

INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE PRACTICES

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 89 collective agreement settlements negotiated during the fourth quarter of 2005. Of these, 30 settlements contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

During this quarter, settlements with a 36-month duration represented close to half (42 collective agreements and 47% of all agreements) of the 89 settlements reviewed containing such a duration. Twenty-seven agreements had a duration of 48 months while 8 settlements had durations of between 24 and 26 months. There were 3 education settlements with 12 month durations. Also, there was 1 settlement with a 52-month duration and 8 settlements with 60 months.

Compensation

A **gain sharing** and a **stock option** plan were introduced between Canadian National Railway Company, system-wide and Teamsters Canada Rail Conference. Based on performance criteria yet to be defined, the gain sharing plan will provide 20% of the productivity gains realized to be distributed among the employees up to a maximum of 4.0% of base salary. The stock option plan is based on source deductions up to a maximum of 6.0% of base salary. Effective January 1 of each year, the employer will contribute 35% of the amount contributed by the employee in the previous year to enable the employee to purchase additional stock.

INCO Limited, Thompson, Manitoba and United Steelworkers of America continue a **nickel-price bonus**. For any quarter in which the employer has net earnings and the Average Realized Price of nickel is US\$2.25 per pound, each employee will receive a lump-sum payment equal to 10¢ per hour worked in that quarter. The multiplier used to calculate the payment will be increased by 1¢ for each 1¢ the price of nickel exceeds US\$2.25. The bonus will now also be paid on vacation hours and will be based on the Thompson, Manitoba operations.

A provision for the **conversion of long service increments into an extra increment step** has been initiated between the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, province-wide and Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union. Effective April 1, 2006, 3.0% of maximum rates will be added to the top step of each classification range. Employees at the old maximum range for 1 year or more will be eligible to move to the new range maximum immediately; those with less than 1 year will be eligible to move to the new range maximum on the first day of the pay period following the one-year anniversary of their move to the old maximum.

The Royal Canadian Mint, Ottawa, Ontario and Winnipeg, Manitoba and Public Service Alliance of Canada continue the off-scale **performance awards**. In each of the 3 years, amounts will be paid where the employer's pre-tax income is as follows:

Income	2005	2006	2007
\$5 million or more	1.0%	1.0%	1.5%
profit target achieved	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%
25% excess of profit target	4.0%	4.5%	4.5%

The applicable percentage of the performance award will be calculated on the total bargaining unit payroll and divided equally among the employees.

An **individual performance incentive** has been established between Canada Post Corporation, Canada-wide and Public Service Alliance of Canada. Employees will be eligible for an incentive potential of between 0.5 and 3.0% of regular salary, with the 0.5% rating indicating that improvement is needed up to 3.0% for an exceptional performance. A **corporate team incentive** plan continues with employees receiving a possible 4.0% per fiscal year for meeting corporate financial, service performance and customer satisfaction targets. There is a possibility of earning more than the 4.0% if the corporation exceeds the established targets.

Entourage Solutions, province-wide, Ontario and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have introduced a **technology bonus**. An incentive will be established to maintain competitiveness in a market that is in a constant state of technological change. By November 2005, the parties would have jointly selected applicable technologies, determined a value and created a list of technicians eligible for the bonus.

An **employment retention adjustment** has been introduced between the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, province-wide and Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan. Effective April 1, 2006, an additional 2.0% will be applied to Step 6 of all classifications. Also, a **provincial market supplement program** exists to address specific pay related skill shortages to attract and/or retain qualified employees where workplace initiatives have been unsuccessful in addressing recruitment and retention challenges. The program will be implemented only when it is necessary to enhance the ability of employers to retain and/or recruit employees with the required skills to deliver appropriate health services. The criteria for consideration will be service delivery impacts, turnover rates, vacancy rate analysis and salary and market conditions. The determination of the wage rates, which will be outside of the wage schedules, will be negotiated between the parties.

Two settlements with the Regional Health Authorities of Manitoba, province wide, one with Canadian Union of Public Employees and the other with the Manitoba Government and General Employees Union, have established a **general wage standardization fund** to rectify identified salary inequities in the health sector. An additional \$12 million will be committed by the employer to complete the wage standardization initiative for the faculty support sector. The amounts of \$3 million will be made available in each of the 4 years of the contract.

Maple Leaf Fresh Foods, Brandon, Manitoba and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union have negotiated a **maintenance wage survey** provision. The employer will conduct an annual survey of 10 competitors in direct competition for human resources with Maple Leaf Foods. The positions will consist of licensed and unlicensed skilled trades, licensed stationary engineers, pre-treatment employees and apprentices. The highest and lowest wage rates of the competitors will be removed and the remaining 8 average rates will be calculated into a simple average. If this average is more than 3.0% above the rate at the Brandon operation, their rate will be adjusted to reflect the higher rate.

