



TEAMSTERS LOCAL 399 FAQ:

WHAT IS THE REASON THE WRITERS MIGHT STRIKE THE AMPTP?

Should the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (the AMPTP) be unable to address the real and reasonable issues the writers have brought to the table in bargaining, the WGA will be left with no other choice than to strike.

We know it all too well - the workers that bring productions to life must constantly fight for their fair share.

The AMPTP is a multi-employer bargaining entity made of big tech companies, like Apple and Amazon, and colossal corporations like Disney and Netflix. These companies, and many others that make up the AMPTP, can afford to address the writers, and all Industry workers', concerns.

The fight of all workers against these employers is one in the same; we are constantly having to articulate our members' worth, all the while the employers are cashing in on our hard work. The nature of the industry is changing. The WGA is seeking to address economic equity, make improvements to working conditions and protect their work.

IF A WGA STRIKE WAS TO HAPPEN, WHEN WOULD IT START?

A strike could start as early as 12:01AM(pst) on Tuesday, May 2nd when the WGA contract expires. We must wait and see if/when the WGA calls its strike.

SHOULD THE WGA GO ON STRIKE, DOES THAT MEAN TEAMSTERS ARE ON STRIKE?

No. If the WGA goes on strike, that does NOT put our members on strike. We are NOT on strike. Our collective bargaining agreements are still in place, and Local 399 has no active labor disputes with the employers.

SO, IF THE WGA GOES ON STRIKE CAN I JOIN THEM ON THE PICKET LINE TO SUPPORT?

No. Whether you are working or not, our members cannot join the picket line, carry a picket sign or banner, distribute literature for WGA at the picket line, or walk near any picket line.

Local 399 members cannot strike or picket any of the companies in the AMPTP while our agreements with the AMPTP are in place.

Included in all our #399 contracts with the AMPTP (Black Book, Location Manager, Casting, Chef Assistants), is the **'No Strike - No Lockout Provision'** which states:

"The Union agrees during the existence of this Agreement, unless the Producer fails to comply with an arbitration award, not to strike against, picket or boycott the Producer for any reason whatsoever, and to order its members to perform their obligations to the Producer hereunder and to use its best efforts to get the employees to perform such obligations.

So again, in the instance of a WGA strike, **Teamsters are not on strike and cannot picket.**

IF I HAVE WORK SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY MORNING, AND THE WGA CALLS A STRIKE, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Should a strike get called early Tuesday morning, and you are scheduled to work on Tuesday, you should report to work as normal.

SHOULD THE WGA GO ON STRIKE, WHAT DO I DO IF I ENCOUNTER A PICKET LINE ON MY WAY INTO WORK?

Though our contract language does not allow us to call a strike or to picket alongside the WGA, you have certain individual rights that are protected in that same 'No Strike, No Lockout' Provision in many of our contracts with the AMPTP.

You are protected if you choose NOT to cross any active picket line of the WGA.

'No Strike - No LockOut' Continued:

"The Producer will not discipline any employee covered by this Agreement because of his refusal as an individual to cross a picket line, providing that such picket line has been sanctioned by the Joint Council of Teamsters, No. 42 (or the other International Unions). No employee covered by this Agreement shall be required by the Producer to go through any picket line when there is actual and imminent danger of bodily harm to the employee."

For confirmation, the WGA's picketing has been sanctioned by Joint Council of Teamsters, No. 42.

Simply put, Teamsters do not cross picket lines; however, ultimately that decision is up to you as an individual. The Teamsters are not calling for a strike.

If you are headed to work and you DO NOT see an actual physical picket line, you are expected to report to work.

If you DO encounter a picket line, please make your first call to your department head to ask them **'WHAT SHOULD I DO?'** if you are choosing not to cross.

If you have any questions, please contact your Business Agent immediately for assistance. If you do not know your Business Agent, please contact the Union Hall and someone can assist you.

