

Innovative Workplace Practices

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

This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 62 collective agreement settlements negotiated during the first quarter of 2004. Of these, slightly over one half (34 settlements) contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

Of the 62 settlements reviewed during the quarter, over half (35 collective agreements) had a duration ranging from 30 to 36 months. Four settlements had durations of 12 months. Eight settlements had durations of between 24 and 29 months while five had durations of exactly 48 months. Ten settlements had durations of 60 months or more. The longest agreement (83 months) was negotiated between Brasseries Molson, Montréal, Quebec and International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Two settlements had 72-month durations: West Fraser Mills Ltd., Smithers, British Columbia and Northern Interior Woodworkers Association and Rogers Cable Inc., Toronto, Ontario and Metro Cable TV Maintenance and Service Employees Association.

Compensation

Gain sharing plans appear in several settlements over the period reviewed. The plan between Canadian Pacific Railway, system-wide and United Steelworkers of America is based on specific performance criteria and the employees will share 40 per cent of the productivity gains achieved in 2003, 2004 and 2005, up to a maximum of 5.0 per cent of wages. Any lump-sum amounts generated are included in pension calculations. British Columbia Assessment Authority, province-wide and

Canadian Union of Public Employees negotiated a plan whereby the employee's share realized through improved efficiency will be 50 per cent of any gain in the productivity to a maximum of 5.0 per cent of wages earned in any year. Another plan between Autoliv Electronics Canada Ltd. and International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers provides quarterly payments based on an employee's base wage and that plant-wide quality and performance metrics are met on a monthly basis. Payment amounts will be based on hours worked up to 37.5 hours per week, excluding over-time.

Bell Canada, province-wide, Quebec and Ontario, and Canadian Telecommunications Employee's Association have a **sales bonus** plan which recognizes individual and team contribution toward sales and performance objectives. On the basis of the attainment of 100 per cent of the sales objectives, payment will be as follows:

Occupation	Percentage of Base Salary at Target		
	2004	2005	2006
	%	%	%
Sales Associate	20	25	30
Sales Representative	43	43	43
Account Executive	51	51	51

Alcan Smelters and Chemicals Ltd., Jonquière and other centres, Quebec and Fédération des syndicats du secteur de l'aluminium inc. have negotiated **market-linked wage reopeners** for the last two years of the collective agreement. The adjustments will be based on aluminium industry weighted average wage rates with a guarantee of 1.0 per cent more

than the highest rate in the industry. Following the survey of 10 major companies, should Alcan's industry position, including the 1.0 per cent guarantee, be more that 3.0 per cent above the general market, employees will receive 50 per cent of the difference in the form of quarterly lump-sum payments. The final year adjustment will also take into account CPI forecasts for the next year, studies of wage projection, wage adjustments in other industry companies and Alcan's financial situation.

An **employee bonus plan** has been established between BC Rail Ltd., province-wide and Canadian Auto Workers. Employees will be entitled to a bonus of 1.0 per cent of basic wages should the net operating income of BC Rail reach \$68,332,000; 2.0 per cent should the net operating income reach \$74,787,780 and 3.0 per cent should the net operating income reach \$81,243,558. Allstream, Canada-wide and Canadian Auto Workers have a **corporate bonus** based on company performance and customer satisfaction. The bonus will provide a maximum of 4.0 per cent of the base rate of pay for each year of the contract. A **performance pay plan** exists between Independent Electricity Market Operator, province-wide, Ontario and Society of Energy Professionals. The plan, based on corporate and line of business results, can generate a minimum payout of 1.0 per cent of base payroll each year of the collective agreement. The overall guaranteed minimum payout will be 2.0 per cent with no maximum amounts. Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Chalk River and Deep River, Ontario and Office and Professional Employees International Union have also initiated a performance pay plan with annual merit increases as follows:

Level	Meets Most Requirements	Fully Meets Requirements	Exceeds Requirements	Outstanding	Step Value
7	-	1	1.25	1.5	\$ 700
8	-	1	1.25	1.5	\$ 800
9	-	1	1.25	1.5	\$ 900
10	-	1	1.25	1.5	\$ 1,000
11	-	1	1.25	1.5	\$ 1,100

The balance of a merit increase beyond an employee's position range maximum will be paid in a lump-sum payment as a re-earnable merit bonus.

Two agreements contain a provision for a **long service bonus**. The agreement with the City of Toronto, Ontario, and International Association of Fire Fighters contains a **service bonus**. Payments applied across all firefighter ranks are calculated as follows: 6 years of service, \$77 per year; 11 years, \$143 per year; 16 years, \$205 per year; 21 years, \$260 per year; 26 years, \$325 per year and 30 or more years, \$340 per year. Amounts generated will be included as salary in calculating overtime, vacation, statutory holiday pay, pension contributions, sick leave pay, etc. Provincial Health Authorities of Alberta, province-wide and Health Sciences Association of Alberta have established a **long service increment** whereby an equivalent to 3.5 per cent of the current top step will be added as a 9th step of the salary schedule for all professional and technical classifications in Pay Grade 6 and above. To qualify for the increment, eligible employees must have six years of service at the previous top step of their classification.

Working Conditions

The City of New Westminster, British Columbia and Canadian Union of Public Employees have established a **flexible work hours** arrangement for employees in certain classifications who are scheduled to work extended work days in order to attend public sessions or meetings.

