

INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE PRACTICES

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This overview of innovative or special interest provisions is derived from a summary of 136 collective agreements that settled between April and August 2001. Of this number, 76 include provisions deemed innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

The trend of having contract durations of 36 months or less continues for a majority of the collective agreements signed during this selected period (84 per cent of agreements reported). Of those remaining, eight agreements had a duration of 60 months, while one agreement, Smurfit-MBI and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada in St. Laurent, Quebec, had a renewal term of 84 months.

Compensation

A profit sharing plan continues for both Canadian Freightways Limited in the Prairie Provinces, British Columbia, Northwest Territories and Yukon and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and IPL Inc. in Saint-Damien-de-Buckland, Quebec, with the Service Employees International Union. The Canadian Freightways' plan is subject to the company achieving 60 per cent of profit accomplishment goal and the formula calculation is hourly wage, times the number of straight hours worked including statutory holiday and vacation pay, times 7.0 per cent, times the actual profit sharing accomplishment. The IPL Inc. formula consists of multiplying the gross salary on January 1 of each year by the percentage of savings, divided by the number of hours worked and distributed equally for each hour worked by each employee. The generated adjustment, paid as a lump-sum payment in December, will be the profit sharing percentage less the wage adjustment. Also, CORUS, previously Reynolds Aluminum of Canada, and the Fédération de la métallurgie in Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Quebec, have replaced the current indexing provision with a gain-sharing plan which provides a minimum guaranteed bonus of \$600 for the year 2003. In 2003, the union and employees will choose between returning to the indexing provision, which

would provide a 1.0 per cent wage adjustment in each remaining year of the contract, or remain with the gain-sharing plan, which would provide a guaranteed bonus of \$1,000 for the years 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Market retention adjustments have been noted in several agreements. The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and its Academic Staff Association in Edmonton, Alberta, provide a provision whereby a one-time grant equal to 1.0 per cent of payroll made available by the provincial government, addresses salary inequities which could have market retention implications. At the start of a 24-month agreement, Natco Canada Ltd. and the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers, Calgary, Alberta, implemented a 6.5 per cent wage adjustment to maintain industry competitiveness. Two agreements between the Health Employers Association of British Columbia and the Nurses' Bargaining Association and the Paramedical Professional Bargaining Association, province-wide, British Columbia, have established additional annual adjustments ranging from 2.0 to 5.1 per cent, depending upon classification, to address the recruitment and retention of employees. Also in British Columbia, the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver, implements adjustments that range from 0.5 to 1.0 per cent per year to cover recruitment and retention issues for regular employees created by competitive pressures from other employers, such as the City of Vancouver and other Lower Mainland municipalities. In Ontario, the Regional Municipality of Durham and the Canadian Union of Public Employees provided additional adjustments which were applied before the negotiated wage increases. These ranged from approximately 8.0 to 16 per cent and were primarily given to classifications considered to be "Hot Market".

Different styles of wage restructuring or classification adjustments were reported in 14 agreements. Two Government of Canada settlements and one National Research Council of Canada settlement restructured wages by eliminating the minimum level and adding a step to the maximum of all levels. Two Government of

New Brunswick settlements, both negotiating with the Canadian Union of Public Employees, include special classification adjustments which apply to a majority of bargaining unit employees (70 and 90 per cent), to address wage equity and employee recruitment and retention. The Edmonton Public Library Board and the Civic Service Union No. 52 introduced the amalgamation of salary schedules for shift and non-shift employees, resulting in additional wage adjustments for various classifications. The licensed practical nurses with the Nova Scotia Association of Health Organizations and the Nova Scotia Nurses Union were given a classification review adjustment advance in the first year of their agreement in addition to a 2.0 per cent wage adjustment.

AT Plastics and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have introduced a variable pay program based on performance measures in order to encourage employee understanding and alignment with business and company objectives and strategies, and to recognize employee contributions to achieving these objectives.

Twenty-two agreements reviewed for this period received either a lump-sum payment or a signing bonus. The lump-sum payments range from \$250 in each of the first two years of a three-year agreement with Camco Inc. in Montréal, Quebec, to \$1,000, \$700 and \$600 payments respectively, in a three-year agreement with Parmalat Dairy and Bakery Inc. in Brampton, Ontario. Toronto District School Board and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation provided an amount equal to 1.95 per cent of year 2000 earnings to all bargaining unit members, except continuing education occasional teachers. In two collective agreements between the City of Montréal and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, a 1.0 per cent lump-sum payment provided for in the previous agreement was folded into the wage rates, in addition to a 1.0 per cent wage adjustment.

