



CEP Atlantic Communications Council Membership Bulletin February, 2007

Workplace Change

No meeting was held in January, and there has been no new Workplace Change notices issued to the Council.

New CEPACC Strike Policy

Correction: The CEPACC Strike Policy will not be available on any of the websites as stated in our previous Bulletin. Please contact a member of your Local Executive for a copy. This policy may also be discussed at your Local meetings.

CIRB

As reported in our last Bulletin, we have received a decision from the CIRB on our application regarding 'scope' of the Bargaining unit. The Council and the Company met on January 11 & 12th to discuss terms and conditions of employment for our new members. Those discussions continued on January 24th at which time an agreement was reached. Discussion with the new members involved took place last week reviewing the agreement and what it means to them. We would like to take this opportunity to WELCOME all those employees to the Union.

XWAVE

Approximately one year ago the company decided that there were a number of employees in xwave who should be brought over to Aliant. Some of these employees were doing work that could be described as bargaining unit work. At that time we made an application to the CIRB to review all xwave employees. Meanwhile, we were awaiting the decision of the 'scope' issue as described above. Now that we have this decision, we feel we have the ground work to begin bargaining the terms and conditions of the xwave employees whom the company has identified to us. A meeting was held on Feb 6 & 7 in NB where preliminary discussions were held with the company. More meetings are scheduled for Mar 14 & 15. We hope to provide additional updates in the coming weeks.

BIENNIAL LOCALS MEETING

The Notice of the Biennial Locals meeting has been issued. This meeting will take place in Memramcook NB on May 11 & 12th, 2007. The purpose of this meeting is to vote on resolutions on changes to the CEPACC By-laws and elect the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Recording Secretary and Treasurer of the Council. Please consult the CEPACC Bylaws, which can be found on the Council Website (www.cepacc.ca) as well as your Local's Bylaws, for information on this meeting. Your Local will be posting the deadline date and process for resolutions to be sent to your Local Executive for approval. It is important that you read "Guidelines for submitting Resolutions" in order to ensure that you have all the proper information on the "Resolutions Form". Any questions should be directed to your Local officers.

JOB EVALUATION/PAY EQUITY

We have had a number of inquiries and requests regarding Job Evaluation and Pay Equity. A joint union/company committee of representatives from each province met in October where an employee of Bell Canada presented the 'Hay' system which is the job evaluation tool they use today. Another meeting was held on February 13th to investigate another tool for this process called "Watson Wyatt". On March 27th, there will be one more presentation on the 'Hay' system which will be done by the company who sells 'Hay' rather than the company who uses it. After that meeting, we can make an informed decision on how to move forward and we will update you on the progress.

EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EFAP)

As many of you are aware, last fall, the services for the Bell Aliant EFAP which were once provided internally by the Health & Wellness Group are now contracted out to a for-profit company Warren Shapell. Since that time, the Council has heard the concerns of many members who are currently in the EFAP system who complained about the insensitive and sub-standard service compared to what was previously offered. The Council has brought these concerns to the company who are currently following up. If you have had an unpleasant experience with the services of Warren Shapell, please contact an executive officer of your local so we can follow up with the company.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Meeting Participation: Many members of the Regional Safety Committees were told by their managers that they could not attend their regional meetings due to workload. After some harsh debate about the employees right to attend these meetings the company conceded that the union was correct

and then sent an e-mail from the Occupational, Health & Safety Group to the managers explaining the following:

Article 135.1 (10) of the Canada Labour Code Part II states:

Time required for duties

(10) The members of a committee are entitled to take the time required, during their regular working hours,

(a) to attend meetings or to perform any of their other functions; and

(b) for the purposes of preparation and travel, as authorized by both chairperson of the committee.

If you are a representative from your group, you are entitled by law to attend your safety meeting or if you are unable to attend due to other commitments, your alternate has the right to attend safety meetings.

Also contained in this e-mail to managers was the following:

- The managers were made aware of Bill C-19 – Hazard Prevention Program. This brief document can be found at:
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/images/Hazard_Prevention_Program.pdf
- Notification to the manager that every employee has three basic rights:
The **Right to be Informed** of hazards of the workplace, the **Right to Participate** in and monitor the health and safety programs in the workplace, and the **Right to Refuse** to do work that might be hazardous to their health & safety. Managers who have reports must review the Canada Labour Code with their employees and answer any questions on the Canada Labour Code as well as make sure you have access to it and know where to find it in the workplace.

The only way that a regional safety, a provincial safety or a policy safety committee meeting can be cancelled is a voted on agreement of all members of the committee during a properly conducted meeting, or by mutual agreement between both co-chairs of that committee. As long as you give ample notice of these meetings, (which should be regularly scheduled) the company can not refuse your right to attend this meeting short of an emergency. An emergency is NOT workload (i.e we are busy). If we had a natural disaster like Hurricane Juan again, please use proper judgment for these meetings.

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT & YOU

Many of you are familiar with the term ‘Attendance Management’. The Council did not approve of the attendance management process contrary to what some managers have stated. A manager can place any employee under attendance management if they feel that too many ‘sick days’ are being taken. To do this successfully would take time, energy and good management skills. Instead, managers avoid managing their group by not dealing with the individual but by placing an entire group of employees under attendance management. The result is that members who have no history of sickness or absence have to bring a doctor’s note for one day sick or whenever the manager asks for one. Equate it to punishing a whole group for the offence of one. Incidental Sick Days are not intended to be days off when you don’t want to come to work. Vacation time, floaters and banked time off were bargained for those purposes. **If you ARE sick, you must not be intimidated by company management tactics, you call in sick and if asked for a doctor’s note, go to the doctor and get one.** Sometimes, if not most times, that is easier said than done as it isn’t always easy to get a doctors appointment on the day you are sick. Not many doctors will give you a note if they don’t see you when you are sick which could be a problem if your manager is looking for a note and you can’t get a doctors appointment. If a doctors note is required, the manager should tell you this when you call in sick. If you don’t speak directly to your manager when you call, the manager should call you back to inform you of this request. If your manager insists on a doctor’s note, then you have to try to get one before you return to work. That then becomes your job....get a doctor’s note before returning to work! Always keep your manager informed of where you are and what you are doing....getting that doctor’s note. That may mean going to the doctor’s office every day until you get to see the doctor. This may be the only way to get the managers to manage their employees on an individual basis and not discriminate against employees who call in sick legitimately. If you’re sick, call in sick.....if you’re not sick you have to take vacation, banked time or a floater.

In Solidarity,

Penny Fawcett
Chuck Rouse
Joyclin Coates

Noel Pauley
Phil Briffett
Mary Croke