



Bloodletters

A Bargaining Bulletin for OPSEU Members at Canadian Blood Services

Can't Get No Satisfaction!

CBS gets grades of C & D in employee survey

At Canadian Blood Services, the Rolling Stones song is just as true today!

The Employer just recently released the results of the Employee Satisfaction Survey.

Co-worker cohesion was the ONLY area that CBS received a B grade. Everything else received grades of C and D. There were no As!

If we ever brought home a report card with these grades, our parents would not have been pleased.

Customer service, satisfaction with supervisor, satisfaction with physical work environment and satisfaction with CBS all received a C grade.

Issues such as workload, pay satisfaction, impact of job on personal life, communication, intentions to remain all received a D grade!

The Employer made the following comment about the survey results:

The results have shown clear areas that have scored well in terms of general satisfaction. These areas include: co-worker cohesion, benefits

satisfaction, job satisfaction and clarity, training satisfaction, and satisfaction with our physical work environment.

How can CBS believe that these results are satisfactory? The workers at CBS have sent the employer a very clear message that working for CBS is not a very satisfactory experience, but CBS doesn't seem to be getting the message!

Rumour has it that CBS would like to be one of the "Canada's Top 100 Employers," but with results like these, they'll be waiting a long time!

Ontario unlikely to repeat Nova Scotia's experience

Giving your bargaining teams a strike mandate doesn't mean we will be repeating the three-month strike endured by about 45 CBS members in Nova Scotia last year.

The strike, by members of the small and unaffiliated Nova Scotia Union of Public and Private Employees (NSUPE), reduced the blood supply in the Province from four days to one day despite shipments from Ontario. NSUPE represents clinical assistants, drivers and recruitment coordinators.

On the other hand, the much larger Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU), representing approximately the same number of professional, technical and administrative staff at CBS, avoided job action after taking a strike vote in early 2003. With a strike vote in hand, the union was able to achieve an agreement with the employer two days before their members were due to walk off the job.

Continued.../Over

"Ontario's demand for blood is too large to be easily replaced by other provinces."

Your CBS

Bargaining Teams

Technologists (Locals 210 and 5101)
Steven O'Marra (L5101)
Shirley Johnny (L210)
Sheila Annett (L5101)

Support Unit (Locals 160, 210, 477, 5103)
Katherine Zan (L160)
Brenda Thompson (L210)
Kelly Tibbles (L477)
Mirla Alvarado Fenn (L5103)
Dino Gus Kourlas (L5103)

Thunder Bay Plasma (Local 716)
Jennie Hartviksen
Joanne Bruni
Kelly Borchardt

Bloodletters is your direct communication resource from the OPSEU bargaining teams and is intended to keep you up to date and informed on bargaining developments. **Bloodletters** is your only accurate source of bargaining team information during this round of bargaining. If you do not read it here, you cannot be sure it is true. Do not rely on gossip and rumours. We will provide the facts.

Bloodletters will be available by e-mail and on the OPSEU website at

<http://www.opseu.org/bps/health/cbs/index.htm>

Financial tips in the event of a strike

While a long strike is unlikely (see accompanying story), it is none-the-less prudent to prepare yourself financially. OPSEU does provide strike pay, benefits, and in special cases, members can access a hardship fund.

If you haven't already done so, you should be setting aside savings for this purpose. Now is not the time to embark on a major family purchase.

Strike pay is not intended to replace your salary, but to supplement savings and other sources of income during a strike.

To receive strike pay, a member must perform a minimum of four hours of strike duty per day, or 20 hours per week. For the first three weeks, strike pay is set a \$25 per day, or \$125 per week. Should a strike last longer than three weeks, strike pay is increased to \$40 per day, or \$200 per week. If you have dependents, you will receive an additional \$4 per day, or \$20 per week per dependent. Strike pay is the same regardless of whether you are a full or part-time employee. If both spouses are on strike, both may claim for dependents. A strike must last longer than one day in order to receive strike pay, however, strike pay is retroactive to that first day.

At a minimum, OPSEU will also pay for basic life and extended

health insurance benefits (including drugs) for members on strike.

Given not all members are equally equipped to handle the hardship of a strike, the Strike Committee may provide these members with extra help over and above strike pay. This is called "hardship relief." Names of those requesting it are kept strictly confidential. However, hardship relief is given only after other options have been exhausted.

Financial institutions (ie. banks, credit unions) are normally notified that a strike is in progress and that loan applications and requests for payment deferrals may be forthcoming.



Graphic: CALM

"The union demands are much too reasonable. I need something I can reject out of hand."

Tips for Members

- **Mortgages and Rents:** Talk to the bank or credit union and negotiate a plan for the duration of the strike before the next payment is due.
- **Taxes:** Ask your municipal office if an accommodation can be arranged to defer property taxes.
- **Utilities, Insurance:** Ask to spread your payments.
- **Loans:** If your lender won't allow a deferral, consider refinancing to reduce the payments.
- **Credit Cards:** Use a low interest line-of-credit instead. Pay your minimum.

Ontario unlikely to repeat Nova Scotia's experience

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While there are lessons to be learned, there are some major differences between the situation in Nova Scotia and the one here in Ontario.

- Whereas Canadian Blood Services workers in Nova Scotia are split evenly between NSGEU and NSUPE, the overwhelming majority of Canadian Blood Services workers belong to one union in Ontario: OPSEU.

- Whereas Ontario was able to ship blood to Nova Scotia during their strike, it is impossible for Nova Scotia to be able to make a dent in Ontario's needs should workers walk off the job. Ontario's demand for blood is too large to be easily replaced by other provinces.
- NSUPE went on strike with about 45 employees. OPSEU represents more than 1,000 CBS employees.

- Coordinated bargaining makes it much more difficult for the employer to play off one group of workers against another, as was the case in Nova Scotia.
- Should CBS fail to take heed of your strike vote, it will be left scrambling during its highest demand season, not over the winter/spring, as was the case with NSUPE.