

# INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE PRACTICES

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 73 collective agreement settlements reviewed during the fourth quarter of 2006. Of these, 28 settlements contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

## Duration

During this quarter, the trend for a 36-month duration continued with 31 settlements having this term (representing 43% of the total 73 settlements reviewed). Fourteen agreements had a duration of 48 months while 11 settlements had durations of 24 months. There were 7 settlements with a 12-month duration. The 10 remaining settlements ranged from 50 to 72 months in duration with the longest being between Construction Labour Relations Association of British Columbia, province-wide and Bargaining Council of British Columbia Building Trades Unions.

## Compensation

Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Co. Limited, Flin Flon and Snow Lake, Manitoba and various unions 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. At the end of each year of the contract duration, 10% of the company's after tax earnings will be distributed to employees. Information submitted at the arbitration hearing indicates that the plan is likely to

produce payments of at least \$23,000 per employee in 2006.

A **copper price bonus** between Highland Valley Copper, Logan Lake, British Columbia and United Steelworkers Union will provide employees with quarterly payments based upon the average price of copper using the London Metal Exchange settlement quotation for copper and converted to Canadian dollars. On this basis and calculated as a percentage increase to the base rate, the first quarter payments would be as follows: should the average copper price be \$1.22 Canadian, the bonus payment would be +1.0%; \$1.23, +2.0%; \$1.24, +3.0%; \$1.25, +4.0%; \$1.26, +5.0% and \$1.27 or greater, +6.0%.

The calculation will be applied to all wage earnings of all bargaining unit employees during the quarter. Any funds payable will be allocated to the purchase of improved pension benefits.

An **employee share ownership** plan has been introduced between Cameco Corporation, Key Lake and McArthur River, Saskatchewan and United Steelworkers Union. Effective January 1, 2007, the employer will purchase \$1,000 worth of company shares on behalf of each employee. Employees may also contribute 6.0% of earnings each year to buy additional shares through payroll deductions, with the first 3.0% of contributions matched at a 50% rate by the employer.

Canada Post Corporation, Canada-wide and Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association have established a **team incentive** plan. Indeterminate employees whose performance contributes to attaining targets beneficial to the long-term goals of Canada Post will receive an annual maximum incentive payment of 3.0% of earnings.

Bell Canada, province-wide, Quebec and Ontario and Canadian Telecommunications Employees' Association have a **sales bonus** plan based on attaining 100% of the individual and team sales objectives. Payments by occupation will be equivalent to a percentage of the base salary as follows: for Direct Marketing Associates and Team Coordinator, from 7.52% to 20.83% of base salary in 2007 and from 10.10% to 23.73% in 2008; for Sales Associate, up to 33.12% in 2007 and up to 36.31% in 2008; for Sales Representative, up to 46.43% in 2007 and up to 49.95% in 2008 and for Accountant Executive and Solution Sales Executive, up to 54.62% in 2007 and up to 58.33% in 2008.

**Recruitment and retention adjustments** have been established between Regional Health Authorities of Manitoba – Community Support Agreement, province-wide Manitoba and Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union to bring the hourly rate closer to that of the Healthcare Aide classification in the Facility Support collective agreement, the Home Care Attendant II will receive additional adjustments of 1.25% on April 1, 2006; 2.5% on April 1, 2007 and on April 1, 2008 and 2.0% on March 31, 2009. The Home Care Attendant I, Home Support Worker and Home Visitor I and II will receive an additional adjustment of 1.0% on October 1, 2007.

City of Edmonton, Alberta and Amalgamated Transit Union have a **service bonus** in addition to basic hourly pay. The operational, trades and maintenance and security employees will receive a lump-sum payment in December of each year based on hours worked during the year and accumulated years of service. For 5 to 9 years of service, 2¢ per hour worked; 10 to 14 years, 4¢ per hour worked; 15 to 19 years, 6¢ per hour and 20 or more years, 8¢ per hour.

## **Health and Welfare**

A **health care spending account** has been established with the City of Edmonton, Alberta and Canadian Union of Public Employees. Effective January 1, 2007, an individual health benefit account in the amount of \$500 per year will be set up on behalf of each permanent full-time employee and \$250 per year for permanent part-time employees. To be eligible, employees must have completed the 90-day waiting period for benefits and be actively working during the first pay period of each year. The account is to be used to access supplementary medical care not included in the current health coverage in the collective agreement and may be used on behalf of the employee or their eligible dependents. Unused portions of the account can be carried over to the following year only.

