

Innovative Workplace Practices

Bruce Aldridge
Workplace Information Directorate
Labour Program, Human Resources Development Canada

This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 82 collective agreement settlements negotiated during the first quarter of 2003. Of these, over one-half, 45 settlements, contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

The trend over the past year towards 36-month durations continues. Of the 82 settlements reviewed during the quarter, slightly over one-half (44 collective agreements) had a duration of 36 months. Of the six settlements with 12-month durations, there were two extension agreements, two renewal agreements and two wage reopeners. Sixteen settlements had durations of between 17 and 24 months while eight had durations of between 46 and 48 months. There were eight settlements that had durations of 56 or more months. Of these, two had a duration of 72 months: Shorewood Packaging Corporation in Smith Falls, Ontario, with the Graphic Communications International Union and Services Drummondville inc. in Drummondville, Quebec, with the Union des ouvriers de textile-coton de Drummondville.

Compensation

The innovative element in compensation relates to either additional wage adjustments or classification adjustments and is present in 17 agreements. In the settlement with the Government of New Brunswick and New Brunswick Nurses' Union, employees in the Institutional Group 2 receive an additional 2.5 per cent to **harmonize hourly salaries** with those of the Non-institutional Group 2. Employees at the maximum of the range may be granted up to four re-earnable increments; these temporary payments are not included in base pay and do not constitute pensionable earnings. Increments are based on performance measures through the performance management system.

McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario and Service Employees International Union have provided **market adjustments** for cafeteria employees in addition to the wage adjustments. These

adjustments range from 20¢ to 45¢ per hour, depending on occupation. After a **classification review**, Services Drummondville inc., Drummondville, Quebec and Union des ouvriers du textile-coton de Drummondville, restructured the wage scales which generated an average wage increase of 1.5 per cent before the first general wage adjustment. A **classification adjustment** was also implemented by Avcorp Industries Ltd., Richmond, British Columbia, and International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers: a material handler classification was created which combined the duties and responsibilities of three former classifications. The 20 employees affected will receive an additional wage increase of \$1.50 per hour.

The Edwards, Unit of PX Canada Inc., Owen Sound, Ontario, and United Steelworkers of America have negotiated a **savings and stock ownership plan**. After one year of service, an employee may contribute a minimum of 3.0 per cent to

the stock fund and the employer contributes 4.0 per cent. If the employee chooses investment options other than the stock fund, the employer's contribution will be 2.5 per cent. An **incentive investment** plan has been established with Kimberley-Clark Forest Products Inc., Terrace Bay, Ontario, and Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Effective January 1, 2004, the employer will match the employee's contribution to a maximum of 5.0 per cent of regular earnings with the first 2.0 per cent of regular earnings being matched at 75 per cent and the next 3.0 per cent at 50 per cent. In a **profit-sharing** plan with Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Co. Limited, Flin Flon and Snow Lake, Manitoba and various trades unions, 10 per cent of the company's "after tax earnings" shall be distributed to the employees at the end of each year of the contract. Miramar Giant Mine Ltd., Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, and CAW-Canada have a **gold price premium**. When gold prices average within specified ranges for a fiscal year, the base wage will be increased the following quarter by 2.0 per cent per \$50 above \$500.

Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, and Queen's University Faculty Association have a

special adjustments fund. An amount of \$195,000 will be used to adjust salaries of those at the lower end of the pay scale in order to **enhance retention and recruitment**. The adjustments will apply to tenured and tenure-track faculty whose current salary is less than the junior increment cut-off and is determined to be abnormally low considering years of experience and merit history. Another anomaly fund of \$250,000 will address equity and career-progression salary anomalies identified by self-application or by recommendation of the Head or Dean, and retention and market-related cases such as **countering external offers or correcting salary inversions**.

A **special severance** fund has been established between B.C. Terminal Elevator Operators' Association, Vancouver, British Columbia and Grain Workers' Union. The employer will contribute \$1.8 million for the purpose of early retirement and severance payments. The union is directed to make a proposal to the employers as to how it wishes the fund to be distributed among early retirement applicants and junior employees on layoff status. Should the parties be unable to resolve the distribution, either party may refer the matter to arbitration.