Health and Welfare

A new **flexible benefit spending account** has been established between SaskPower, province-wide, Saskatchewan and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. Effective January 1, 2006, the employer will provide an account of \$2,400 for full-time and \$1,200 for part-time employees. On January 1, 2007, the amount will be reduced to \$1,800 and \$800, respectively. On January 1, 2008, the accounts will be increased by the same amount as the newly negotiated wage adjustment applicable for that year. The accounts may be used for the following options:

- 1) Health Care Spending Account with a \$50 minimum;
- 2) Voluntary Group Registered Retirement Savings Plan;
- 3) Millennium Registered Retirement Savings Plan;
- 4) Vacation purchase, capped at \$500 per year;
- 5) Public Employees Pension Plan; or
- 6) Cash pay out, less deductions.

SaskEnergy, with the same union, have also negotiated a similar flexible spending provision with smaller amounts being placed into the accounts.

The parties have also introduced a **millennium registered retirement savings** plan. The employer will contribute into an individual plan for each employee an amount equal to 40 hours pay. The dollars are locked in until the employee retires, is permanently laid off, resigns, dies or is terminated. All employees will have the option of enrolling in the plan and participation for new employees is mandatory.

Johnson Controls Inc., Whitby, Ontario and Canadian AutoWorkers have negotiated a provision for **same sex benefits** whereby employees in a conjugal relationship for at least 12 months will be covered under the current plans, provided the various federal and provincial regulatory agencies continue to recognize same sex relationships.

Working Conditions

CBC/Radio-Canada, Canada-wide, excluding the province of Quebec and Moncton, New Brunswick and National Guild of Canadian Media, Manufacturing, Professional and Service Workers/Communications Workers of America have initiated a provision to **limit the use of contract employees**. The total number of employees on contract will not exceed 9.5% of the permanent workforce and 80 additional contract positions at any given time. Current contract

employees with at least 4 years of continuous service will have a one-time opportunity to move to permanent status. Upon 2 years of continuous service, contract employees will have the opportunity of joining the pension plan and be given the opportunity to buy back all eligible service.

Falconbridge Limited, Timmins, Ontario and Canadian AutoWorkers have agreed to meet every quarter to discuss the use of contractors as regular crew supplements with a view to **reducing the number of contractors and associated costs**. The objective will be to review the use of contractors and discuss upcoming requirements and potential opportunities to use existing bargaining unit members where practical.

A **job sharing** provision has been established between Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax, Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Union of Public and Private Employees. Permanent full-time, part-time and temporary employees will have the opportunity to share jobs through the program. Employees participating in a job share arrangement will receive salary on a pro-rated basis in accordance with the hours worked; will participate in group benefit plans and will accrue and be entitled to take leave, including holidays, sick, vacation, bereavement and emergency leave; also pro-rated.

Two settlements with the Regional Health Authorities of Manitoba, province wide, one with Canadian Union of Public Employees and the other with the Manitoba Government and General Employees Union, have entered into agreement on the **development of a representative workforce**. The parties realize that Aboriginal persons are significantly underrepresented in the health care sector and that actions are needed to promote employment at all levels. The parties will work to develop strategic initiatives and programs that focus on the recruiting, training and career development of Aboriginal employees and to identify workplace barriers that may be discouraging or preventing Aboriginal persons from entering and remaining in the workforce. They will also implement educational opportunities for all employees to promote cultural awareness of Aboriginal peoples which will include enhanced orientation sessions for new employees to ensure better understanding of respectful work practices to achieve a harassment free environment.

The Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario and Canadian Union of Public Employees have initiated measures to reduce the potential for experiencing **workplace aggression or violence**. The employer will provide debriefing and post-traumatic counselling for individuals exposed to violence, aggression, secondary trauma and vicarious trauma.

The University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario and United Steelworkers of America have negotiated a **"whistle blower" protection** clause. An employee will not be discharged, penalized or disciplined in the event of good faith reporting to the appropriate regulatory authority of a release of a hazardous substance.

Domtar Inc., Cornwall, Ontario and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have negotiated a day of **mourning in remembrance**. The parties will recognize April 28 of each year as the annual day of remembrance for employees killed or injured on the job. The employer will lower the flag at the main entrance of the operations to half-mast on this date.

Labour-Management Committees

During the fourth quarter of 2005, 25 of the full complement of 89 agreements contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of issues.

The Canada Post Corporation, Canada-wide and Public Service Alliance of Canada have established a **surplus and orientation** committee. The orientation program will assist surplus employees in understanding the staffing process, identifying training and networking, and give assistance in interviews and writing skills. The training program will identify training needs and opportunities for surplus employees.

A **rehabilitation** committee has been initiated between the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, province-wide and Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union. The committee will develop a policy that supports the accommodation of an employee who has become incapacitated by injury, illness or disability. Also included will be the development of educational tools and the details of a rehabilitation/return-to-work placement process.

Other committees included in collective agreements deal with such items as work load, health and welfare provisions, job evaluation, staff mobility, training and development, and task forces.

Source: Workplace Information Directorate, HRSDC—Labour Program.

Enquiries: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/wid/contact/contact_us.shtml

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