If the WGA calls a strike early Tuesday morning, we understand there will be a lot of confusion at the onset so please utilize the support of our Business Agents to make sure you are aware of your rights, work obligations, and the “do’s and don’ts” of how Teamsters can support Writers.

WHEN WE SAY ‘TEAMSTERS DON’T CROSS PICKET LINES’, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Teamsters Don’t Cross Picket Lines - It’s not in our DNA and it’s a protected right in most of our contracts.

Most Teamster contracts across all Industries include some version of the above language that protects members' individual right to NOT cross a picket line.

This provision makes Teamsters one of the strongest labor unions in the world. Teamsters don’t just talk about solidarity, we are contractually protected to walk the walk; we make it a point to protect our members’ individual rights not to cross sanctioned picket lines so that they are free to honor the fight of working people on strike.

Ultimately, the decision to cross a picket line falls on the individual.

However, history has shown in strike after strike, across the country, and in all kinds of industries, that Teamsters don’t cross picket lines.

IF I ENCOUNTER A PICKET LINE AND DECIDE NOT TO CROSS, WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

If you DO encounter a picket line, please make your first call to your department head to ask them “**WHAT SHOULD I DO?**” if you are choosing not to cross.

If you have any questions, please contact your Business Agent immediately for assistance or the Union Hall Call Board: 818-985-7550.

IF I ENCOUNTER A PICKET LINE AND CHOOSE NOT TO CROSS, WILL I BE PUNISHED?

No. Again, our contract language states:

“The Producer will not discipline any employee covered by this Agreement because of his refusal as an individual to cross a picket line, providing that such picket line has been sanctioned by the Joint Council of Teamsters, No. 42 (or the other International Unions).”

Make your Business Agent your first call if you feel you are being subjected to punishment or being disciplined.

Please keep in mind that all provisions of our Collective Bargaining Agreement will still be in place SHOULD the WGA go on strike. That means you should still be aware of all violations of your agreement and make your business agent immediately aware. We must continue to protect our work even if the WGA is on Strike.

IF I GET TO WORK AND THERE IS NO PICKET LINE AT THE GATE, BUT IT FORMS AFTER I AM ALREADY AT WORK, WHAT DO I DO?

You should continue to work if you are already on the lot.

If you asked to EXIT the lot and cross a picket line in the service of the employer, your right to choose NOT to cross would STILL APPLY.

I HAVE HEARD ABOUT SOMETHING CALLED A 'RESERVED' OR 'NEUTRAL' GATE ON STUDIO LOTS. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

A reserved gate system is established when there are multiple employers at a common location and an employer expects union picketing to occur against one or more, but not all, of the employers on site.

In such an instance, an employer may create a separate entrance to the facility for the employees of a neutral, third-party employer against which the Writers have no active labor dispute.

A legally valid and enforceable reserved gate system ensures that picketing occurs only at a gate used by employees of the targeted employer and not at gates reserved for employees of neutral employers that are not involved in the labor dispute.

WHAT IF I AM INSTRUCTED TO GO THROUGH A RESERVED GATE?

If there is a picket line at the gate you have been asked to enter, you have the right not to cross that picket line. If there is no picket line at the gate you have been asked to enter, you should go to work.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE A PICKET LINE?

A picket line is a PHYSICAL line of workers in front of you picketing an employer. If there is not a PHYSICAL picket line in front of you, you should report to work.

A picket line can be set-up at a Studio Lot or on location of a production and your contractual rights remain the same.

Simply put, there must be a physical picket line in front of our members when and where they enter the employer's facility for them to be able to make the individual decision not to cross. If there is no picket line, you should go to work.

For our members that work from home, chances are you will NOT encounter a physical picket line so you should continue to work. We will roll out ways you can show solidarity digitally, however you should continue to work to avoid discipline.

SHOULD THE WGA GO ON STRIKE, HOW WILL THIS IMPACT THE INDUSTRY?

