of New York Cooperatives & Condominiums** has represented the point of view of cooperative and condominium home owners on the negotiating team of the RAB. As always, it is hoped that a new contract, satisfactory both to the employees and to building owners, will be agreed upon without incident. However, it is important to be prepared for every eventuality. This booklet is designed to help boards anticipate problems and avoid them. It suggests ways to prepare the residents of your cooperative or condominium to cope with issues that could arise in the event that the union does resort to a strike, offering the board practical ways to organize to provide necessary services and to insure tight security throughout a strike.

The Bronx Realty Advisory Board (The BRAB) will similarly negotiate the Bronx contract in 2023. The Association of Riverdale Cooperatives (ARC) is represented on the negotiating team.



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INTRODUCTION

The contract between the owners of residential apartment buildings in New York city and Local 32B-32J of the Building Service Employees International Union will expire at midnight on Tuesday, April 20, 2022. History has shown that an employee strike could take place at that time or shortly thereafter

It is the responsibility of the Board of any cooperative housing corporation or condominium association serviced by employees who are union members to make every effort to guarantee the security of the building and the safety and comfort of residents in the event of a strike. This will require the Board to make certain decisions well in advance of the time of the contract expiration and to provide building residents with the information that they will need to help them plan for a possible strike.

This booklet suggests procedures to help protect the security and well-being of all residents. It provides information that will help insure that the building will function as smoothly as possible in the absence of employees.

The sample documents that follow are intended to serve as a guide. You will want to make appropriate modifications in these samples to meet the particular needs of your cooperative or condominium.



YOUR SUPERINTENDENT WILL BE ON THE JOB

If the superintendent lives in your building and is your only employee, it is reasonable to expect that he or she will continue to perform all basic duties.

In many larger buildings, the Superintendent is not subject to the same contract as the other building employees but has instead a contract that expires in June. Therefore, the Super will be on the job during an April strike. You cannot expect your Superintendent to do the jobs of the striking employees, but he or she should operate the heating plant, make emergency repairs and keep the building functioning.

Please remember that the Superintendent does belong to the same union as the other building personnel. Understand that he or she may choose to keep a low profile during a strike.

YOUR STRIKING EMPLOYEES

If a strike occurs, your employees will be walking the picket line because their union will have persuaded them that this is the only way to put sufficient pressure on building owners to obtain satisfaction of their demands. Striking workers receive no pay. The union only provides them with a small daily stipend. It would be unfair to feel animosity toward an otherwise loyal employee for taking part in a strike. Once the strike is settled, the employees will return to work in your building.

UPDATES FROM CNYC AND FROM THE RAB

If a strike should take place, a strong communications network will be important. CNYC and the RAB will keep members updated on all developments. You will be able to obtain information by calling the RAB at 212 889-4100 or the CNYC office at 212 496-7400 or by checking their websites at www.CNYC.coop and www.rabolr.com. If you also wish to have notices e-mailed or faxed to you, please contact CNYC and/or the RAB prior to April 16th and provide an e-mail address or fax number inside your building where messages and notices can be received.

ADVANCE PREPARATIONS

COMPREHENSIVE CHECK OF BUILDING SYSTEMS

Because repair workers may be reluctant to cross a picket line, your manager or superintendent should conduct a thorough check of building systems several weeks before the contract expiration date. Necessary repairs to the elevators, the boiler, the water tank, etc. should be completed well in advance of April 20th. Be certain that all locks are in working order, particularly the lock on the front door.

TEST SECURITY SYSTEMS

Security is the most important responsibility of the Board during a strike. All alarm systems and other security devices in your building should be tested to make sure that they are operational. Needed repairs should not be delayed.

REVIEW INSURANCE COVERAGE

Check your insurance policies to learn precisely what coverage you would have during a strike. You may want to increase liability coverage to protect your building against vandalism and malicious mischief or obtain special coverage if residents are to operate building machinery.

KEEP FUEL IN GOOD SUPPLY

Arrange for a fuel delivery just prior to April 20th. If no strike occurs at that time but no agreement is reached, be prepared to reorder fuel as soon as the tank is 3/4 full. In the event of a strike, fuel deliveries may be stopped by the picket line.



HIRE SECURITY GUARDS

Arrangements should be made in advance with a reliable security firm to guarantee that you will have as many security guards as needed if a strike occurs.

Some buildings hire 24-hour guards, locking all doors and allowing free access only to residents with keys or proper passes. If a resident expects a guest or a delivery, arrangements must be made with the guard. Other buildings ask residents to volunteer to staff the door during the day and use guards only from midnight to 8 AM. Others employ guards as security, but ask residents to volunteer to screen people seeking access.

The earlier you reserve the services of the security personnel that you will need, the fewer problems you will have if a strike occurs. You will want assurance that the guard will come on the first day of the strike even if there is very short notice. The price of a firm reservation is generally a guarantee of one day's pay.

