

Accuracy of information

In performing your responsibilities, you will frequently be giving answers and information to your members or to your immediate superior. In such cases, it is extremely important that you pay careful attention to the accuracy of that information.

What you should obviously avoid is giving incorrect information to a member (and, thus, to other members through the grapevine) which results in people having more problems than they started with.

Let's consider an extreme example. A teacher is seriously depressed about the situation in the village and wants a transfer. He asks you what the deadline is for requesting a transfer. You think you know the answer by heart and tell him, incorrectly, that the date is April 1. So he waits till March 31 to send his request, which is summarily rejected, since the actual deadline is March 1. The teacher is thus deprived of the opportunity for a transfer and is left with resignation as the only solution! All this could have been avoided had you done a simple check in the collective agreement or communicated with the SD or the AENQ office

Not only should you verify that the information you have provided is correct—if you aren't certain, you should offer to look into the question and come back later with an answer. That not only indicates that you're committed to the case but also gives you time to verify the facts by checking in the collective agreement or with the SD, union advisors or even the President.

Another situation where you should pay particular attention is when you are providing information to your immediate superior. Remember that, as delegate, you are representing your members to the employer and that the employer can therefore consider your response as "official." This can have serious consequences for your members.

It is always a good idea, before providing any such information, to coordinate with the Sector Director and, where circumstances warrant, ask him or her to intervene directly.

Finally, never forget that you are representing your members. Consult them!