

INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE PRACTICES

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 65 collective agreement settlements negotiated during the fourth quarter of 2004. Of these, 27 settlements contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

Of the 65 settlements reviewed during the quarter, slightly fewer than 50 per cent (31 collective agreements) had a duration of between 34 and 39 months with the majority being of 36 months (26 collective agreements). Nineteen settlements had durations of 24 months while nine had durations of between 42 and 48 months. Four settlements had durations of more than 50 months. The longest agreement duration of 84 months was with BC Ferry Services Inc., British Columbia coast and B.C. Ferry and Marine Workers' Union. Over this period, there were only two collective agreements with a 12-month duration.

Compensation

The Government of Canada, Canada-wide and Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada have a provisional allowance, paid semi-monthly, for the **recruitment and retention** of research employees of the Communications Research Centre Canada in Ottawa.

A **long-service recognition** award has been introduced between Peace Wapiti Regional Division No. 33, Grande Prairie, Alberta and Alberta Teachers' Association. The non-pensionable lump-sum payments will be as follows:

- after 15 years of service, \$2,000;
- after 20 years, \$2,500;
- after 25 years, \$3,000;
- after 30 years, \$3,500; and
- after 35 years, \$4,000.

Jazz Air Inc., Canada-wide and Canadian Auto Workers have established a **voluntary separation** package. The employer guarantees 200 separation packages over 18 months. The terms of the agreement offers employees three weeks of pay per year of service with up to nine years of service and four weeks of pay per year of service with 10 or more years of service, to a maximum of salary paid over 36 months. Employees laid off in the cargo facilities in Calgary and Vancouver may elect to sever their employment and receive two weeks of pay per year of service to a maximum of 52 weeks. The parties have also

negotiated **travel pass incentives** to be offered to laid-off employees in exchange for their recall rights.

A **two-tier wage** structure has been introduced between BC Ferry Service Inc., British Columbia coast and B.C. Ferry and Marine Workers' Union. A wage grid for new employees will be established as follows: 85 per cent of the standard rate for the first year of employment, 90 per cent for the second year and 95 per cent for the third year. A rate of 85 per cent of the standard rate will be applicable for all seasonal employees. Canada Safeway Limited, province-wide Manitoba and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union also have a two-tier wage structure for employees hired on or before April 1, 2002, which now requires fewer hours worked to attain the top rates.

The Government of New Brunswick, province-wide, and New Brunswick Nurses' Union have introduced a provision whereby there will be **no reduction in salary** when an employee is absent from work due to a **quarantine** ordered by a medical health officer.

Health and Welfare

Bell Canada, province-wide, Quebec and Ontario, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have negotiated a **flexible benefits health** plan. Effective July 1, 2005, the Omniflex plan will provide more improved benefit options, such as the possibility of buying up to two additional vacation days and/or additional benefit coverage. A **health spending account** has been established between the Edmonton School District No. 7, Edmonton, Alberta and Alberta Teachers Association. Effective September 1, 2005, an individual account in the amount of \$500 will be opened on behalf of each teacher for the purpose of subsidizing supplemental health care expenses.

Aliant Telecom Inc., province-wide, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada and Atlantic Communications and Technical Workers' Union have introduced a **job accident insurance**. When an employee travels on employer's instruction by helicopter, small fixed wing aircraft or boat, or while working offshore, the employer will provide additional accidental death and dismemberment insurance of \$700,000.

Working Conditions

The Health Employers Association of British Columbia, province-wide and British Columbia Nurses Union, Health Sciences Association of British Columbia and Union of Psychiatric Nurses are establishing **shift scheduling flexibility**. No later than April 1, 2005, the employer will develop implementation plans designed to improve shift scheduling from a quality of work perspective and the Ministry of

Health will set up a project team to investigate various shift scheduling software and programs to assist nursing managers in improving shift scheduling.

Job Security

Canada Safeway Limited, province-wide, Manitoba, and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union have negotiated a **duty of accommodate** clause. An injured employee's job duties will be modified and/or they will be reassigned to a different work assignment where reasonably practical. If an employee can only be accommodated in a lower paid classification, the employer will attempt to find a position that minimizes the effect on their rate of pay.

To **minimize contracting out**, Phillips & Temro Industries Ltd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, and United Steelworkers of America have negotiated a provision whereby employees can enhance their skills with a view of minimizing the use of contractors. The employer will meet with the union to consider whether additional training should be provided to one or more bargaining unit employees for the purpose of acquiring needed skills. BC Ferry Services Inc., British Columbia coast and B.C. Ferry and Marine Workers' Union have also introduced a provision to guard **against layoff due to contracting out**. Prior to any work being contracted out, the employer will determine whether the work can be done by bargaining unit employees based on its operational needs, the capability of the workforce and whether the work can be done in a cost effective and competitive manner, including the availability of resources. The employer will approach the union with documents which would constitute the need for outside contractors. The union will be given the opportunity to discuss with the employer and provide a written proposal whether members could continue to perform the work in a manner which would satisfy all the listed requirements. The employer will give the proposal due consideration.

CAMI Automotive Inc., Ingersoll, Ontario and Canadian Auto Workers have a provision concerning **laid off employees**. An employee who is permanently laid off and has exhausted or forfeited the supplemental employment benefit may choose a lump-sum payment that ranges from \$27,500 for five years of service to \$67,500 for 25 or more years of service. In the event of a **plant closure** the benefit ranges from \$42,500 for five years of service to \$82,500 for 25 years of service.

A new provision between Imperial Tobacco Canada Limited, Guelph and Aylmer, Ontario and Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union states that should the **employer open a new plant** in Ontario, employees in the Aylmer manufacturing facility will be offered employment by seniority before new employees are hired from outside. Seniority dates from the Aylmer facility will be recognized at the new location.

Funds

Canada Bread Company Limited, Langley, British Columbia and Canadian Auto Workers have established three new funds. First, a local **health and safety** fund is initiated whereby the employer contributes 1¢ per hour worked for the purposes of union health and safety training and the funding of health and safety programs within the local. The second is a **paid education** fund with the employer contributing 3¢ per hour worked for the purpose of providing paid education leave. Such leave will be for upgrading employee skills in all aspects of trade union functions. The third fund is a **social justice** fund and the employer contributes 1¢ per hour worked to provide financial assistance to such entities as food banks, registered Canadian charities and international relief measures to assist innocent victims of drought, famines and other dislocations.

Labour-Management Committees

During the fourth quarter of 2004, 14 of the full complement of 65 agreements contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of issues.

Two Securitas Canada Limited agreements in Toronto and Eastern Ontario and an agreement with Rentokil Initial Canada Ltd., province-wide, Ontario, all with the United Steelworkers of America, have established **health and safety** committees. Their mandate is as follows:

- identify situations that may be a source of danger or hazard to employees;
- make recommendations to the parties for the improvement of the health and safety of employees;
- recommend to the parties of the establishment, maintenance and monitoring of programs, measures and procedures respecting the health and safety of employees, and;
- obtain information from the employer respecting the identification of potential or existing hazards, materials, processes or equipment, as well as health and safety, experience and work practices and standards in similar or other industries of which the employer has knowledge.

The School District No. 39, Vancouver, British Columbia and Canadian Union of Public Employees have introduced a **health benefits review** committee. The current health and welfare plans will be reviewed with the goal of indentifying cost savings which could then be **applied to wage** rates as part of the July 1, 2005 wage reopener negotiations.

Other committees included in collective agreements deal with such items as classification evaluations, workforce adjustment, employment and pay equity, sick leave administration, staffing and absenteeism.