

# INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE PRACTICES

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 159 collective agreement settlements reviewed during the third quarter of 2006. Of these, 52 settlements contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

## **Duration**

During this quarter, 60 settlements had a 36-month duration (representing 38% of the total 159 settlements reviewed). Thirty-eight agreements had a duration of 48 months while 13 settlements had durations of 24 months. There were 8 settlements with a 12-month duration. During this period, there were 30 settlements with a 60-month duration and 7 settlements with a 72-month duration. There were 3 settlements with durations more than 72 months: Toronto Community Housing Corporation and Canadian Union of Public Employees (84 months); Government of Quebec and Quebec Provincial Police (93 months); and Government of Canada and Union of Correctional Officers Canada (96 months).

## **Compensation**

TELUS Communications (Quebec) inc., province-wide, Quebec, and Canadian Union of Public Employees have negotiated a **profit-sharing** plan. Effective January 1, 2007, the plan will provide an annual maximum of 3.0% of wages for 2007, 4.0% for 2008, and 5.0% for 2009. The payments are based

on company operational needs and strategies in the previous year and the amounts generated are pensionable. Also in Quebec, Hydro-Québec and Canadian Union of Public Employees have a **profit-sharing** plan whereby a maximum lump-sum payment of 4.5% of the annual base wage for 2007, 2008 and 2009 will be paid according to established operational target objectives for each division of the company.

A **profit-sharing** plan has also been established between Stelco Inc., Hamilton, Ontario and United Steelworkers Union which replaces the Income-Sharing Plan which was based on financial performance. The new plan is based on the Hamilton earnings before taxes, depreciation and amortization and the parties agree that 80% of the amounts generated will be divided between active employees and 20% will be given to retirees at the discretion of the union. The parties also initiated a **productivity bonus** based on departmental productivity and paid on a pay period basis.

The British Columbia Public School Employers' Association, province-wide, and British Columbia Teachers' Federation have introduced 2 bonuses. The first, an **early signing incentive bonus** provides a maximum lump-sum payment of \$3,700 for each full-time teacher and prorated for part-time employees. Time spent on the following leaves will not be deducted for the purposes of the calculations: all paid leave including maternity or paternity

and days on approved Workers Compensation Board and Salary Indemnity Plan that commenced between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006. The second, which is included within the entire public service, is a **fiscal dividend bonus**. The bonus will be payable to bargaining units if the province's audited financial statements for the fiscal year 2009-2010 show a surplus in excess of \$150 million. The surplus amount will be shared throughout the entire public sector to a maximum of \$300 million.

A **merit plan** has been provided between Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Mississauga, Ontario, and Montréal, Quebec, and Society of Professional Engineers and Associates. Effective May 16, 2006, 2.0% adjustments will be paid based on the distribution and salaries of bargaining unit members. On January 1, 2007 and 2008, the adjustments will also be 2.0% but will increase on January 1, 2009 and 2010 to 2.25%.

Vancouver Community College, Vancouver, British Columbia and Canadian Union of Public Employees have established **labour market adjustments**. The employer will grant an amount equal to 0.1% of annual salaries for each year of the collective agreement. Compensation for specific support staff positions will be provided if it is demonstrated that there is a recruitment and/or retention problem that can be objectively determined with reference to specific criteria set by the Public Sector Employers' Council.

A **direct deposit** provision has been established by University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia and Canadian Union of Public Employees. Effective April 1, 2007, employees must have pay cheques

directly deposited into their bank accounts. The cost savings of this provision of \$25,000 will go towards **funding maternity and paternity benefits** each year.

## Health and Welfare

A **health care spending account** has been established with the University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta and Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. Effective July 1, 2006, an individual health benefit account in the amount of \$400 per year will be set up on behalf of each full-time employee and \$240 per year for regular part-time employees. Unused portions of the account can be carried over to the following year to a maximum accumulation at any time of a two-years credit.

Société de transport de l'Outaouais, Gatineau, Quebec and Amalgamated Transit Union have negotiated a new **flexible health benefit insurance** plan. Effective November 1, 2006, employees may opt for the plan with 92% of basic plan premiums covered by the employer and 8.0% by the employee. Premiums for the optional plan will be 100% employee-paid. If the employee decides to remain with the present group insurance plan, the premiums will be covered at 80% employer and 20% employee.

An **early intervention program** has been established between Health Employers Association of British Columbia, province-wide and British Columbia Nurses' Union, Health Sciences Association of British Columbia and Union of Psychiatric Nurses. The program will serve to create a proactive and customized service for ill and injured employees and allow for the return to

work in a safe and timely manner. The program will become effective December 5, 2006 following discussions at provincial and local levels pertaining to the implementation, case management evaluation and integration with other plans. If agreement can not be reached by that date, the matter will be referred to mediation/arbitration for resolution.

## **Working Conditions**

Terasen Gas Inc., previously BC Gas, province-wide, British Columbia and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers have implemented a **new model for hours of work**. All full-time employees may have the option to work 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week but be paid for 7½ hours per day and 37½ hours per week. The one-half hour per day will be deposited into a new Time Off bank. Employees will accumulate 19 paid days off per year. The days may be taken as time off for layoff avoidance or time off scheduled at the employee's discretion, subject to operational needs or as cash. The number of days scheduled at the employer's discretion is limited to a maximum of 14 days per year. Effective January 1, 2007, each employee under the new work system will be credited annually with an additional 10 days off. These additional days off may be taken as time off or converted to a non-taxable health spending account, non-taxable registered retirement saving plan contribution or taxable cash. Employees choosing not to participate in the new model of hours worked do not receive the additional days off but may use up to 10 days of time off entitlement, such as vacation leave, etc..