UPDATE LIST OF RESIDENTS

A complete list of everyone authorized to enter the building will be invaluable to the security guard or the resident volunteers who will be at the door during a strike.

It is practical to sort these names into two lists. One list will contain all names in alphabetical order with apartments numbers in the right column to make it easy to find a name without knowing the apartment. The second list will go by apartment, listing the names of all the residents and any sitters, housekeepers, relatives, etc., who are authorized to enter that apartment when the family is not at home. This will help guards quickly verify identification.

PURCHASE GARBAGE BAGS IN QUANTITY

To facilitate the tasks of managing garbage and recycling, cooperatives and condominiums are advised to buy garbage bags in quantity and make them available to residents. See pages 13 and 14 for suggestions about garbage removal and recycling.

KEYS OR IDENTIFICATION FOR ALL RESIDENTS

Your earliest notice to residents should point out that there will be times when all entrances will be locked or security guards will be on duty, and that anyone entering the building will need either to carry their own key or to show the pass or other identifier that the building will provide.

The identifier can take the form of a printed card, a button, or a plastic card, which must be ordered in advance. No indication of the name or address of the building should be included, but a recognizable logo or code should enable a security guard to identify the bearer. If the passes are to be personalized, the committee should collect the name of every resident (including authorized housekeepers, etc.) early in April and then use a uniform system to inscribe these names on each pass. Distribute the passes just before the contract expiration date.

If keys are used, copies should be made available in a systematic way during the days preceding the contract expiration date.

COMMITTEES

A well planned system of committees to deal with the various arrangements is advised. A Committee for Building Operations, a Committee to help the Frail, a Communications Committee and a Captain to coordinate volunteers are suggested in this booklet. Additional committees will be dictated by the particular needs of your building. The Notice to Residents should include the names, e-mail contacts and phone numbers of each committee head, so that they can easily be reached for questions or by residents ready to offer help.

PROVIDE FOR ELDERLY AND FRAIL RESIDENTS

Some building residents will be unable to participate in these arrangements because of advanced age or disability. A strike could cause them great hardship. A Committee should be organized to insure that frail and elderly residents will have all the help that they will need with garbage, deliveries, etc., if a strike should occur.



MAIL DISTRIBUTION

If mail is usually distributed by your building service employees, a small committee should be designated to perform this task in the event of a strike. The post office requires that one individual register in advance to receive the mail. This person is likely to need daily help with sorting and distribution.

NOTICE TO BUILDING RESIDENTS

By late March or early April, the Board should have made all of its plans and should be ready to advise residents of them. A carefully worded notice should explain that a strike may take place if a new contract is not negotiated by midnight on Tuesday, April 20, 2022, when the present agreement expires.

This notice should be succinct and yet cover all the questions that may arise. Outline all procedures that will be followed in the building in the event of a strike and ask for volunteers to take on various responsibilities. A suggested text for this notice is found on pages 10 through 16 of this booklet.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS AT THE DOOR

Most volunteer tasks will be easily understood by the residents without instructions. However, those who monitor entry at the front door have a vital security function. To insure a uniform security policy, it is wise to write out detailed instructions, including use of the intercom; when to call residents; exactly WHO can be admitted to the building, etc. The door monitors should work in teams of two for safety. They must do their jobs courteously and conscientiously; they cannot allow themselves to be intimidated, nor can they make this a social hour and ignore the seriousness of their task.

Updated lists of the names of all residents of the building, listed by apartment and cross-referenced in alphabetical order will be very useful to these volunteer security officers.

A CHART FOR VOLUNTEERS

A large chart posted prominently will encourage volunteers to register for the various tasks that will be necessary in the event of a strike. A suggested basic form for such a chart appears on the pages that follow. Have Board members sign up for several tasks before the chart is posted. Their example should encourage others to volunteer. Do not become discouraged if the chart remains largely blank for several days. In the last few days before the contract expires, residents will begin to sign up.

The 'Chart Captain' should remind volunteers that they will be expected to perform the tasks that they registered for during each week of a strike. If the strike begins Tuesday at midnight, anyone who signed up to work on Sunday or Monday should be aware that their responsibilities carry over.

If the strike is of long duration, a second chart may become necessary where volunteers can enroll to fill vacancies that arise. Try to make it clear that a resident who has volunteered for a certain task should find a replacement if he or she is unable to serve. This will not always be effective, but it will somewhat alleviate the burdens of the 'Chart Captain'.

There may be some tasks that children or very young adults will be able to perform in your building. Others, such as the security positions at the front door, will require a team of adults. Be sure to make clear what jobs are available to youngsters who want to help.

RESTRICTIONS

Your cooperative or condominium will probably not allow any move-ins or move-outs, deliveries of large objects, or any apartment renovations during a strike. Advise your shareholders or unit owners of this policy in advance.



