

Innovative Workplace Practices

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 69 collective agreements settled during the second quarter of 2007. Of these, 18 settlements contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

Forty agreements had a duration of 36 months which represents over half (58%) of the total settlements for the second quarter of 2007. Six agreements had a duration of 48 months and 8 settlements had durations of 24 months. There were 6 settlements with a 12-month duration. Three settlements had 56-month durations while 5 settlements had 60-month durations. The longest duration was an 72-month agreement between Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec, Services de cartes Desjardins, Montréal, Quebec and United Food and Commercial Workers of Canada.

Compensation

A **corporate team incentive plan** between Canada Post Corporation, Canada-wide and Canadian Union of Postal Workers will provide full- and part-time employees with an incentive potential of 3.0% per fiscal year for meeting the 4 corporate performance targets of customer value index, financial performance, delivery service, and employee engagement. Also, there is a potential for earning more than 3.0% if the corporation exceeds its targets, and less if the corporation does not meet its targets. Any amount generated will be given

as a lump-sum payment and pro-rated for part-time employees

The Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec, Services de cartes Desjardins, Montréal, Quebec and United Food and Commercial Workers of Canada have negotiated an **incentive system based on individual performance**. According to an annual assessment, an employee whose performance is judged to be "as expected" is entitled to a lump-sum payment of 3.0% of wages with wages maintained at the normal level. An employee with a "superior" assessment is entitled to a lump-sum payment of 2.0% of wages and wages increased by 2.0% and an employee with an "exceptional" assessment is entitled to a lump-sum payment of 1.0% of wages and wages increased by 4.0%.

A **flexible spending account** has been established between Saskatchewan Telecommunications, province-wide, Saskatchewan, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. Effective December 15, 2007 and each December 15 thereafter, the employer will contribute 1.0% of base salary to an account. Employees will have the option of allocating such funds to the pension plan, registered retirement savings plan, health spending account, home computer purchase program or to a wellness account. Part-time employees will receive a pro-rated contribution.

Health and Welfare

A **health care spending account** has been established with Southern Alberta Institute

of Technology, Calgary, Alberta and SAIT Academic Faculty Association. Effective July 1, 2009, an individual health benefit account in the amount of \$500 per year will be set up on behalf of each permanent full-time employee. The account is to be used to access supplementary medical care not included in the current health coverage in the collective agreement.

Canada Post Corporation, Canada-wide and Canadian Union of Postal Workers have introduced a provision concerning **employees with hearing impairments**. The employer will provide an independent sign or oral language interpreter for employees with hearing impairments when receiving formal training. Also, the employer will contribute up to a maximum of \$100,000 to produce a video version of the collective agreement in American Sign Language and Quebec Sign Language and will reimburse registration fees of employees who take sign language courses to better communicate with employees with hearing impairments.

An **employee wellness program** has been established between Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, province-wide, and Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union. The goal of the program is to assist employees in making personal changes with a focus on establishing and maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle. Some of the initiatives include a health risk assessment tool, up-to-date health information, and proactive tools to promote wellness. The employer will contribute \$30,000 towards the program's operations.

Working Conditions

The Durham District School Board, Whitby and area, Ontario and Canadian Union of Public Employees have established a new **summer work schedule**. Commencing in

September 2007, employees will work an additional 30 minutes on every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Effective July 2008, full-time employees will be paid for 40 hours per week but will work 41.5 hours. This will enable employees to have every Friday off during the summer months commencing in 2008 although 3 of these days must be covered by accumulated vacation leave.

A **reduced workweek** provision has been introduced by Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec, Services de cartes Desjardins, Montréal, Quebec and United Food and Commercial Workers of Canada. In order to meet obligations related to the care, health or education of the employee's child or of the spouse's child, or due to the state of health of the employee's spouse, father, mother, brother, sister, or grandparent, employees will be able to go on a reduced workweek once every 3 years. The minimum number of hours worked will be 25 per week for a duration from 15 days to a maximum of 12 months.

Olymel Société en commandite, Berthierville, Quebec and Fédération du commerce have initiated an **extra staff pool** for heavier work periods. The parties have agreed to implement a pool of 40 employees who will be required to report to work in order of seniority, on call and at the employer's choice. Members of the team are not guaranteed weekly hours of work and may not work outside regular working hours unless there is a shortage of staff. Seniority is accumulated after 280 hours worked at a rate of 8 hours per day, and when the employer staffs a regular position, the employee with the most seniority will be selected.

Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, province-wide and Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union

have negotiated a **youth employment initiative**. The plan will identify full-time positions to be designated as opportunities for hiring recent post-secondary graduates and include entry level for certain occupations and hard-to-recruit positions. The union agrees to waive provincial seniority for the recruitment of these positions. No existing employee will be bumped or lose employment as a result of the positions identified.

A **representative workforce** provision has been established between Saskatchewan Telecommunications, province-wide and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. The parties agree to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate initiatives designed to facilitate participation by equity seeking groups—Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, visible minorities, and women in non-traditional jobs—in all occupations. In order to achieve full representation, the parties will prepare the workplace, develop partnerships to promote and facilitate employment, and prepare provincial youth for future employment. Educational opportunities will be implemented for all employees to raise awareness of cultural and other differences and to ensure a better understanding of respectful work practices. Subject to business requirements, every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate an employee when a request is made to attend or participate in a spiritual or cultural observance required by faith or culture.

Canada Post Corporation, Canada-wide and Canadian Union of Postal Workers have negotiated an **ergonomic study** concerning oversized manual sorting cases. The employer will contribute up to a maximum of \$100,000 to conduct a study to review the ergonomic considerations of the safe use of stools during the manual sorting process. The study will

review if the case design can be practically modified to accommodate the use of stools in a manner that will decrease the risk of musculoskeletal injury during the sorting process. The parties will select a third party ergonomic expert based on their proposed research plan and will submit a report to the National Joint Health and Safety Committee.

Alcan Inc., Kitimat and Kemano, British Columbia and Canadian Auto Workers have introduced a **military/voluntary emergency response** leave. An employee may be granted an unpaid leave of absence to fulfill training and duty requirements.

Labour-Management Committees

During the second quarter, 29 of the 69 agreements contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of issues.

Olymel Société en commandite, Berthierville, Quebec and Fédération du commerce have established a **economic transparency** committee. The mandate will be to discuss the evolution of the company and to develop a communications process to better understand the situation. The parties will cooperate in implementing various elements to ensure the profitability and competitiveness of the plant as well and the job security of the employees. Issues will include the financial situation of the company, investment projects, future prospects and productivity and competitiveness improvements.

A **diversity** committee has been introduced between Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, province-wide and Grain Services Union. The parties will discuss diversity in the workplace and improving the representation of designated group members

in the workforce, in particular First Nations and Aboriginal People.

Durham District School Board, Whitby and area, Ontario and Canadian Union of Public Employees have established a **special training** committee to research the need for training in dealing with students with severe behavioural issues.

A **writing and simplification** committee has been introduced between Association des constructeurs de routes et grands travaux

du Québec, province-wide and Alliance syndicale de la construction. The parties will review the process of writing and simplifying collective agreements texts in order to improve understanding of provisions and to ease consultation.

Other committees included in collective agreements deal with such items as work reorganization, job descriptions, training, employment equity, health and welfare provisions, and workplace violence.

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

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