

# ENFORCING THE CONTRACT

An important purpose of grievances is to **Enforce The Contract and other policies and rules**, because a contract or rule not honored by management is worthless. It makes no difference whether the violation is innocent or deliberate, whether it involves a member or non-member, or even whether the person concerned wants the Union to do anything about it or not. Any violation can be harmful and each one must be addressed if the meaning of our contract is to be preserved. Regular and systematic contract and rule enforcement is crucial to each of us and our Union. because:

1. It *guarantees* our members their "money's worth." It ensures that all the benefits and protections written into our contract and rules are extended to everyone covered by them.
2. It gives meaning to the contract. No matter how carefully it is written, no contract can anticipate every question that arises under it. Its application and enforcement in these unforeseen circumstances give added meaning to the contract.
3. It helps improve our contract. Enforcement reveals the contract's strengths and weaknesses. Even grievances we lose can point at the contract's weak

points, and become arguments for stronger, more precise language. If we publicize these areas, we can build membership support for contract changes in negotiations. These changes strengthen the contract and extend it to cover new areas.

4. It helps organize the Union. Workers will join our Union if they see the contract enforced.
5. It gains the respect of management-when they know we are determined to enforce the contract and rules, they will think twice before violating it.
6. It maintains the loyalty of our members. Even an excellent contract like ours is only a promise of things to come. If our Union is to win the support of members in other areas, we must make sure that promise is fulfilled.

Every violation that goes unchallenged is a threat to our contract. Our local can not sit back and wait for violations to be reported, they may not be reported at all. Instead we must take the initiative in enforcing the contract-this can only be done by actively policing the contract every day, in every office where our members work.