

Innovative Workplace Practices

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 69 collective agreement settlements negotiated during the fourth quarter of 2003. Of these, slightly under one-half (34 settlements) contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

Of the 69 settlements reviewed during the quarter, approximately 39 per cent (27 collective agreements) had a duration of 36 months. Four settlements had durations of 12 months. Twelve settlements had durations of between 22 and 29 months while 18 had durations of between 48 and 56 months. Eight settlements had durations of 60 months or more. A 96-month agreement was negotiated between Canada Post, Canada-wide and Canadian Union of Postal Workers: a first-time agreement covering 6,000 previously independent rural and suburban mail carriers.

Compensation

An **achievement incentive program** has been introduced between Bell Canada, province-wide, Quebec and Ontario and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. The program, based on financial results and customer satisfaction, has an objective to provide employees with 1.5 per cent of the basic wage rate for 2004 and 2005 and 3.0 per cent for 2006, 2007 and 2008.

The agreement between Alberta Treasury Branches, province-wide and Alberta Union of Provincial Employees includes a **variable pay** plan. The plan, based on attainment of branch, regional and corporate goals, provides for an annual maximum lump-sum payment of 150 per cent of 7.5 per cent of annual salary if all goals are met.

As a **result of cost savings**, the Government of British Columbia, province-wide and British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union recognize that there will be ongoing cost and savings accruals beyond the 2006 expiry of the current agreement. The parties agreed that savings in excess of costs will be applied to a wage increase or to other benefits during the term of the next collective agreement. The collective agreement also contains a negotiated **inflation adjustment account**. This account is used to cover cost-of-living adjustments to pensioners and to pay full or partial premiums for medical service plan coverage, extended health care and life insurance to age 65 for those employees who take early retirement. The employer contributes 2.5 per cent of salaries and effective April 1, 2005 the employee contributes 1.5 per cent of salaries, although this premium will be taken from gain sharing amounts generated.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Mississauga, Ontario and Montréal, Quebec and Society of Professional Engineers and Associates have a **merit pay** provision based on the distribution and salaries of bargaining unit members. For 2003 and 2004, the merit adjustments will be 2.0 per cent of salaries and in 2005, the adjustment will be 2.5 per cent.

A **recruitment and retention** provision has been introduced between Greyhound Canada Transportation Corporation, various locations in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and Yukon Territory and Amalgamated Transit Union. The employer reserves the right to increase wages on a regional basis in order to retain licensed mechanics. Prior to commencing any regional market analysis, the employer will meet with the union to discuss the concerns, the process and the intent of the market analysis.

CHUM Limited and other divisions, Toronto, Ontario and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have initiated a **wage protection** plan. An employee who has reverted to a lower salary group due to workforce adjustment will be subjected to the lower salary scale as follows: less than one year's service, after one month in the lower position, one to three years service, after 12 months; more than three years service, after 24 months in the position.

Three agreements contain a form of **long service bonus**. The agreement with the City of Edmonton, Alberta and Amalgamated Transit Union contains a **service bonus** whereby the operational, trades and maintenance employees receive a lump-sum payment in December of each year. Payments are calculated as follows: 5 to 9 years of service, 2¢ per hour worked; 10 to 14 years, 4¢ per hour worked; 15 to 19 years, 6¢ per hour worked; and 20 or more years, 8¢ per hour worked. The City of Montréal, Quebec and Montreal Firefighters' Association have a **seniority bonus** which provides 2.8 per cent of wages of employees with more than five years of seniority; effective January 1, 2004, 2.7 per cent, January 1, 2005, 2.6 per cent, and January 1, 2006, 2.0 per cent. The Caisses populaires du Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean, Quebec and Fédération du commerce inc. have established the following **long service vacation and bonus** schedule.

<u>Seniority</u>	<u>Additional Vacation</u>	<u>Bonus</u>
15 years	-	\$250
20 years	-	\$500
25 years	1 week	\$500
30 years	2 weeks	\$750
35 years	3 weeks	\$1,000
40 years	4 weeks	\$1,000

Working Conditions

The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, province-wide, Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Teachers' Union have introduced an **out-of-school instructional service**. Teachers shall be required, on request by the principal, and with reasonable notice, to provide students who are absent, with copies of lesson plans that were prepared and taught by the teacher, course outlines, sample tests and examinations, and such other materials as the teacher might prepare for the student's class. However, teachers shall not be expected to prepare additional materials, or to release tests and examination materials prior to their release to the class.

Canada Post Corporation, Canada-wide and Canadian Union of Postal Workers have a provision concerning **rotation of duties**. The employer will make every reasonable effort to ensure that an employee assigned to coding duties or manual loose loading or unloading of parcels from vehicles will not be required to perform these duties for the entire shift.

