Dear Colleague,

This letter seeks to remind you, as a locally employed colleague, and your chain of command, of responsibilities and behaviours during periods of strike action. Specific details are available in the Cyprus Instruction & Notice CIN 01 005 located on the BFC website.

You may be aware that Trade Unions (TU) / Staff Associations (SA) are required to give at least 10 working days written notice of a strike, and to inform SBAA/BFC of:

- the start date of the proposed industrial action
- a description of the employees whom they intend involving in strike action so that they can be readily ascertained
- whether the action is to be continuous or discontinuous, and where discontinuous, the intended dates.

As you are probably aware Trade Union Coordinating Committee (TUCC) (PEO, SEK, TURKSEN) ENYBA and PASYDY union groups have confirmed their intention to take strike action for one or more days during the week 7th to 11th September 2015. I understand strike action may last throughout each day and your place of work could be affected.

A TU or SA is required to agree that they will not take any industrial action before both sides have taken full use of the mediation service of the SBAA. This has not happened as yet but we remain available for the TUCC (PEO, SEK, TURKSEN), ENYBA and PASYDY to enter into negotiations either before or during strike action. Until then we will be continuing with the pay reduction measure implemented from 1st September 2015.

There is also speculation about a possible delay to the implementation of the Pay Reductions Ordinance. However, as it stands, pay reductions, as effected by the Ordinance has taken place as planned from the 1st September 2015. The Administration has stated clearly in all of its correspondence to TUs and SAs that implementation will go ahead unless considerable progress is made toward a collective agreement (encompassing all TUs and SAs) by 10 September. TUs and SAs have been invited to attend meetings with me this week, but unfortunately most have declined to engage. The SBAA/BFC remains open to the agreement of an alternative proposal prior to the pay run in mid-September and the TUs have been asked to delay strike action and enter into serious negotiations.

As a result of the above, it falls within my area of responsibility to notify you of important information as follows:

If you are intending to strike i.e. are members of PEO, SEK, TURKSEN, ENYBA or PASYDY then please make note of the following:
i. If you are a member of the above unions and intend to take strike action any time during the 7th to 11th September then please inform your line manager. By all means inform then by email, in person or in writing, otherwise it will be assumed that you will be working normally. Your line manager has also been asked to establish if you are on strike so that contingency plans can be made to cover work and make them aware of your whereabouts. This is normal line manager / employee engagement. If your line manager is also on strike then please inform their line manager.

ii. If you are a member of PEO, SEK, TURKSEN, ENYBA or PASYDY and you participate in the strike action then you must confirm this to your line manager each and every morning. Again, if your line manager is not at work then please report to their line manager.

iii. Pay will be deducted if you go on strike or on unauthorised absence on the day of the strike activity.

iv. You are only permitted to picket or protest peacefully where you work i.e. outside the wire but not outside another workplace. i.e. if you work in Episkopi then you cannot picket or protest Akrotiri. Akrotiri would not be deemed your place of work.

So what behaviour is expected of you and your colleagues who are on strike?

i. You and your striking colleagues may stand outside the wire – where you work, to explain why you are striking and try to persuade others to join the strike. This is called picketing.

ii. The key word is "peaceful". You and your striking colleagues are required to protest/picket peacefully.

iii. It is acceptable for you to try and convince colleagues not to cross the picket line and non-striking colleagues may or may not decide to stop and listen to your views.

iv. However you or your striking colleagues are not entitled to obstruct another person’s entry to their place of work. This includes school children and teachers as well as police, ambulance and firefighters.

v. In essence, protesting or picketing must not involve any breach of law (including being near anyone who does): Some examples of behaviour which are not acceptable include:
   - blocking of people or vehicles trying to get into the workplace
   - trying to block roads near or related to protesting or picket lines
   - sitting down on the road to block anyone from passing through
   - intimidating others
   - using threatening or abusive behaviour to people walking past or crossing the picket line.
     Including approaching individuals in a threatening way and following them as they go to work
   - carrying weapons
   - damaging property
   - to cause or threaten to cause a ‘breach of the peace’
   - trying to stop the police who are outside the workplace from doing their job
   - trespassing (trying to enter premises or land without permission)
   - using threatening language or offensive material, libel or slander in person, leaflets, banners, placards, chants or speeches
   - seeking to intimidate staff by posting online images of non-striking staff.

vi. You may have legal action taken against you if you break the law or encourage others to do so when you are protesting or picketing. You may also have legal action taken against you if you are associated with a group which breaks the law or encourages others to do so.

vii. Breaching the law and/or unacceptable behavior may result in disciplinary proceedings and the removal of your security pass. The removal of your security pass may lead to your dismissal.
viii. You are expected to demonstrate standards of respectful behaviour in keeping with those expected with you whilst you are at work.

