

Innovative Workplace Practices

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Workplace Information

Labour Program, Human Resources and Social Development Canada

This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 87 collective agreements settling during the first quarter of 2007. Of these, 28 settlements contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

The average contract duration this quarter was 30.7 months with over half (52%) having a duration of 36 months. Fourteen agreements had a duration of 48 months and 8 settlements had durations of 24 months. There were 6 settlements with a 12-month duration. Eleven settlements had 60-month durations while the longest agreements were an 84-month duration between QIT-Fer et Titane Inc., Sorel-Tracy, Quebec and Fédération de la métallurgie and an 87-month duration with Olymel, Société en commandite, Vallée-Jonction, Quebec and Fédération du commerce.

Compensation

A **nickel price bonus** between Xstrata Nickel, division of Falconbridge Limited, Falconbridge, Ontario and Canadian Auto Workers will provide employees with quarterly payments based on 1¢ per hour worked in which the company's average realized price for nickel reaches \$2.15 US per pound, plus an additional 1¢ per hour worked for every 1¢ in excess of \$2.25 US. Payments are made quarterly on a lump-sum basis provided the company is profitable.

Two settlements between Expertech Network Installations Inc., province-wide,

Quebec and Ontario and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have negotiated a **profit-sharing** plan which replaces a performance incentive plan deleted after a classification restructuring. Employees occupying reclassified positions during 2009 and 2010 will share an amount equal to 15% of net revenues if they represent at least 3.5% of consolidated revenues. A joint committee will be established to set up payment distribution criteria and to determine the profits available for distribution to employees.

Enbridge Gas Distribution, province-wide, Ontario and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have also negotiated a **Short-Term Incentive Program**. Effective in each year of the contract, and provided the company and department targets are achieved, eligible employees will receive 4.0% of base income as lump-sum payments. If targets are not met, no payments will be made.

A **productivity bonus** has been introduced between British Columbia Rapid Transit Co. Ltd., Surrey, British Columbia and Canadian Union of Public Employees. Effective September 1, 2009, all active employees and those on approved leaves of absence, will receive \$1,000 if the bargaining unit achieves an absenteeism rate of 5.0% or less in the previous 12-month period. The bonus will be prorated for part-time employees.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Chalk River, Ontario and Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada

have established a **merit pay** provision. Effective July 1, 2007, not less than 2.0% merit adjustments based on the aggregate base salaries of the bargaining unit members, effective as of February 28, 2007, will be rewarded. The adjustments for July 1, 2008, 2009, and 2010 will be 2.0, 2.25, and 2.25% respectively, based on the aggregate base salaries in effect on the previous February 28.

Recruitment and retention adjustments have been introduced between the Government of British Columbia, province-wide and Union of Psychiatric Nurses and British Columbia Nurses' Union. In order to address the systematic difficulty of recruiting and retaining nurses, the following incentives will be put in place for the duration of the agreement: when working an afternoon or weekend shift, a maximum premium of \$1.50 per hour and for night shifts, a maximum of \$2.95 per hour.

Three other settlements also have recruitment and retention provisions. Two settlements between Nova Scotia Association of Health Organizations, province-wide, excluding Halifax—one with the Canadian Auto Workers and the other with Canadian Union of Public Employees, state that certain healthcare employees will receive adjustments of 2.1% effective November 1, 2006, 2007, and 2008. Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario and Carleton University Academic Staff will give a \$400 adjustment of salaries at date of hire of employees employed after May 1, 2006.

Health and Welfare

A **health care spending account** has been established with Edmonton School District No. 7, Edmonton, Alberta and

Canadian Union of Public Employees. Effective September 1, 2007, an individual health benefit account in the amount of \$175 per year will be set up on behalf of each permanent full-time employee; September 1, 2008, \$250 per year. The amounts are prorated for part-time employees. The account is to be used to access supplementary medical care not included in the current health coverage in the collective agreement.

