

## Glossary of Labour Terms

Available online at: <http://prairies.psac.com/stewards-dictionary>

**ADJUDICATION:** Process for settling grievances by a third party when they arise out of the interpretation or application of a collective agreement or arbitral award, or out of disciplinary action resulting in financial loss or penalty (i.e., discharge, suspension ). Normally used for Public Service units covered by the Public Service Staff Relations Act. See Arbitration.

**AGREEMENT, COLLECTIVE:** A contract ('Collective Agreement' and 'Contract' are used interchangeably) between the union acting as the bargaining agent and the employer, covering wages, hours of work, working conditions, benefits, rights of workers and union, and procedures to be followed in settling disputes and grievances.

**APPEAL:** Procedure for seeking redress from Public Service Commission against: appointments to a job made by closed competition or job appointments made without competition. Applies only to Public Service units covered by the Public Service Employment Act.

**ARBITRATION:** A method of settling negotiating disputes through the intervention of a third party whose decision is final and binding. Such a third party can be either a single arbitrator, or a board consisting of a chairman and one or more representatives. *Voluntary Arbitration* is that agreed to by the parties without statutory compulsion. *Compulsory Arbitration* is that imposed by law. Governments sometimes impose it to avoid a strike or to end one. Arbitration (same as adjudication) terminology is used in the Canada Labour Code, Part I, the Northwest Territories Ordinances, and most Provincial Labour Codes and Acts.

**BARGAINING AGENT:** Union designated by a labour relations board or similar government agency e.g. Public Service Staff Relations Board as the exclusive representative of all employees in a bargaining unit for the purpose of collective bargaining.

**BARGAINING UNIT:** Group of workers in a craft, department, plant, firm, industry or occupation, determined by a labour relations board or similar body as appropriate for representation by a union for purpose of collective bargaining.

**BASE RATE:** The lowest rate of pay, expressed in hourly terms, for the lowest paid qualified worker classification in the bargaining unit. Not to be confused with Basic Rate, which is the straight-time rate of pay per hour, job or unit, excluding premiums, incentive bonuses, etc.

**BENEFITS:** Non-Wage benefits, such as paid vacations, pensions, health and welfare provisions, life insurance, the cost of which is borne in whole or in part by the employer.

**BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS:** Production and maintenance workers as contrasted to office and professional personnel.

**CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS (CLC):** Canada's national labour body representing organized labour in the country.

**CERTIFICATION:** Official designation of a labour relations board or similar government agency of a union as sole and exclusive bargaining agent, following proof of majority support among employees in a bargaining unit.

**CHECK-OFF:** A clause in a collective agreement authorizing an employer to deduct union dues and sometimes other assessments and transmit these funds to the union. See Rands.

**CLASSIFICATION PLAN:** A job evaluation method based on a comparison of jobs against money.

**CLOSED SHOP:** A provision in a collective agreement whereby all employees in a bargaining unit must be union members in good standing before being hired and new employees hired through the union. See union security.

**COALITIONS:** An organized group of different organizations who come together for a common purpose and/or to carry out a joint campaign.

**COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT:** See Agreement.

**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING:** Method of determining wages, hours and other conditions of employment through direct negotiations between the union and the employer. Normally the result of collective bargaining is a written contract which covers all the employees in the bargaining unit, both union members and non-members.

**COMPANY UNION:** A one-company group of employees, frequently organized or inspired by management and usually dominated by the employer.

**CONCILIATION AND MEDIATION:** A process which attempts to resolve labour disputes by compromise or voluntary agreement. Pertinent legislation applies when negotiations reach an impasse. Either party can request the assistance of a mediator, a conciliator, or the establishment of a conciliation board. The mediator, conciliator or conciliation board does not bring in a binding award and the parties are free to accept or to reject the recommendation.

**CONFEDERATION OF NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS (CNTU):** A Quebec-based central labour body.

**CONTRACT:** See Agreement.

**CONTRACTING OUT:** Practice of employer having work performed by an outside contractor and not by regular employees in the union. Not to be confused with subcontracting, which is the practice of a contractor delegating part of his work to a subcontractor.

**CONTRACT PROPOSALS:** Proposed changes to the collective agreement put forward by the union or the employer and subject to collective bargaining.

**COST-OF-LIVING ALLOWANCE:** Periodic pay increase based on changes in the Consumer Price Index.

**DUES:** Periodic payments by union members for the financial support of their union .

**FEDERATION OF LABOUR:** A Federation, chartered by the Canadian Labour Congress, grouping local unions and labour councils in a given province.

**EMPLOYMENT EQUITY:** A comprehensive program designed to overcome discrimination in employment experienced by members of equity groups. The goal is to give equity groups access to all jobs, re-evaluate traditional jobs and improve equity groups' overall economic situation. An employment equity plan is designed to eliminate barriers that create discriminatory practices and denies access to all jobs to members of a designated group and to address past discriminatory practices.

**GRIEVANCE:** A written complaint against management by one or more employees or a union concerning an alleged breach of the collective agreement or an alleged injustice. Procedure for the handling of grievances is usually defined in the collective agreement. The last step of the procedure is usually arbitration/adjudication.

**HOMEWORKING:** work performed in the home instead of a normal place of work such as offices and factories. It can include piece work.