Working Conditions

Algoma Central Railway, system-wide, and various unions have introduced a provision concerning **technological, operational or organizational changes**. The employer will provide details of the change and the number of affected employees to the union. The parties may negotiate terms other than those provided in the collective agreement to minimize the adverse effects on employees. If such terms are not agreed upon within 15 days, they will be referred to a mediation review board. Should the changes result in the permanent layoff of a permanent employee hired before January 1, 1993, the employer shall canvass other permanent employees for volunteers to avoid the involuntary layoff. The voluntarily departing employee would receive a severance payment equal to two weeks pay per year of service up to the lesser of one year's pay or \$65,000.

For employees in the **job sharing** program at Exceldor Poultry Cooperative, St-Anselme, Quebec, and Centrale des syndicats démocratiques, the employer will contribute \$5.00 per week towards the group life insurance premium. Also, the employer will add 5.2 per cent to each pay period to compensate for paid holidays.

A **peer counselling** pilot program has been established with the City of Ottawa—OC Transpo and Amalgamated Transit Union. The program is to ensure that employees have trained peers available to them to discuss issues of concern at the workplace. The jointly developed training program will include 15 union employees trained in subjects such as conflict resolution, employee assistance counselling and combating harassment and discrimination.

Services Drummondville inc., Drummondville, Quebec and Union des ouvriers du textile-coton de Drummondville have initiated a **new system of work organization**. The plant has been divided into five workshops with a guarantee of no layoffs. Any employee who might be affected is flexible and can be transferred to other comparable occupations within the same group or, if they have the training required, to any other occupation in the group on the basis of operational requirements. Employees cannot refuse training.

A **new employee orientation** program exists with Ryder Truck Rental Canada Ltd., Canada-wide and CAW-Canada. A union representative will meet for up to one hour with new employees as a group during the new driver orientation session to acquaint them with the benefits and duties of union membership and employee responsibilities and obligations to the employer and the union. New dock employees' orientation and training will be limited to two weeks on day shift, after which they will move to the shift based on seniority and training may continue.

The City of Thunder Bay, Ontario and CAW-Canada have introduced the observance of a **minute of silence** each year on April 28, for employees who have been injured on the job, and on December 6, for issues of violence against women.

Training and Development

Services Drummondville inc., Drummondville, Quebec, and Union des ouvriers du textile-coton de Drummondville inc. have introduced a structured training plan for each occupation **to maintain and improve employee skills** in the plant. The skill assessment process takes into account observations by the employees supervisor and by the instructor in relation to job skills. Employees designated by the employer as instructors will receive a 10 per cent premium and are responsible for updating and developing the specific content used in training, writing the manual and any other related tasks.

A **shop steward training** plan between Canada Bread Atlantic Limited, Moncton, New Brunswick, and Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union provides information on labour-management relations and safety issues within the plant. Ryder Truck Rental Canada Ltd., Canada-wide and CAW-Canada have a provision whereby the employer contributes three cents per hour, per employee, to provide paid leave to upgrade employee skills in all aspects of **trade union functions**.

The University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario and Canadian Union of Public Employees have developed an **educational assistance** provision for the library technicians. Employees will have their tuition waived for a University of Toronto degree course, up to and including the Master's level. Fifty per cent of tuition will be reimbursed to employees completing job-related courses at other educational institutions.

Labour-Management Committees

During this first quarter of 2003, 18 of the 45 agreements with innovative practices contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of concerns.

Accuride Canada Inc., London, Ontario, and CAW-Canada has established a **return to work committee** to institute guidelines to return disabled employees to work and to monitor the return to work placement process and review the effectiveness of the program.

A **dispute resolution** committee has been initiated between Air Canada, system-wide, and Canadian Union of Public Employees. The parties will study and find solutions to disputes which will enable them to develop a more effective process. Also, a **wellness** committee has been created to deal with issues related to working conditions and the employer's concern over absenteeism.

Other committees included in collective agreements discuss such items as work scheduling, contracting-out, health and welfare benefit costs, retiree benefits, staff planning and job evaluations.

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