

Nobody's Perfect – 20 Common Union Steward Mistakes

We all make mistakes. We're human. Shop stewards even make mistakes. Some of these mistakes are particularly serious. Here is my list of 20 mistakes that shop stewards make. Read them over. Nod your heads. But don't make them again.

- 1.** Always wait until a worker comes to you with a grievance.
- 2.** Walk around the worksite with a chip on your shoulder.
- 3.** Pretend to know all the answers to all problems.
- 4.** Give out false information or spread rumors.
- 5.** Fail to keep members posted on disposition of grievances.
- 6.** Violate company rules.
- 7.** Violate the contract.
- 8.** Always try to talk members out of filing grievances.
- 9.** Present a grievance that isn't one.
- 10.** Forget to investigate a grievance thoroughly before handling.
- 11.** Blow up when dealing with the supervisor or workers.
- 12.** Use profane language to intimidate the boss.
- 13.** Argue a grievance by taking personal issue with the supervisor and directing personal remarks.
- 14.** Miss membership meetings.
- 15.** Bawl out a member in front of co-workers or in front of a supervisor.
- 16.** Stall when workers call you.
- 17.** Keep all the information to yourself.
- 18.** Permit workers to push you around.
- 19.** Enhance the supervisor's prestige by permitting the supervisor to use you as means of doing his/her dirty work, such as enforcing company rules or calling the workers down for minor abuse of certain privileges negotiated by the union.
- 20.** Manage the workers.