A new **retirees health spending account** applicable to employees who retire on or after January 1, 2003 has been established between Manitoba Hydro, province-wide and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The individual account will be initially limited to \$350 per year, but will be indexed annually by 2.5 per cent commencing January 1, 2005. Additional benefit improvements, valued at 0.25 per cent of basic salary annual payroll, will be added to the account in 2005,

unless the coalition of unions advises the employer by December 1, 2004 that it wishes to allocate the funds to improvements to the Manitoba Hydro Supplemental Pension Plan. The coalition will provide the employer with a reasonable opportunity to discuss the two options prior to making its final decision.

First Air, Canada-wide and Canadian Auto Workers have introduced an **attendance award leave** provision. An employee shall receive two days' additional vacation leave for perfect attendance and one day if sick for only one day during the year.

A **frequent travel leave** provision has been initiated between the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, Ottawa, Ontario and Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada. Employees who travel and are away from their residence for 40 nights in a fiscal year will receive one paid day plus one extra day for each 20 additional nights, to a maximum of five paid days per year.

The Municipal Corporation of Iqaluit, Nunavut and Public Service Alliance of Canada have a **child care paid expense while on travel**. An employee, who is required to travel on behalf of the employer, may be reimbursed a maximum of \$35 per day, per child, upon provision of a receipt.

Job Security

A **plant closure** clause appears in two agreements. Weyerhaeuser Canada, Kamloops, British Columbia and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada offer a **severance** payment in a lump-sum payment equal to two weeks' pay per year of service to a maximum of 52 weeks' pay. ThyssenKrupp Fabco, Windsor, Ontario and Canadian Auto Workers have a provision for 20 weeks **notice or pay in lieu** in case of a closure.

MTD Products Limited, Kitchener, Ontario and Canadian Auto Workers have a **work injury** provision. An employee who has been injured on the job and must make follow-up appointments with a physician will be paid for a maximum of 10 visits.

Mayne Logistics Loomis, province-wide, Ontario and Canadian Auto Workers have also negotiated a new work injury provision. Employees who become **incapacitated** as a result of a work related injury **will not be terminated** as long as work is available that medical restrictions will allow them to perform; the employer will provide such employees with 10 days of training. In addition, a **substance abuse** provision has been negotiated between the parties. The employer will provide all normal group insurance benefits while an employee is under a medically prescribed course of treatment, and will pay the costs of the treatment if the institute chosen is not covered under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan.

The Government of Manitoba, province-wide and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have amended their policy concerning **military leave** to permit leaves of absence of up to three years for the purposes of military service in the Canadian Forces.

Funds

An **employee assistance** fund has been established with the City of Montréal, Quebec and Canadian Union of Public Employees. The employer contributes 2.3 per cent of the total payroll to the fund to provide emergency assistance to employees who fall sick or suffer accidents.

Sun-Rype Products Ltd., Kelowna, British Columbia and International Brotherhood of Teamsters have an **education** fund whereby the employer contributes 2¢ per hour worked to the union's shop steward fund; effective September 1, 2004, 3¢ per hour worked.

The agreement between Canada Post Corporation, Canada-wide and Canadian Union of Postal Workers contains a **child care** fund. The employer will contribute \$300,000 each quarter and 1/2 of one per cent of the employer's annual net operating profits to the fund. Employee's children, grandchildren and dependent adult children with special needs may benefit from admission in a facility and be eligible for a subsidy.

Training

The City of Montréal, Quebec and Montreal Firefighters' Association have introduced **modifications to individual work schedules** so as to facilitate training and development programs. Tuition fees will be reimbursed to employees who take an approved relevant career planning course.

Weyerhaeuser Canada, Kamloops, British Columbia and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have a provision to cover apprentice **out-of-town training expenses**. On successful completion of the required period of vocational school training, the employer will reimburse expenses to a maximum of two hours' pay per day on a 7-day per week basis at the first year apprentice rate.

Labour-Management Committees

During the fourth quarter of 2003, 12 of the 34 agreements with innovative practices contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of concerns.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Mississauga, Ontario and Montréal, Quebec and Society of Professional Engineers and Associates have introduced a **non-monetary issues resolution** committee. The committee has been established to resolve, or engage a mediator to help resolve, outstanding issues: contracting-out; competition for positions within the bargaining unit, including work outside Canada; layoff positions; and the definition of a program for development and training funding of up to 3.0 per cent of payroll.

A **labour relations** committee has been created between the City of Montréal, Quebec and Montreal Firefighters' Association. Employees will be involved in the process of reorganizing the work and improving the workplace atmosphere as well as other aspects of labour relations.

Bell Canada, province-wide, Quebec and Ontario and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have introduced an **enhanced mobility** committee which will recommend measures to facilitate employee mobility within the company and to improve employees' access to information about the career opportunities available.

Other committees described in collective agreements include such items as training, pension plan recommendations, work reorganization and employee assistance programs.

Innovative Workplace Practices

Previously published innovative workplace practices from past issues of the Workplace Gazette, are available on the Workplace Information Directorate Website at

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca>, click on:

- (1) *Labour and Workplace*,
- (2) *Workplace Information and Innovation*,
- (3) *Workplace Innovations*.