**A gradual merger of trades occupations** has been initiated between

Abitibi-Consolidated inc., Alma, Quebec and Syndicat national des travailleurs et travailleuses de pâtes et papiers d'Alma inc. In order to have optimal use of the workforce in the mechanical trades and to allow mechanical maintenance employees to have wage rates compared to other plants, the parties have agreed to gradually merge the trade occupations. The parties will define the applicable conditions and develop an implementation plan to maximize the use of employee competencies as soon as possible. At this time, the mechanical trade employees will receive an additional 40¢ per hour. When the implementation has been completed to the satisfaction of both parties, the employees will receive an additional 40¢ per hour.

Domtar inc., Windsor, Quebec and Fédération des travailleurs du papier et de la forêt have also introduced **trade flexibility**. In order to maximize the functional flexibility of the company, trade groupings in the mechanical, electric and building trades will be established which will allow the employees to work with another trade in the same group even if the employee's own trade is not required. A committee will evaluate the difficulties of work and propose and implement solutions.

A new provision under **shift scheduling** has been introduced between Vancouver Terminal Elevators' Association, Vancouver, British Columbia and Grain Workers' Union. When employee moves from continuous to non-continuous operations or vice versa, he will be paid double time for the first 2 days of the new shift provided the change is at the insistence of the employer or that the employee has successfully bid on a

posting that requires him to move to his current shift.

Société de transport de l'Outaouais, Gatineau, Quebec and Amalgamated Transit Union have negotiated a **preventive leave of work** for pregnant employees. When work represents a danger for the pregnant employee or her unborn child, the employer will make every effort to re-assign her to a position without such risk. If the employer is unable to re-assign her, she will be entitled to a preventive leave as well as to an allowance equal to 75% of her regular salary for up to 5 weeks preceding her scheduled date of delivery.

A **candidate pool of “technicians-in-training” employees** has been implemented by TELUS Communications (Quebec) inc., province-wide, Quebec and Canadian Union of Public Employees. The pool will be created from current employees and in order to acquire comprehensive training, the interested candidate will occupy a technician's position for a minimum of 12 months.

Durham District School Board, Whitby and area, Ontario and Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario have negotiated a provision concerning **communicable disease leave** for occasional teachers. An employee who is not ill but is prevented by order of a physician from entering a particular school or classroom due to evident or suspected presence of a communicable disease will be re-assigned or when no appropriate re-assignment is available will be paid for the 1 or ½ day as per the original assignment.

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce – Visa Centre, Toronto, Ontario and United Steelworkers Union have

established a **day of mourning** paid leave of 7.5 hours for an employee selected by the union to attend events on April 28 for employees killed or injured on the job.

## **Funds**

Alcan Inc., Jonquière and other centres, Quebec and Canadian Autoworkers have established a **training** fund. Effective October 15, 2006, the employer will grant an amount equal to 1¢ per hour worked to the union's leadership training program. The contribution is aimed at improving relations between the union and management as well as increasing the administrative efficiency of the collective agreement. Abitibi-Consolidated inc., Alma, Quebec and Syndicat national des travailleurs et travailleuses des pâtes et papiers d'Alma inc. also have a training fund whereby 20% of the amounts generated from the profit-sharing plan will be contributed annually. Should the amount paid for 2006 and 2007 not be entirely used, the contribution will be reduced to 15%.

A **human resources development** fund has been introduced by University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta and University of Alberta Non-Academic Staff Association. The employer will provide \$40,000 annually to allow employees' access to learning opportunities that will improve the performance in their current position or develop future job related skills, access development opportunities when participating in rehabilitative employment, or access non-credit University of Alberta courses that enhance employee wellness.

## **Labour-Management Committees**

During the third quarter of 2006, 53 of the full complement of 159 agreements contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of issues.

Tembec Spruce Falls Operation, Kapuskasing, Ontario and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and United Steelworkers Union have established a joint **competitiveness** committee. The parties will develop and implement, on an ongoing basis, changes to the operations that will improve the competitive position of the company. The process will involve a review of monthly operating and financial performance and joint consultation on all active and new initiatives prior to implementation.

A **recruitment and retention** support committee has been created between British Columbia Public School Employers' Association, province-wide and British Columbia Teachers' Federation. The committee will review demographic and other data to establish

criteria for the designation of other school districts within a district deemed appropriate for recruitment and retention allowances. Effective July 1, 2008, the committee will receive funding of \$3.5 million per year for this purpose.

Hydro-Québec inc., province-wide and Canadian Union of Public Employees have established a **training and development** committee. The committee will examine the development and maintenance of professional competencies to define problems related to work, identify problem areas, find solutions and make recommendations. Also, the committee may deal with workforce planning, subcontracting and all problems of career advancement.

Other committees included in collective agreements deal with such items as work reorganization, health and welfare benefits, operational flexibility, wage and classification reviews, pension buyback, and training.

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

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

Enquiries: [http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/wid/contact/contact\\_us.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/wid/contact/contact_us.shtml)

**November 15, 2006**