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STRIKE ASSIGNMENTS FOR RESIDENTS

Please volunteer for these tasks which are essential for keeping our building safe, clean and comfortable in the event of a strike by building service employees. Print your name and apartment number in the space provided, along with your daytime phone number and email address. The chart is organized to prepare for a strike that would begin at midnight on Tuesday, April 20, 2022. If the parties "stop the clock" and continue to negotiate, but no resolution is reached and a strike is called at a later time, volunteers will be expected to serve on the days and at the times that they have chosen.

If the strike lasts for more than a week, you are expected to perform your task for each week or find a replacement.

TASK & TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Front Door Security 2 people per shift 8 AM to 10 AM							
10 AM to NOON							
NOON to 2 PM							
2 PM to 4 PM							
4 PM to 6 PM							
6 PM to 8 PM							
8 PM to 10 PM							
10 PM to MIDNIGHT							
Sweep, Mop, Vacuum							
Sort Mail							
Collect Garbage							
Run Manual Elevators (indicate hours as above)							

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SAMPLE NOTICE

TO ALL RESIDENTS OF YOUR
COOPERATIVE OR CONDOMINIUM

Here is a suggested notice for your Board to send to all building residents to prepare them for a possible strike. Modifications are necessary to adapt the suggested text to the specific needs of your cooperative or condominium. Bracketed items indicate choices for you to make.

* * * *

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES IN CASE OF A STRIKE
BY BUILDING SERVICE EMPLOYEES

The contract with Local 32B-32J of the Building Service Employees Union expires at midnight on Tuesday, April 20, 2022. If a new contract agreement is not concluded prior to that time, the union may call its members out on strike on that date or shortly thereafter.

In the event of a strike, the Board of this building is prepared to take certain emergency measures to insure the safety, health and welfare of all residents. The success of these measures will depend upon your full cooperation.

PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY AND, IN THE EVENT OF A STRIKE, PLEASE FOLLOW THESE RULES AND PROCEDURES:

1. Security

If a strike occurs, the only access to the building will be through the front door. The side doors and the basement entrance will be locked and secured; no entry will be permitted. [The laundry room will be closed.] [News-papers and other deliveries will be accepted at the front door only and residents will be asked to come down to receive them.]

First priority will be to provide proper monitoring of the front door. A security guard will be on duty [at all times] [from midnight until 8 AM] [from 4 PM to 8AM] [any set of alternate hours appropriate to your building].

The front door will be locked [at all times] [at midnight] [etc.] and the guard will be instructed to admit only those individuals who have [a pass] [a key to the front door] [a building identity card/button]. If you need a [pass][key] [identity card/button], you may [obtain][sign up for] one from [the building Superintendent] [appropriate Board member] by _____ (give instructions here).

PLEASE REMEMBER TO CARRY YOUR [PASS][KEY] [IDENTITY CARD/BUTTON] AT ALL TIMES. THE SECURITY GUARD WILL NOT RECOGNIZE BUILDING RESIDENTS AND WILL STOP ANYONE WHO DOES NOT HAVE A [KEY] [BUTTON] [PASS].

THIS IS FOR EVERYONE'S PROTECTION!

[During the day, from [give hours], residents will be expected to monitor the door in two hour shifts. This responsibility is given to building residents, since security guards, who are strangers to the building and do not know the residents, would have difficulty performing these tasks effectively.]

[A sign-up chart is posted [give location] to allow each resident to choose the tasks and the times that best fit his or her schedule. We urge each of you to sign this chart as soon as possible for as many hours as you can give.]



Residents are urged to take extra security precautions in their own apartments. Be sure to keep doors locked at all times and to open them only for people whom you know.

The [residents responsible for security at the front door and the] security guards will be instructed not to allow any non-resident to enter the building without specific written permission from the resident whom they will visit or unless that resident is at home to receive them. If you wish to authorize [your housekeeper][or][any visitors] to come to your apartment in your absence, please [send detailed e-mail instructions to _____ or] leave a legible note to this effect at the front door on the day that they are expected with all names printed clearly.

In authorizing admission, you are also vouching for the conduct of your visitors.

2. Deliveries and Elevator Service

[Since all traffic into the building will have to pass through the front door and the main lobby,] residents are requested to keep deliveries, shopping trips and other use of the entrance to a minimum during a strike. No move-ins, move-outs or renovations will be allowed during a strike.

[No repair personnel, contractors, [or visitors] will be admitted to the building unless you are at home to authorize their entry. Deliveries and groceries will be accepted at the door; you will be called down to claim them. If you expect a visitor, be sure to make appropriate arrangements.]

[The service elevator will not be operative during the period of a strike. This means that all services, deliveries and garbage removal will have to be done through the front elevator(s).]