Please note, any protest or picket may not obstruct the road or prevent emergency services, school buses, teachers and school children from entering or exiting any locality. Additionally you may not bully, intimidate or demonstrate aggressive behaviours or language towards these people. SBAA / BFC will not tolerate any such behaviour and if it occurs it is likely to lead to legal or disciplinary action and as a result could lead to your dismissal.

If you are not part of the strike action then please note the following:

i. The existence of protests will not be accepted as a legitimate excuse for non-attendance at work of non-striking colleagues and such non-attendance may result in an individual being subject to disciplinary proceedings. This means, either you are on strike or you are at work.

ii. If you willingly refuse to cross a picket/protest line then you will be treated as participating in the strike. If alternative working arrangements are not approved in advance then this will be deemed unauthorised absence.

iii. Annual leave or taking a day off sick s not legitimate reasons for non-attendance unless your leave was approved prior to the 4th August 2015. Or your sick absence is supported by a doctors note. Any requests for leave after this date needs my approval, and should be submitted to me through the chain of command for consideration of compliance with the rules and fairness.

iv. You need to make a determined attempt to get to work and walk past any lawful picket line. This may mean coming in to work with other colleagues or asking someone to assist you.

v. You have an individual responsibility to make a concerted effort to get into work. Please be assured that SBAA/BFC will endeavour to support you wherever possible.

vi. On walking or driving past or through a picket line it is better not to engage in any discussion or argument at this point. There will be better opportunities for discussion if you want them. In the unlikely event of an intimidating picket, that may be unlawful, you are asked to telephone your line manager for instructions. Your line manager should assist you and will give further help and advice on request. Line managers are expected to coordinate with the SBA Police on how to assist colleagues to get into work. Line Managers cannot excuse staff from coming to work. Contact details for the police are WSBA 2596 7227 / ESBA 2474 7900

vii. Aggressive use of language, intimidating or defamatory manner directed at individuals on a picket line or involved in a protest is not acceptable behaviour either. No matter how frustrated you are with them please do not engage using inappropriate behaviour.

viii. More importantly, your security pass will be removed if there is any evidence of bullying, intimidating or aggressive behaviours or language involved. SBAA / BFC will not tolerate any such behaviour whether on strike or not and as a result could lead to your dismissal.

In general:

i. SBAA/BFC respects the right of TU / SA members to take industrial action including strike, but hopes that support for what we do in Cyprus will be a major consideration when deciding whether or not to participate. I again urge all TU/SAs to re-engage in discussions. Unfortunately until now some TU/SA refused to discuss these pay saving measures or alternatives to achieve the required savings.

ii. Copies of all letters from the administration to Unions and Staff Associations can be read at http://www.sbaadministration.org/index.php/tu-letters. There is still time to find a solution and I urge you to ask your TU/SA representatives to engage with us on your behalf.
iii. SBAA/BFC will make every effort to ensure that staff and families are not adversely affected by strike action or any behaviour related to the situation. Additionally we have asked families to respect those on strike too.

To non-striking colleagues – respect those who strike and do not seek to antagonise the situation by challenging their beliefs and/or actions. If everyone behaves in a respectful and peaceful way then we will not have any difficulties later on.

I realise that many of you will not wish to participate in strike action and I regret having to write to you however, I thought it important to let everyone know of the behaviour and expectations required during this difficult period.

If you have any questions about this letter please speak to your line manager in the first instance. Additionally, I encourage you to refer to the SBA website below for details on all correspondence and discussions. http://www.sbaadministration.org/index.php/tu-letters

Kind regards

Lee Gibson-Nicholls

Lee Gibson-Nicholls
Head of HR for locally employed staff.

Note: For information or reporting purposes relating to industrial action / strike please contact:

Human Resources for locally employed staff
Email - BFC-HQ-CmdSec-LEHR GpMailbox
Telephone - 00357 2596 3842