

Lock Talk



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Ministry axes compensating leave

Just weeks after ratifying the new Corrections collective agreement, the employer has unilaterally decided to stop allowing employees to take compensating leave in lieu of overtime payments.

In a memo dated March 18, Lori Potter, Director of the Management and Operational Support Branch, intimates that formal notice of this move was provided to the bargaining team during contract negotiations. The Corrections Bargaining Team disagrees.

“The employer came to us and said they were planning on withdrawing from the agreement on compensating leave,” says Dave Kerr, team chair. “Since they were not proposing a change to the collective agreement language, we told them that this was not a bargaining issue.”

Under Article COR8.5 of the Collective Agreement, compensating leave can be accumulated if there is mutual agreement between the parties to do so. Normally, the employer will provide advance notice in writing to the OPSEU President at least 60-90 days before if they intend to withdraw from such an agreement.

“The Corrections Bargaining Team **in no way** negotiated an end to compensating leave,” Kerr says. “We told the employer two things. First, that if they decided to unilaterally withdraw from the agreement in COR8.5, it wasn’t a bargaining issue...it was a MERC issue. Second, we told them, in no uncertain terms, that if they did this it would cause *extreme* labour relations problems in Corrections. Obviously, they couldn’t care less about labour peace.”

Kerr said that the Corrections and Children and Youth Services MERC teams will now deal with the issue at their respective tables.

Eddy Almeida, chair of the Corrections MERC, says this is a totally unnecessary attack on his members.

“This move by the Ministry does nothing but destabilize labour relations across the province,” Almeida says. “We have now raised the issue with the employer, and OPSEU is filing a policy grievance.”

The Corrections MERC will discuss with local presidents strategies on dealing with the Ministry’s latest tactic.

“In the meantime, we ask that every local demand an immediate local ERC and put this issue as the number one item on the agenda,” Almeida says. “This is just another blow to the well-being of our members, and shows the complete and utter disrespect and contempt the Ministry has for the people who keep this province safe. These ham-fisted decisions will backfire...and badly.”

The Children and Youth Services MERC is currently scheduling to meet with their employer on the same issue.

Authorized for distribution:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Warren Thomas".

Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Eddy Almeida".

Eddy Almeida, MCSCS MERC Chair