Over the review period, many unique leave provisions were negotiated. Air Transat A. T. inc., and International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, various locations, Canada-wide and outside Canada, have negotiated a new **leave without pay** provision whereby employees willing to take such leave to pre-

vent other employees from being laid off, will continue to accumulate seniority for wage increase and vacation entitlement purposes. The parties have also established a leave of one day **after an off-base posting** lasting 30 consecutive days; two days from between 30 and 60 days; three days from 60 to 90 days and 4 days from 90 to 180 consecutive days. The Government of Canada, Canada-wide and Canadian Association of Professional Employees have negotiated a similar leave provision for **trips on government business**. An employee will receive one day of leave after being away from home for 40 nights per year on government business outside their headquarters area. There will be an additional one day of leave for each additional 20-night period up to a maximum of five days per year.

The Provincial Health Authorities of Alberta, province-wide and Health Sciences Association of Alberta have introduced a special paid leave of up to four days per year if an employee is unable to work due to **unanticipated circumstances of pressing necessity** requiring the employee's personal attention. The City of Toronto, Ontario and International Association of Fire Fighters have established a new **quarantine leave** whereby time lost by an employee as a result of being quarantined by a certified medical practitioner because of a job related incident will be treated as a leave of absence with pay for the duration of the quarantine.

The College Compensation and Appointments Council, province-wide, Ontario and Ontario Public Service Employees Union established a **workplace wellness** task force. In order to maintain a positive workplace, the committee will undertake to investigate components of workplace wellness; identify sources of workplace stressors; assess mechanisms for relieving existing workplace stressors; review colleges' current practices; and gather and analyze information on employee and management concerns.

A new **health spending account** has been established between the Government of Manitoba, province-wide and Manitoba Government and

General Employees' Union. Effective January 1, 2005, the individual account will provide full-time employees reimbursement to a maximum of \$120 per year in supplemental medical expenses and part-time employees to a maximum of \$60 per year; effective January 1, 2006, \$200 and \$100, respectively.

Job Security

Three agreements have negotiated a **plant closure** clause with varied severance packages. Autoliv Electronics Canada Inc., Markham, Ontario and International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers offer a **severance** payment in a lump-sum payment equal to three weeks' pay per year of service to a maximum of 65 weeks' pay. Tolko Industries Ltd., The Pas, Manitoba and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada offer lump-sum payments equal to two weeks' pay per year of service to a maximum of 52 weeks. Tower Automotive, Toronto, Ontario and United Steelworkers also provide a severance payment to employees with over five years service of one week's pay per year of service to a maximum of 34 weeks.

The College Compensation and Appointments Council, province-wide, Ontario and Ontario Public Service Employees Union have introduced a **return-to-work program**. Every college will have a policy to support injured and ill employees in returning to work, and will contain the following:

- a statement of commitment that describes how the program will operate, which may include a permanent or ad hoc committee;
- strategies that support the statement of commitment and formal framework within which individual return-to-work cases are managed;
- a description of roles and responsibilities for the various stakeholders involved in the process;

- a process that outlines the steps to be followed in managing individual cases, including a mediation component;
- a communications and training component; and,
- a process for regular reviews of the program.

Overwaitea Food Group, province-wide, British Columbia and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union have negotiated a **job security guarantee** provision. In the event that an existing Overwaitea store is impacted by the opening of a new Overwaitea store in close proximity, the employees will not suffer a reduction of hours, pay or benefits. If an employee is impacted by such a development, the employee may be transferred to another store within an area of 40 kilometres. The guarantee covers Pay Grid A and B employees who have a minimum of four years continuous service, are at the top of their classification and have averaged a minimum of 24 hours work per week for a period of three consecutive months.

Training

Tolko Industries Ltd., The Pas, Manitoba 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.

Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario and Canadian Union of Public Employees have a **tuition assistance program** for the service and maintenance employees. An amount of up to \$400 per year will be available for work-related courses at a recognized institution other than Queen's. For courses taken at Queen's, the tuition payment will be waived to a maximum value equivalent to five full-credit undergraduate arts and science courses. The university also has a **tuition support plan** with a fund of \$70,000 per year. If the value of eligible

claims is less than the total available, the surplus will carry forward to the next year. If eligible claims exceed the total available, the fund will be reviewed and amounts will be prorated based on the number of claims. Employee's spouses and dependent natural, step, common-law and adopted children under the age of 25 are eligible for tuition support up to \$3,000 per year, per person. This support allowance can be applied to full- or part-time undergraduate, graduate and professional programs offered at any recognized university or college in Canada or the United States.

Labour-Management Committees

During the first quarter of 2004, 13 of the 34 agreements with innovative practices contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of concerns.

The City of Toronto, Ontario and International Association of Fire Fighters have established a committee which will examine the possibilities of moving to a promotional process that focuses on **career development and continuous learning**, while maintaining placement on a list based on seniority within a qualification period. The committee will investigate opportunities for a modular-based qualification and re-qualification process. The parties have also initiated committees concerning substance abuse policies, benefits monitoring, hours of work and staffing reviews.

The British Columbia Assessment Authority, province-wide and Canadian Union of Public Employees have introduced a **productivity** committee to identify improvements in processes and work practices, enhancements in the delivery of services to the public and innovations and improved efficiencies throughout the organization.

Other committees included in collective agreements discuss such items as classification evaluations, job profiles, health and welfare benefits, retiree benefits, pension plan reviews and modified work to accommodate ill or injured employees.