[The manually operated passenger elevators will be operated by residents. Our insurance company informs us that we cannot allow children under the age of [16] to operate the elevators.

Everyone who will operate the elevators must first take a 15-minute training program from [the Superintendent] [the Chair of the Building Operations Committee]. During the second week of April, hours will be posted for these “hands-on” training sessions. Please arrange to attend one if you plan to help by operating a manual elevator. Please sign up on the chart [in the lobby] to operate an elevator.

**PLEASE KEEP ELEVATORS TIDY AND
HOLD THEIR USE TO A MINIMUM!**

3. Emergency Repairs

The Superintendent will be on hand to remedy emergency situations as they arise. Please be aware that outside contractors and repair personnel may not wish to cross a picket line to provide services in the building.

4. Garbage Removal

Please plan spring cleaning early this year or else defer it and any other garbage-generating activities until after the contract is settled.

Sanitation workers may refuse to cross a picket line to collect garbage until ordered to do so by a health inspector. This means that garbage may sit outside the building for several days.



Please wrap all garbage in plastic bags and place it [outside your [rear][front] door][inside the compactor room.] Each evening volunteers will collect the garbage, and, on appropriate days, will set it out at the curb for collection. Please sign the chart in the lobby to help with garbage collection.

OR

[As the strike deadline approaches, we will supply plastic bags for your garbage.] Each resident will be responsible for taking his or her garbage down to the curb and stacking it neatly [give appropriate additional instructions here].

Garbage is collected from our building on [give scheduled days] in the [morning][afternoon]. Please bring your garbage to the curb no sooner than the previous evening.

If a frail or elderly person lives near you who might have difficulty with garbage removal, please offer to help.

OR

During a strike, the compactor will continue to operate.

5. Recycling

Please store recyclable items inside your apartment until the building staff returns to their duties.

OR

Recycling is collected on [give specifics for your building]. Please store recyclable items in your apartment until that day. Tie newspapers, magazines and corrugated cardboard in piles that do not exceed 18". Put 'junk mail', cereal boxes and other clean cardboard in clear plastic bags. Place cleaned glass, bottles, rigid plastic, juice and milk cartons, cans, metal hangers and aluminum foil in clear plastic bags or in the blue recycling container at curbside on the [evening before][morning] they will be collected.

6. Composting

Composting is collected on [give specifics for your building]. Please store compost in your apartment until the day of collection. Place compost in biodegradable plastic bags in the brown collection containers at curbside on the [evening before][morning] it will be collected.

7. Cleaning of Halls and Public Areas

During a strike, residents will be asked to keep the hallways on their floors in good order.

[There is a space on the chart in the lobby for residents to volunteer to [sweep][mop][vacuum] the lobby and the elevators each day. Please sign up for these tasks.]

8. Laundry Room(s)

For security reasons the laundry room will be closed for the duration of any employee strike.

OR

Kindly keep your use of the laundry facilities to a minimum during a possible strike. Please be aware of the importance of proper use of the machines and of cleaning them after each use. It may be difficult to get service if breakdowns occur during a strike.

9. Basement Storage Areas

[In the interest of security, all storage areas will be locked during a strike. We must ask that residents refrain from visiting the bicycle room and the storage room in the basement during a strike.

If there is an item stored there that you may need during the expected time of a possible strike, please bring it to your apartment prior to April 20th.]



10. **Garage**

If a strike of building service employees occurs, the garage in our building will continue to function as it presently does.

OR

[Since the employees of the garage in our building are members of Local 32B-32J][Although the workers in our garage are not members of the same union as the building service employees,]it is likely that they will honor a picket line. Therefore,] the garage will be locked if a strike occurs. Please arrange to remove your vehicle from the garage prior to April 20 if you will need it during the expected time of a strike.

OR

For security reasons, there will be no access to the garage through the basement of the building during a strike. Please use the garage entrance on the street.

11. **Developments**

The Board will keep you informed of developments by posting notices [on the building website] [on the bulletin board] [via e-mail updates] [etc.] Please keep this memo handy and refer to it for information.

If we all cooperate and follow the procedures outlined above, we should be able to weather an eventual strike with a minimum of difficulty and discomfort.

For further information, contact [give names of Board members and committee heads and their day and evening phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
THE BOARD OF MANAGERS**

USEFUL CONTACTS

BOARD MEMBERS

Phone

E-Mail

Chart Captain

**Committee for
Building Operations**

**Communications
Committee**

Garbage Collection Team

**Committee to
Help Neighbors in Need**

Managing Agent

Security Guard Company

NYC Department of Sanitation
Request an inspector if garbage
becomes a health hazard.

311

NYC Department of Health

311

Police Anti-Terrorist Unit
Report suspicious situations

1-888-NYC SAFE

Local Police Precinct

Local Fire House

Nearest Hospital



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