



OPS CONTRACT 2002

Information for OPSEU members in the Ontario Public Service

March 7, 2002

Strike Pay Q&A

Questions and answers about strike pay for OPSEU members in the event of a strike or lockout in the Ontario Public Service.

Your bargaining teams are bargaining for a better contract, not a strike. However, in the event of a strike or lockout, members are entitled to receive strike pay. The following questions and answers deal with queries most often raised by members.

Q1 . How much is strike pay?

Strike pay is provided to members who complete strike related duties assigned by their Local Strike Committee. During weeks one to three, each member is entitled to strike pay of \$125 per week plus an additional \$20 per week per dependent. The daily rate is \$25 per day and \$4 per day per dependent. Strike pay is calculated daily.

During the fourth week, strike pay increases and each member is entitled to \$200 per week (or \$40 per day). Dependent pay remains the same at \$20 per week per dependent.

A dependent is defined as a non-working spouse, children under 18, any children under 22 (if attending school), or older children if disabled and dependent. If both spouses are on strike, only one spouse can claim the dependents.

Q2. If my essential or emergency services are required for part of a day or part of a week, am I required to complete strike duties?

Yes. Essential service and emergency workers are expected to participate in “outside” strike activities if they are not performing full-time essential or emergency services. They will receive pro-rated strike pay for the balance of the days that they perform regular strike duties.

Members are encouraged to spend as much time on the picket line as possible, even if you do not qualify for strike pay. As the old union saying goes, “the longer the line, the shorter the strike.”

Q3. What are strike duties?

Strike duties include picketing, running strike headquarters, handling logistics to name a few. These are the strategic duties assigned by your local strike committee that will help bring maximum pressure on the employer to ensure a short strike and a new contract.

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Q4. How much time must I spend picketing to qualify for strike pay?

There is no minimum or maximum amount of time you must picket (or perform other strike-related duties) in order to qualify for strike pay. These levels are set by individual locals. Usually, the minimum level is set at one-half of your normal work hours per week. Obviously, each local will want every member to put in as much time as possible to support the strike.

Q5. What about day care costs?

There are no provisions for day care costs while on strike. You must work with your local committees to make suitable arrangements or accommodations so that you can fulfill your strike responsibilities.

Q6. What if I am on an accommodation?

Members on accommodation should be assigned to appropriate strike duties. A member seeking accommodation has an obligation to inform their local strike committee of their need for accommodation and help their committee find accommodation solutions.

Q7. How will I receive my strike pay?

The finance committee of your local strike committee will administer strike pay. They will ensure that you have fulfilled your strike duties. All strike pay is issued by cheque.

Q8. What is a hardship committee?

This is a sub-committee of the finance committee which assists and provides advice to members who may require assistance. A lengthy strike can take a toll on family finances. The hardship committee is responsible for helping members secure loans from credit unions and to intercede on behalf of members who are unable to meet credit obligations. The hardship committee may make recommendations to the local strike committee for the allocation of special assistance to members experiencing particular hardship.

All members are strongly encouraged to plan their personal finances now. Put away a pay cheque to build an extra cushion if you can. Contact your bank, credit union, your landlord, your day care provider to discuss payment options. The earlier you make a plan the better prepared you will be.

If you have further questions, ask any member of your local executive committee to help you. Details about your local strike committees are found in your local strike committee manual available in early February from your OPSEU Regional office.



Authorized for distribution:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leah Casselman".

Leah Casselman, President

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