

# Status Quo

## Understanding Status Quo



After a successful union election, the law requires the employer to maintain the “status quo” — the existing terms and conditions of employment — while a first contract is being negotiated. This rule protects stability in the workplace and ensures that no changes can be made unilaterally by the employer.

### What Status Quo Is

A legal requirement under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

A freeze on wages, benefits, schedules, and working conditions as they existed at the time of the election.

A safeguard that ensures changes must be negotiated, not imposed.

### What Status Quo Is NOT

It does not mean that nothing can ever change.

It does not prevent improvements from being implemented if both the union and management agree.

It does not stop routine or previously established operations from continuing.

### What Cannot Be Changed Without Bargaining

Reducing or increasing pay  
Altering the schedule or hours  
Changing pay policies  
Modifying healthcare or retirement benefits

*These actions would require negotiation and union agreement before they can be implemented.*

### What May Continue Under Status Quo

Applying existing accrual systems  
Continuing staffing levels as already budgeted  
Maintaining protocols that were in effect before the election  
Routine management communication and operations

### How Changes Can Still Happen

If a change is desired by either the union or the employer before a full contract is in place, the parties can negotiate and agree to implement that specific change through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). An MOU is a written agreement that becomes binding and enforceable, allowing for flexibility where needed.

### Examples of changes that could be made via MOU:

A temporary incentive or bonus structure  
New protocols or documentation systems  
Expedited fixes to policies while a full contract is being developed

For questions or more information: Contact Roxanna McCloud-Lewis  
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### If Status Quo has been violated

If you believe the status quo has been violated, contact us right away so we can work with you to determine the appropriate next steps.