

INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE PRACTICES

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 96 collective agreement settlements negotiated during the third quarter of 2005. Of these, 28 settlements contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

During this quarter, settlements with 48-month durations dominated with over 50 per cent (50 collective agreements) of the 96 settlements reviewed containing such a duration. This was mainly due to the settling of the majority of the Ontario education sector. Twenty-five agreements had durations of 36 months while 11 settlements had durations of between 12 and 24 months. There were also 7 settlements with 60 months and 3 with durations of 72 months. These longest durations were reported from the manufacturing industry as follows: Bombardier Aéronautique, Canadair Division in Dorval and other centres, Quebec; Bridgestone/Firestone Canada in Joliette, Quebec; and, J.M. Schneider in Kitchener, Ontario.

Compensation

A **gain sharing** plan continues between British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, province-wide, and Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union. Employees will receive annual lump-sum payments equal to 4.0% of annual salary if Corporate measures of financial goals, customer satisfaction and improvement in all injury frequencies are met. Effective April 1, 2007, the calculations may provide a potential payment of up to 5.0%.

Bell Canada, province-wide Quebec and Ontario, and Canadian Telecommunications Employees' Association have negotiated a **variable pay bonus** plan. Effective January 1, 2006, a new payment system will be created whereby Client Representatives, with sales targets and who do not benefit from wage protection, will receive 12% of base wages if their targets are met. The variable remuneration bonus is to recognize the individual contribution to sales targets and to quality and productivity objectives. It will provide a motivation initiative to meet and exceed objectives. The parties will meet regularly to review and make recommendations on evolving the plan.

A provision for the **conversion of long service increments into an extra increment step** has been initiated between the Health Boards of Alberta (HBA Services), province-wide, Alberta, and Health Sciences Association of Alberta.

Effective April 1, 2006, the 3.5% increment, applicable to all professional employees and technical employees in Pay Grade 6 and above, will be converted into a new Step 9 for each classification group. Employees will advance to the new step following 12 months service at Step 8. This provision was also negotiated with the union for the technicians with the Calgary Laboratory Services, Calgary, Alberta.

The Government of Ontario, province-wide and Ontario Public Service Employees Union have a **merit pay** provision whereby employees in the unified bargaining unit who are at the maximum of the salary range will be eligible for an adjustment of 3.0% above the maximum rate. The adjustment is dependent on a satisfactory performance rating. The eligible adjustment for the Corrections employees will be set at 5.0%. Also, seven classifications will receive **pay equity** adjustments ranging from 10¢ to \$1.40 per hour, retroactive to July 1, 2004.

Health and Welfare

A new **health spending account** has been negotiated between Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73, Red Deer and Mountain View, Alberta and Alberta Teachers' Association. Effective September 1, 2005, an individual account in the amount of \$475 will be opened on the behalf of each teacher for the purpose of subsidizing supplemental health care expenses. The Health Boards of Alberta, province-wide and Health Sciences Association of Alberta also have a **flexible health benefit spending** plan whereby, on January 1 of each year of the contract, an amount of \$500 will be placed into each employees' account. This amount may be used to top up drug, dental or alternative medical treatments such as acupuncture, massage, etc. Any unused allocation as of December 31 may be carried over for a maximum of one year. Effective January 1, 2007, the amount will be increased to \$600, provided recommendations from the joint benefits review board are adopted by the parties.

Working Conditions

Bombardier Aéronautique, Canadair Division, Dorval and other centres, Quebec and International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers have initiated **flexible work arrangements**. In order to reduce absenteeism by 50% and increase productivity, a pilot project of a flexible work schedule has been introduced in which it will be possible to bank a maximum of 4 hours of regular time with a maximum accumulation of 2 hours per day.

An **outsourcing/sub-contracting** provision has been established between Bell Canada, province-wide, Quebec and Ontario and Canadian Telecommunications Employees' Association. Outsourcing may only be used for incremental work volume caused by attrition and/or other operational reasons including situations that require movement of bargaining unit employees to entities outside of Bell Canada.

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, province-wide and Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union report a **reduced work week leave** program. Employees work 37.5 hours per week with 17 paid days off per calendar year for an average of 35 hours per week. Employees are encouraged to use all of their program days as time off before the end of the calendar year. For employees hired prior to July 1, 2005, a maximum of 5 days annually may be put into a time-off bank which may accumulate days without limit. Employees hired after July 1, 2005 may not bank any days beyond the calendar year earned. Full-time employees may elect to receive cash in lieu of time off for any of the 17 days.

Labour-Management Committees

During the third quarter of 2005, 19 of the full complement of 96 agreements contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of issues.

The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia and Canadian Union of Public Employees have established a **restructuring** committee for the support employees. The parties will determine how province-wide bargaining in the school board sector will be implemented by April 1, 2007. They will also discuss the implementation of wage parity adjustments phased in over the next 5 years by developing standardized job descriptions, classifications and province-wide wage scale for unionized school board employees.

A **classification review** committee has been initiated between NAV CANADA, Canada-wide and Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada. The parties have agreed to work together towards the selection and development of a new classification system commencing January 2006. Unresolved issues will be submitted to arbitration. Economic implications and rules of conversion pertaining to the new system will be negotiated at the next round of bargaining.

Other committees included in collective agreements deal with such items as work load/work life, health and welfare provisions, mandatory retirement, training and development, and mutual interest issues.

Source: Workplace Information Directorate, HRSDC—Labour Program.

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

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