

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/toronto/confusion-and-abuse-mark-garbage-strikes-second-day/article1192905/>

Confusion and abuse mark garbage strike's second day



Promised picket line protocol not in place yet

Brodie Fenlon

Toronto — Globe and Mail Update, Tuesday, Jun. 23, 2009 07:12PM EDT

In the words of a police officer who helped keep the peace at the Bermondsey Transfer Station, "one hand doesn't know what the other hand is doing."

Toronto residents who braved the picket lines Tuesday to deposit their garbage at the city's designated drop-offs were met by a mish-mash of conflicting rules, parking hassles, threats of fines, and at one transfer station in Scarborough, verbal abuse.

Although city and union officials insisted on Monday that they would work on a picket line protocol, it clearly wasn't in place on Tuesday.

The mood was particularly hostile at the Scarborough transfer station off Markham Road and Nugget Avenue, where residents waited up to several hours and were forced to walk their garbage in, while a bylaw officer threatened others with steep fines for dumping.

Pickets shouted down a resident who dropped a bag on the ground after clearing the blockade. Asked about the picket line protocol and wait times, an unnamed district captain with the union told a reporter to get in line with a bag of garbage to get an answer.



"They called us ... all these words," said Riaz Mohammed, 58, who spent most of his morning trying to offload two bags of trash. "It has a devastating effect on people."

Mr. Mohammed, a quality-control inspector at a Markham auto parts plant who lost his job in December when the shop closed, said he had little sympathy for the workers.

But he was also upset with city officials for failing to negotiate with the union a set of rules to govern all picket lines.

It was a much different scene at the Victoria Park transfer north near Finch Avenue and Highway 404, where residents could expect a warm greeting and an apology for the delay. Although waits were still long, workers helped carry the trash in, while seniors and people with young children were waved through.

"People have been very good, even waiting a half hour," said Ed, a district captain who declined to give his last name. "Some are a little pissed off, but most are good. We're not asking for anything. We just want to keep what we've got," he said of the union's bargaining demands.

Confusion reigned at the reopened Bermondsey station, which strikers had shut down on Monday. Police officers told one resident he could walk his garbage to a large pile, but the young man was stopped by a bylaw officer, who threatened to charge him with illegal dumping. Ivan Powell said another officer then told him he could carry the trash straight to the trucks, which raised the hackles of striking workers.

Still, the union had the support of passing truckers and bus drivers, several of whom honked their endorsement while passing the pickets.

Trucker Fred Barnard, 51, of East York, said he fully supports the strike, even though he had to return to the Bermondsey station on Tuesday with his trash after being turned back the day before.

"You can't just give up what you've bargained for," he said. "They want to throw 30 years of bargaining

out, but they'll [city councillors] vote themselves a pay raise. Don't be a hypocrite."

Toronto's 24,000 indoor and outdoor workers walked off the job early Monday morning after failing to negotiate a new contract with the city. The two sides continued bargaining on Tuesday and the city was scheduled to update the public on its contingency plans late this afternoon.