Whereas when the Teamsters go on strike, we rule the ground game and shut all operations down, the strategy and effectiveness for the writers in a strike looks very different.

Withholding their labor means putting down their pencils and refusing to generate any further content, scripts, edits, etc. Their withholding of labor in turn becomes more of a waiting game

for the employers to recognize and address their core needs so that they can get back to work to create any new or edit any existing material.

A Writer Strike might look different than a Teamster strike, but the goal remains the same, withholding labor until the employers will listen to and respect the issues of the workers.

SHOULD THE WGA GO ON STRIKE, HOW LONG WILL THIS LAST?

Honestly, we don't and can't know at this time. It will last as long as it takes for the employers to address the concerns and issues of the Writers. The 2007 strike lasted 100 days.

We stand in solidarity with the Writers, and hope the Employers will bring any strike to an end swiftly by addressing their core concerns.

IF THE WGA GOES OUT ON STRIKE AND MY PRODUCTION SHUTS DOWN, AM I ELIGIBLE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS?

Yes. For our members that are laid off because the WGA strike has shut down production, you are eligible to file for unemployment benefits from the State.

WHAT IF I HAVE BEEN RECENTLY OUT OF WORK, CAN I APPLY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT?

Yes. Teamsters Local 399 members can apply for unemployment from the state if you are out of work and seeking employment.

DO I NEED TO PAY MY UNION DUES IF I AM NOT WORKING?

Honorary withdrawal remains an option for members to take should you be unable to work in the industry. If you are seeking to collect unemployment however, you will need to make sure you are following the 'work search' requirements.

To remain on an AVAILABLE status with the Call Board, you will need to be in good standing with the Local Union.

WHY SHOULD I PAY MY DUES IF I AM NOT WORKING?

Union dues are the lifeblood of our organization. We all pay them. They are intended to sustain the operations of our Local Union. In our cyclical Industry, in times of heightened work and slow periods, the Local continues to operate to represent and serve the members.

Ultimately the decision to take a Withdrawal at any point in time falls on the individual.

HOW DO I TAKE A WITHDRAWAL?

You can complete a request to go on Withdrawal via our website. Please keep in mind, your account must be CURRENT and if you have worked (1) day in the month you will be expected to pay dues for that month.

You must come off a WITHDRAWAL status, prior to starting work.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Currently, we wait. We understand that many members are concerned for your livelihood and your family should the WGA go out on strike. We also know that many of our members are ready to stand in solidarity alongside the writers.

Ideally, we would see the two parties be able to find common ground on the core issues that the WGA is advocating for that protects, preserves, and improves the lives of writers in film & television.

The best immediate course of action is to make sure you are connected to ALL our channels of communication: emails, Local 399 App, official social media pages and text messages.

Obviously at this time we do not have all the answers for all the situations that could unfold.

You have our commitment however to keep the membership as engaged and informed as possible.

HOW DOES THE UNION PLAN TO SUPPORT TEAMSTERS DURING THIS TIME?

Our Local 399 Executive Board is looking into all options of financial support, employment opportunities and more to help our members out should the WGA go on strike. Again, please stay tuned to our channels of communications for ALL resources and information to be shared as it becomes available.

WHY ARE THE TEAMSTERS STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE WRITERS?

Solidarity forever is the only way workers win. We have a common enemy with the writers and that is the employers. To be successful in our fights ahead, we must stick together. United we bargain, divided we beg.

The industry is changing, and so must our commitment to true Union Solidarity in our Industry.

WILL THE WRITERS SUPPORT US IN OUR CONTRACT FIGHT?

We are building a united and strong network of Hollywood Union and Guilds for the support and benefit of our members. Solidarity must start somewhere. We stand with the WGA because we trust they too will stand with the Teamsters.

HOW CAN TEAMSTERS SUPPORT WGA IF THEY DO GO ON STRIKE?

Stay tuned. Should the WGA call a strike, we will share more ways our members can legally stand on the side of workers getting their fair share for a hard day's work.