Cost-of-living allowances were recorded in 16 renewed agreements. Of these, 11 used the calculation of a cent amount for each point increase or decrease in the Consumer Price Index; with only one agreement using a 4.0 per cent trigger. All other agreements used the calculation of an amount equal to the percentage increase or decrease in the Consumer Price Index, with most having a trigger of at least 2.0 per cent.

Working Conditions

A provision between Gray Line of Victoria Ltd. in Vancouver and Lower Mainland, British Columbia, implements a flextime work schedule which enables office employees, in approved classifications, to work hours in excess of their normal daily hour for a fixed period, in exchange for a paid day off at a later date within the month worked. Suncor Energy Inc. in Fort McMurray, Alberta, and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada continue a flexible benefits health care spending account whereby the employer contributes an additional \$400 into each employee's account. Under family-related leave, the Manitoba Hydro and the Association of Manitoba Hydro Staff and Supervisory Employees provided a new provision which grants up to a maximum of five paid days to cover the illness or medical appointments of a parent, spouse or child. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Canadian Union of Public Employees have extended their family-related paid leave of 15 hours per year for full-time employees to part-time employees, but prorated according to hours worked in the previous year.

Job Security

Cooper-Standard Automotive (Canada) Limited in Stratford, Ontario and the Canadian Autoworkers provide that, in the event of plant closure, the employer will notify the union within two months and the parties will meet to discuss averting the closure. If not successful, they will continue to discuss severance packages, any extension in benefit coverage and an adjustment process. The employer will also provide job search and social counseling for affected employees. A job-sharing clause has been introduced by the Government of Newfoundland, province-wide, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees. The guidelines state the arrangement will be employee-initiated and voluntary; be one full-time position shared by two employees, each working 50 per cent of the position; permit the employees to self-schedule the work; share the collective agreement benefits equally; and include a pre-determined notice period for discontinuing the arrangement. In a letter of understanding between the City of Calgary and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the impact of large scale organizational changes will not be carried out without union review and involvement. In the agreement between the Government of Saskatchewan, province-wide, and the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees

Union, not only is employment security guaranteed for bargaining unit members for the current fiscal year but 400 permanent part-time incumbents will be converted to full-time status.

Training

Education funds were noted in at least six agreements reviewed, with employer contributions ranging from 1¢ to 3¢ per employee per hour worked. Natco Canada Ltd., Calgary, Alberta has an employer-financed cap of \$75,000, while the Health Employers Association of British Columbia covering the paramedical professionals will contribute \$1 million toward education leave. Camco Inc. and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada in Montréal, Quebec, provide that the employer will commit \$5 thousand, for training when an employee is laid off as a result of plant closure. Lear Corporation and the Canadian Autoworkers grant an amount of \$750 per year for tuition and book costs associated with a work-related course. The University of Windsor and the Faculty Association have established unique pilot programs to be established in the areas of Business and Engineering. The programs will be designed to meet the specific needs of outside professionals and others seeking opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills, enabling them to improve or shift their careers. These programs will be designed not to compete with the academic programs of the University.

Labour-Management Committees

Once again this quarter, close to half (30) of the 76 agreements with innovative practices contained provisions for establishing joint committees. The committees consisted of a wide variety of issues.

The Health Employers Association of British Columbia and the Nurses' Bargaining Association have established a joint provincial committee to conduct research into the causes of overtime and to identify ways and means of reducing such overtime in a cost-effective, efficient manner. Research findings and recommendations will be provided to the Ministry of Health Services and the Ministry of Health Planning. The association of building service contractors in Quebec and the Service Employees International Union, have initiated a committee on prevention services which will review health and safety issues, design and develop training and make recommendations concerning health and safety regulations and standards. Smurfit-MBI and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, in Quebec, have incorporated a committee to develop procedures for setting up a training program that would enable employees to be qualified to perform plant-related operations and to assess training needs, objectives and priorities. The Coast Mountain Bus Company in Victoria, Vancouver and Lower Mainland, British Columbia, and the Canadian Autoworkers have established an joint operational review committee, which is intended to be a long-term consensual body seeking solutions to productivity issues while protecting employee's interests. Emco Limitée and the Syndicat national des travailleurs des pâtes et papiers de Pont Rouge inc. have incorporated a committee for the development of teamwork to exchange the benefits of knowledge and experience in the workplace.

A number of other agreements include provisions to discuss such issues as workload, work environment, utilization of temporary employees, modified work week, cost containment in benefits and pension programs, harassment procedures, and pay equity/classification.