Alberta Cancer Board, province-wide and Alberta Union of Provincial Employees have negotiated a **flexible health benefit spending account**. Effective at the date of signing, an amount of \$300 per year will be established for each full-time employee; effective January 1, 2008, amount increased to \$500. Any unused allocation in an employee's account as of December 31 may be carried forward to a maximum of one calendar year. The account may be used to cover reimbursement for health and dental expenses that are eligible medical expenses in accordance with the *Income Tax Act* but are not covered by the agreement benefits plans.

South Shore Regional School Board, Lunenburg and Queen Counties, Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Teachers' Union have introduced a **living donor leave** provision. The employee may receive 10 days leave to be a living donor which will allow the employee the time required for testing, counselling, consultation, extraction, and recovery.

Working Conditions

The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Government and General Employees'

Union have introduced a provision covering **Aboriginal representation** in the workforce. Until the proportion of Aboriginal employees reflects the proportional representation of Aboriginal persons of working age in Saskatchewan, qualified Aboriginal applicants will be given preference in the hiring process. Each posting of a vacant position resulting from a retirement during the term of the collective agreement may be designated so that qualified Aboriginal applicants be given the right of first refusal over all other candidates, with criteria to be established by the parties. The parties may continue the application of this provision after June 30, 2009, by mutual agreement. The parties have also negotiated a **youth employment** provision to increase employment opportunities for recent post-secondary graduates and to begin to address the demographic challenges associated with retirements. A pilot program will be included whereby each academic division will identify two full-time positions they have targeted for recruitment to attract recent graduates.

Sobeys Retail Support Centre, Milton, Ontario and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union have introduced an **employment adjustment** provision. The employer will contribute \$150 per employee which will provide affected employees with job training, resume writing, supplemental employment insurance benefit assistance and other resources.

An **alternate dispute resolution** provision has been established between Canadian National Railway Company, system-wide and Canadian Auto Workers. Twice per year an expedited arbitration process coupled with mandatory joint conferences will take

place in order to reduce the number of outstanding grievances.

Waterloo Catholic District School Board, Waterloo and area, Ontario and Canadian Union of Public Employees have negotiated a **quarantine leave** provision whereby employees will be granted leave without loss of pay or sick leave credits as a result of being quarantined by order of the Medical Officer of Health.

Labour-Management Committees

During the first quarter, one-third of the agreements contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of issues.

Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union have established a **labour relations dialogue** committee. The mandate will be to promote better communications, mutual respect and understanding between management and the union; to discuss and attempt to resolve issues and concerns of the parties; and to share information on operational changes being considered by management.

A **job evaluation** committee has been introduced between Hay River Health and Social Services Authority, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The parties will meet to implement a new or revised job evaluation system and negotiate new rates of pay for the affected positions. The Hay job evaluation guide charts and benchmarks positions as set out by the committee will be used for assessing the value of positions to which the employees are assigned. The employer will adjust the point ratings of all

positions to reflect the findings and notify each employee of current point position. Employees will have 30 days from notification to appeal their position job evaluation. An appeal system has been implemented to give employees an opportunity to explain their reasons for the appeal.

The City of Regina, Saskatchewan and Canadian Union of Public Employees have established a **market supplement program** committee. The parties will develop a program that is timely and receptive given the rapidly changing labour market conditions that require the employer to be responsive with respect to retention and recruitment of certain workforce occupations.

A **labour mobility tracking** committee has been introduced between Alcan Inc., Alma, Quebec and Steelworkers. The committee is to be established in order to ensure the effective movement of labour and to reduce overtime associated with unfilled positions.

Other committees included in collective agreements deal with such items as work reorganization, new technology, work rescheduling, rehabilitation, health and welfare provisions, and workplace harassment.

Previous articles on innovative workplace practices are available at <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/wid/win/00index.shtml>.

Source: Labour Policy and Workplace Information, HRSDC—Labour Program.

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

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