

# Innovative Workplace Practices

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 87 collective agreement settlements negotiated during the third quarter of 2004. Of these, 37 settlements contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

## Duration

Of the 87 settlements reviewed during the quarter, slightly fewer than 50 per cent (41 collective agreements) had a duration of 36 months. Almost half of these were in the construction industry with 11 province-wide settlements in Ontario and 8 in Alberta. Five settlements had durations of 12 months. Eight settlements had durations of between 21 and 29 months while 12 had durations of between 42 and 48 months. Eight settlements had durations of between 54 and 60 months. The five Air Canada settlements reported a duration of 61 months. Five forestry settlements had durations of 72 months while the longest duration covered in this period was a 74-month settlement between Westfair Foods Ltd., Real Canadian Superstore, Western Grocers and Extra Food Divisions, province-wide, British Columbia and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.

## Compensation

Four collective agreement settlements have reported **profit-sharing** plans: two in the forest industry and two in the steel manufacturing industry. The plan between the Council on Northern Interior Forest Employment Relations, in the northern interior of British Columbia and Industrial Wood and Allied Workers of Canada is based on the industry's return on capital investment and will provide annual

lump-sum payments of \$500 with respect to years two, four, five, and six of the collective agreement and \$1,000 in year three. The plan with Canadian Forest Products Ltd., Mackenzie, British Columbia, and Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada is to be established in 2004 and is also based on the industry's return on capital.

Effective August 15, 2004, the profit-sharing plans in two settlements with Algoma Steel Inc., Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and United Steelworkers of America provide employees with a \$10,000 advance payment, prorated for employees who work less than 1,000 hours as of August 1, 2004. The balance, if any, will be paid by March 31, 2005. Future amounts will be paid in two instalments, 50 per cent of projected profit sharing in November 2005 and the balance paid 90 days after the end of the fiscal year.

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia and Faculty Association of the University of British Columbia have introduced **market adjustments** for the following classifications:

- General Librarians – the minimum salary schedule is to be increased at a cost not to exceed \$50,000;
- Department of Economics – base salaries of selected faculty members will be increased in aggregate by the sum of \$150,000; and
- Commerce and Business Administration – base salaries of selected faculty members will be increased in aggregate by the sum of \$400,000.

The parties also negotiated **productivity payments** that provide for the recognition of the contributions of faculty members for the research and development in the area of fundraising activities. Lump-sum payments of up to 1.0 per cent of salary will be payable on June 30, 2006 if specified targets are achieved.

A **stock purchase** plan has been negotiated between Cooper-Standard Automotive (Canada) Limited, Stratford, Ontario and Canadian Auto Workers. For every dollar the employee contributes to the plan, the employer will contribute 25 per cent of that amount to the employee's defined contribution pension account, to a maximum of \$320 per month.

The National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Ontario and Public Service Alliance of Canada have a **service pay** provision which provides a 2.0 per cent increase on base salary to employees once every year on the employee's anniversary of hiring or promotion if the employee has not reached the maximum of scale; effective July 1, 2004, 2.5 per cent and July 1, 2005, 2.5 per cent. If in any year, the full percentage can not be applied because the employee's salary will reach the maximum, the difference will be given as a lump-sum payment.

## Working Conditions

The Council of Marine Carriers, coastal region, British Columbia and Canadian Merchant Service Guild have **reduced work schedules** for the purpose of **retirement phase-in**. An officer may request to work up to half time at 60 years of age with 15 years of service; 55 years of age with 20 years of service or 50 years of age with 25 years of service. The minimum period for such an arrangement is one year. The arrangement must be mutually agreed to by the officer and the employer and it is understood that the officer may have to relinquish current posting and take another position in order to facilitate the modified hours.

Camoplast inc, Roxton Falls, Grand-Mère and Princeville, Quebec and Association des employés de Camoplast Roski have introduced a new provision on **psychological harassment** providing for the employer to adopt appropriate measures in order to prevent psychological harassment and to eliminate such behaviour when brought to the employer's attention.

CANPAR Transport Ltd., Canada-wide and United Steelworkers of America have initiated a provision whereby an employee who is off duty due to illness and is not claiming short-term disability will have the option of **using accumulated banked overtime** as of the second day of absence. Also, another new provision in the settlement states that an employee who becomes ill or injured will be allowed to **continue payment into the pension plan** while off work. For the employer contribution to be paid, the employee must make all required employee contributions which must commence within 90 days of the start of the leave and continue throughout the leave period.

Continuation of **health benefits for employees on layoff** has been negotiated between the City of Hamilton, Ontario and Canadian Union of Public Employees. The provision provides for benefit coverage for a period of 13 weeks while on layoff. In the event the layoff is deemed by the employer as temporary and exceeds 13 weeks, the employer will continue benefit coverage for the entire period of layoff. As well, the parties have established an **emergency leave** provision whereby the employee is entitled to a maximum of 10 unpaid days for personal illness, injury or medical emergency. The leave may also be used for the death, illness, medical emergency of an urgent matter concerning specified family members.

