

INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE PRACTICES

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 78 collective agreement settlements negotiated during the second quarter of 2005. Of these, 38 settlements contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

The tendency for 36-month durations continued during the quarter with over 50 per cent (42 collective agreements) of the 78 settlements reviewed containing such a duration. Five agreements had a duration of 12 months while 18 settlements had durations of between 20 and 28 months. There were 7 settlements with a duration of 48 months and 5 settlements with 60 months. The longest duration of 78 months was negotiated between Laurentian Bank of Canada and Laurentian Trust of Canada, province-wide, Quebec and Ottawa, Ontario, with Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union.

Compensation

Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd., Toronto Ontario, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have a **profit-sharing** plan based on the previous year's cash margins and paid in lump-sum payments in February of each year of the contract. The cash margins will include gross profits of the newspaper operations before the deduction of depreciation, amortization, interest and taxes above 15, 17 and 20% of corporate revenues.

A **goal sharing** plan has been negotiated between Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia, province-wide, and Compensation Employees Union. Employees will receive annual lump-sum payments equal to 2.0% of annual salary if plan targets of measured improvements to operational efficiencies and service quality are met. Payments to part-time and casual employees will be pro-rated.

Wage parity adjustments have been established between Nova Scotia Association of Health Organizations, province-wide and Canadian Auto Workers. Certain classifications will receive an adjustment of 2.1% where such an adjustment is required to maintain parity of rates with the Capital District Health Authority. Such employees may also qualify for a second adjustment of 2.1% if needed. In another settlement with the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Health Authorities have negotiated **recruitment and retention adjustments**. Where the employer determines that there is a recruitment and/or retention

problem, they will meet with the union for consultation. A special market-based adjustment for selected classifications will be implemented and paid on a bi-weekly basis for a defined period of time.

The Ontario Hospital Association, province-wide and Service Employees International Union have introduced a **skills recognition bonus**. Each current member of the bargaining unit will receive a one-time lump-sum payment equal to 17¢ per hour for all hours worked in the 2004 calendar year.

Merit pay performance bonuses have been established between the Government of Ontario and Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario. An amount for a 12-month work cycle coinciding with the employee's anniversary date is payable ranging from 0 to 5.0% of salary at the discretion of the employer.

Northwestel Inc., territory-wide, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut and Northern British Columbia, and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers have concluded a **team incentive bonus**. The un pensionable bonus is based on plan requirements and current indicators including residential and business customer indicators. The target percentage will be set at 1.5% based on the average annual bargaining unit salary for each year of the plan. The percentage may range from 0 to 3.0%.

Health and Welfare

The Government of Saskatchewan, province-wide, and Canadian Union of Public Employees have realized administrative savings through the following initiatives:

- reduction in the time-in-lieu bank cap resulting in a reduction of overtime and replacement costs;
- a joint initiative to reduce the inappropriate use of sick leave by one day per employee per year;
- changes in the bumping language to facilitate the laying off of employees on an operational-requirement basis and minimizing relocation costs; and
- the option of using a single arbitrator.

The surplus of \$748,070 realized by these initiatives will be directed towards the **extended health and enhanced dental plans**. As a result, the \$25 per month employee premium for those benefits will be eliminated effective January 1, 2005.

A new **health spending account** for retirees has been negotiated in two settlements between Canadian Pacific Railway Company, system-wide, one with Teamsters Canada Rail Conference and the other with Canadian Auto Workers. Employees, who retire within two years of January 1, 2005, are offered the choice of the current plan or the new health spending plan. Under the new plan,

the employees will receive an amount equal to \$33 per year of service annually. When the employee dies, their spouse is eligible for the full amount of the account for the rest of their life.

TELUS Communications (Quebec) Inc., province-wide, and Canadian Union of Public Employees have a provision involving **physical activities or sports**. The employer will reimburse to a maximum of \$130 per year and per medical expenses insurance certificate for registration fees related to a physical activity of sport.

Working Conditions

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, province-wide, Ontario and Canadian Union of Public Employees have initiated **flexible work arrangements**. Full-time employees have the option of rescheduling their work day or work week in order to have a better balance between home and work. Lunch breaks which are normally 45 minutes may now be shortened or lengthened, subject to operational needs; but be no shorter than 30 minutes. Paid breaks which are normally 15 minutes may be shortened to no shorter than 10 minutes. By these initiatives, employees have the potential of an additional two weeks off over the course of a year. They may also request part-time status to a minimum of 14½ hours per week. Benefits and seniority would be prorated based on the percentage of full-time hours.

The parties have also negotiated **recruitment and selection provisions** whereby employer-paid training programs would be developed to support promotions from within the company.

The Canadian National Railway Company, system-wide, and United Steelworkers of America have introduced a **work-family balance** provision which states that the employer agrees, on a trial basis for the duration of the current collective agreement, to allow employees to set aside one week of vacation for family-related emergencies. Any time remaining unused as of December 1 of each year would be paid out to the employee.

A **contracting-out** provision has been established between Toronto Transit Commission, Toronto, Ontario and Amalgamated Transit Union. Before any work in the maintenance department is contracted out, the employer will advise the union and then consider any suggested union alternatives as to how the work might be completed by members of the bargaining unit. If the employer violates this provision, it will pay a penalty of \$5,000 to the union. A grievance procedure will apply to all such circumstances with an arbitrator retaining the jurisdiction to award a greater monetary penalty if it is deemed to be appropriate. Also, the employer will ensure that employees holding a trade licence for their job description will not lose their position as a direct result of contracting-out of work normally done by the employee.

Labour-Management Committees

During the second quarter of 2005, 18 of the full complement of 78 agreements contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of issues.

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, province-wide, Ontario and Canadian Union of Public Employees have introduced a **joint workload** committee. The parties will review workload issues including the following:

- individual and team workloads;
- equalization and equitable distribution of work;
- statistical account of time to perform various functions;
- coverage of absences, special projects and vacations;
- introduction of new technology and systems; and
- job design.

A **training review** committee has been established between Laurentian Bank of Canada and Laurentian Trust of Canada, province-wide Quebec and Ottawa, Ontario and Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union.

Recommendations will be submitted to the employer with respect to the way employees are advised of training programs and plans, to the training needs and results of employees, to the training methods aimed at fostering internal employee mobility and to propose adjustments, as needed, to the training program.

Other committees included in collective agreements deal with such items as job classification reviews, job retention and recruitment, health and welfare provisions, pension plan funding, employee and family assistance plans, and service delivery.