Extendicare (Canada) Inc., Regina, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and Service Employees International Union also have a health care spending account whereby the employer contributes an annual amount equal to 3.1% of straight-time salaries. It will be used to provide additional health and welfare benefits.

## Working Conditions

Prince Edward Island Department of Health, province-wide and Prince Edward Island Nurses' Union have introduced a **mentorship program**. For the first 6 weeks of their assignment, new nursing graduates offered permanent full-time employment will be partnered with an experienced nurse from the unit who agrees to act as a mentor. The 6-week orientation may occur during the period that the graduate is awaiting registration but will not be considered as a member of the bargaining unit until they obtain their licence. The nurse assigned to be a mentor will receive a credit of \$450 to be used towards continuing education and professional development. In the event that more than one nurse is assigned to mentor the same graduate, the credit will be prorated. The new graduate's initial assignment will be for a period of 6 months and will be to a work unit in which the graduate has the basic competency for an entry level position. Should the graduate be awarded a permanent position in another work unit prior to completing the 6-month assignment, they will be required to recommence the probationary period and will complete an additional 6-week orientation in the new work unit.

The parties have also negotiated a **return to work and accommodation** provision. The employer acknowledges its duty to accommodate employees with disabilities and will meet with a union representative and the affected employee to develop suitable accommodation options. The employer will inform the union of all modifications which adversely affect other members of the bargaining unit or which require a waiver of a collective agreement provision.

An **apprenticeship program** had been developed between Cameco Corporation, Key Lake and McArthur River, Saskatchewan and United Steelworkers Union. The employer will provide living and travel allowances while the employee is attending a trade school if the apprentice secures an additional temporary residence during the school term. The employer will pay a living allowance of \$450 per month; a travel allowance for the purpose of travel between their home community and the trade school up to 2 round trips per school term for the use of a personal vehicle or reimbursement for the cost of public transportation and the reimbursement for all required tuitions and fees associated with the apprenticeship, including textbooks and trade manuals. If the apprentice successfully attains journeyman status and remains with the company for at least 1 year, the employer will provide a one-time payment of \$1,000.

**Contracting out** has been guaranteed between Sheraton Centre Hotel, Toronto, Ontario and UNITE HERE CANADA. No employee shall be permanently laid off without being first offered the option of alternate employment or enhanced severance as follows: 0 to 5 years of service, 1 week per year; 6 to 14 years, 1 week and 3 days per year; 15 to 19 years, 2 weeks per year and 20 plus years, 3 weeks per year.

City of Edmonton, Alberta and Civic Service Union, No. 52 have introduced **teleworking** arrangements. Teleworking would be voluntary on the part of the employees and would not reduce full-time positions into part-time positions nor result in the lay off of any permanent employee.

Three settlements with Manitoba Hydro, province-wide and Association of Manitoba Hydro Staff and Supervisory Employees,

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and Canadian Union of Public Employees have introduced a provision for **telecommuting equipment**. If the supervisor determines that the employee should have a high-speed internet connection at an off-site location or at home to complete their work, the employer will pay for the basic service.

Highland Valley Copper, Logan Lake, British Columbia and United Steelworkers Union have negotiated a **severance pay in the event of lay off** as a result of company restructuring or permanent closure of the operation. The affected employees would receive a payment equal to 80 hours of their hourly rate of pay plus 60 hours pay for each complete year of service to a maximum of 1,500 hours pay. Employees may elect to terminate employment immediately following the layoff notice and receive the severance package or to remain on a recall list and receive the payment when recall rights expire.

### **Labour-Management Committees**

During the fourth quarter of 2006, 12 of the full complement of 73 agreements contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of issues.

Bell Canada, province-wide, Quebec and Ontario and Canadian Telecommunications Employees' Association have established a **work-load management** committee. The mandate will be to review the tasks of the sales employees who feel they are handling non-sales tasks such as administrative duties associated with data input, dedicated support to sales teams and tracking of accounts.

A **contracting out** committee has been created between Prevost Car Inc., Sainte-Claire, Quebec and Canadian Auto Workers. The committee will evaluate the manufacturing and maintenance work contracted out to assess whether contracting out has ended in order to give work back to bargaining unit members. Also, the committee will develop a way of increasing consultations with the union when the employer wishes to dispose of inoperative machinery.

Other committees included in collective agreements deal with such items as work reorganization, job evaluation, reclassification, health and safety policies and pension plan.

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

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