The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, various locations in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia and Grain Services Union have established a **military leave** provision. Employees, with at least one year of service, shall be entitled to a maximum of two unpaid weeks per year for the purpose of

serving with the armed forces. Upon return to work, the employee shall be placed in the same or similar position with the same rate of pay as they had prior to the leave.

## Job Security

A **work reassignment or leave provision during pregnancy** has been initiated by the National Research Council of Canada, Canada-wide and National Research Council Employees' Association. It provides for the possibility of a reassignment, or leave when reassignment is not possible, should an employee who is pregnant or breastfeeding considers that her work can be a danger for her future child or baby.

The Provincial Health Authorities of Alberta, Facilities and Community Care Sectors, province-wide, Alberta and United Nurses of Alberta have established a **mobility** clause. The clause provides the employer with the ability to relocate a service within 50 kilometres and have the employees move with the service; create positions that are not tied to work in a specific location and based on patients needs; create positions that are regularly scheduled to work in more than one site; and temporarily assign employees to work at other sites when required for education, orientation, meetings, equipment servicing, emergencies, etc.

A **voluntary employment buyout** option has been negotiated between Westfair Foods Ltd., Real Canadian Superstore, Western Grocers and Extra Foods, province-wide, British Columbia and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union. It provides that Food Clerk Specialists and Distribution Specialists earning \$20.00 or more per hour can request a buyout within 30 days of ratification. The buyout will be calculated based on four times the average weekly earnings for each year of service, to a maximum of \$50,000. The program will be limited to a maximum financial outlay of \$3,500,000. Full-time vacancies created as a result of the buyout option will be filled within 60 days of resignation with part-time employees wishing full-time status.

Securicor, province-wide, Ontario and International Brotherhood of Teamsters have negotiated a provision that will ensure the **stability of retirement benefits** for employees close to retirement during the change from a defined benefit pension plan to a defined contribution plan. The employer will compensate employees who are close to retirement against any lower retirement benefit entitlement that might arise from the change to a new defined contribution plan. Effective September 1, 2004, the employer will contribute, on behalf of employees who are members of the defined benefit plan and 50 years of age or older, an amount calculated as a percentage of the contribution being made for that month to the defined contribution plan based on the employee's age at the beginning of each month as follows:

Age	Percentage
50	20%
51	40%
52	60%
53	80%
54 or older	100%

Contributions will be deposited in the employee's registered retirement savings plan with the employee determining how the amount will be invested.

The parties have also negotiated a **contracting-out** provision that will allow service work and cash transfers to be performed by outside contractors within the area. The service work will not include cash loading and will only be done in a secure location. Cash transfer work may only be performed by contractors within a financial institution. Effective April 1, 2004, the employer will pay the union 25¢ per hour worked by a contractor for whom consent has been given.

**Plant closure** clauses have been included in three settlements for this period. The provision between Abitibi-Consolidated of Canada, various locations in Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada states that in the

case of permanent closure of a paper machine, department or plant, an employee shall receive a maximum **severance benefit** of one week and a half of wages for each year of continuous service.

The Council on Northern Interior Forest Employment Relations (CONIFER) in the northern region and the Interior Forest Labour Relations Association in the southern region of British Columbia, both with the Industrial Wood and Allied Workers of Canada, have an identical clause whereby in the event of a permanent plant or logging camp closure, an employee will receive a **severance payment** equal to 10 days wages for each year of continuous service.

### **Labour-Management Committees**

During the third quarter of 2004, 16 of the 37 agreements with innovative practices contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of issues.

The City of Hamilton, Ontario and Canadian Union of Public Employees have established an **employee relations** committee with a mandate to foster effective and productive communication between the parties and the promotion of constructive and harmonious relations and to reflect the recognition by the City that the staff are the City's most valuable

resource and that the effective utilization of staff is vital to achieve expected outcomes, promote a climate of mutual respect and provide for efficient and fair internal resolution of concerns and complaints.

A **pension review** committee between the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, various locations in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia and Grain Services Union will address the financial viability of the pension plan. The committee will canvas all options that will assist the plan in maintaining assets that are sufficient to meet liabilities, including opening the plan to new members.

The National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Ontario and Public Service Alliance of Canada have a **pre-retirement transition** committee which will review transition programs and their potential applicability. The committee will commence their review within 15 days of the signing of the collective agreement.

Other committees included in collective agreements deal with such items as classification evaluations, health and safety, training, child care facilities and health and welfare benefits.

## *Innovative Workplace Practices*

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

**<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/wid/info.shtml> .**