

FAQs

Writer's Guild of America Strike Action

On May 2nd, the Writer's Guild of America (WGA) took strike action against the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) companies following unsuccessful negotiations and the expiry of the Guild's Theatrical and Television Basic Agreement.

Much remains to be seen concerning the potential impact here in BC and will depend on several factors including the duration of the strike itself. Please see below some frequently asked questions with our answers based on the most current information available to us. We will provide updates as information changes.

Q: What does the WGA's strike authorization vote mean?

On April 17, the WGA announced that 97.8% of its membership voted in favour of authorizing a strike. With this strike mandate, the WGA was able to call a strike after their Basic Agreement expired May 1st.

Q: Can productions be legally picketed here?

The WGA is not a trade union in BC so it cannot legally picket here. It has never been recognized by the BC Labour Relations Board to be a trade union under the BC Labour Code.

Q: Can local unions who "support" the WGA have their members withhold services on a struck production?

No. Any withdrawal of services by the members of a BC union in support of the WGA would be an illegal strike. UBCP/ACTRA and the other film unions in BC have language in their respective agreements that prohibits strikes or lockouts while their agreements are still in effect. If you as an individual decide not to report to work as required, you may be subject to breach of contract claims or be subject to termination by the Producer.

Q: What issues are the WGA striking over?

There is no shortage of information in the media about what the Guild is fighting for, but we recommend going to the WGA's website for information www.wga.org.

Q: How long is the strike expected to last?

There is no way to predict how long the strike will continue. The last time the WGA held a strike was in 2007 and it lasted 100 days.

Q: Will we see production slow down or stop in BC due to the strike?

To some degree, production levels have already slowed down in anticipation of a possible Writers' strike. However, only productions that fall under the WGA's jurisdiction would be affected, not those under the jurisdiction of the Writers Guild of Canada. Generally speaking, Canadian productions, as well as US productions with completed scripts will continue to shoot. As such, a noticeable drop in production may not occur right away.