**INJUNCTION:** A court order restraining an employer or union from committing or engaging in certain acts.

**INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU):** An International trade union body, formed in 1949, composed of a large number of national central labour bodies such as the Canadian Labour Congress.

**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO):** Tripartite world body representative of labour, management and government and is an agency of the United Nations. It disseminates labour information and sets minimum international labour standards called "conventions", offered to member nations for adoption. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.

**INTERNATIONAL UNION:** A union which has members in both Canada and the United States.

**JOB EVALUATION PLAN:** A measurement tool that is used to evaluate work and establish relativity among positions. The reason for doing this is to be able to assign a rate of pay to a given job. In order to be in accordance with Human Rights legislation, a job evaluation plan should be gender neutral and include factors of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions.

**JOB SECURITY:** A provision in a collective agreement protecting a worker's job, as in the introduction of new methods or machines.

**JURISDICTIONAL DISPUTE:** A dispute between two or more unions as to which one shall represent a group of employees in collective bargaining or as to whose members shall perform a certain kind of work.

**LABOUR COUNCIL:** Organization composed of locals of CLC-affiliated unions in a given community or district.

**LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD:** A board established under provincial or federal labour relations legislation to administer labour law, including certification of trade unions as bargaining agents, investigation of unfair labour practices and other functions prescribed under the legislation.

**LAYOFFS:** Temporary, prolonged or final separation from employment as a result of lack of work.

**LOCAL (UNION):** Also known as lodge or branch. The basic unit of union organization. Trade unions are usually divided into a number of Locals for the purposes of local administration. These Locals have their own constitution and elect their own officers; they are usually responsible for the negotiation and day-to-day administration of collective agreements covering their members.

**LOCK-OUT:** A phase of a labour dispute in which management refuses work to employees or closes its establishment in order to force settlement on its terms.

**MEDIATION:** See Conciliation and Mediation.

**ORGANIZING:** A plan to organize unorganized workers to form part of a union.

**ORGANIZING MODEL:** The organizing model is an approach to running the local that puts membership involvement at the centre of each union activity.

**OVERTIME:** Hours worked in excess of a regular number of hours fixed by statute or union contract.

**OVERTIME RATE:** Higher rate of pay for overtime hours worked. See Overtime.

**NATIONAL UNION:** A union whose membership is confined to Canada only.

**PAY EQUITY:** Pay equity incorporates the principle of equal pay for work of equal value which is the requirement to pay males and females within the same organization the same salary for work that is judged to be of equal value. A methodology is used which identifies wage gaps and the female salary is raised to the male salaries to achieve the goal of pay equity.

**PICKETING:** Patrolling near employer's place of business by union members to publicize the existence of a labour dispute, hurt the employer's productivity, persuade workers to join a strike or join the union and discourage customers from buying or using employer's goods or services.

**PREMIUM PAY:** A wage rate higher than straight time, payable for overtime work, work on holidays or scheduled days off, or for work under extraordinary conditions such as dangerous, dirty or unpleasant work.

**PRIVATIZATION:** This is the transfer of publicly owned resources and services from government ownership to private ownership e.g. roads, utilities, airports, national parks. In many cases, government still regulates the standards for service operation and maintenance of resources.

**RAIDING:** An attempt by one union to induce members of another union to defect and join its ranks.

**RAND FORMULA:** Also called Agency Shop. A Union security clause in a collective agreement stating that the employer agrees to deduct an amount equal to the union dues from all members of the bargaining unit, whether or not they are members of the union for the duration of the collective agreement. The Rand Formula is based on the principle that those who benefit from a collective agreement should contribute dues even when they are not members of the union. See Check-Off.

**RE-OPENER CLAUSE:** A provision calling for re-opening a collective agreement at a specified time prior to its expiration for bargaining on stated subjects such as a wage increase, pension, health and welfare.

**SENIORITY:** Term used to designate an employee's status relative to other employees, as in determining order of lay-off, promotion, recall, transfer, vacations etc. Depending on the provisions of the collective agreement, seniority can be based on length of service alone or on additional factors such as ability or union duties.

**SHIFT:** The stated daily working period for a group of employees, e.g. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., 4 p.m. to midnight, midnight to 8 a.m. See Split Shift.

**SHIFT DIFFERENTIAL:** Added pay for work performed at other than regular daytime hours.

**SHOP STEWARD:** A Union official who represents a specific group of members and the union in union duties, grievance matters, and other employment conditions. Stewards are usually part of the work force they represent.

**SLOWDOWN:** A deliberate lessening of work effort without an actual strike, in order to force concessions from the employer. A variation of this is a work-to-rule strike - a concerted slowdown in which workers, tongue in cheek, simply obey all laws and rules applying to their work.

**SPLIT SHIFT:** Division of an employee's daily working time into two or more working periods, to meet peak needs.

**STRIKE:** A cessation of work or a refusal to work or to continue work by employees in combination or in accordance with a common understanding for the purpose of compelling an employer to agree to terms or conditions of employment. Usually the last stage of collective bargaining when all other means have failed. Except in special cases, strikes are legal when a collective agreement is not in force. A Rotating Strike is a strike organized in such a way that only part of the employees stop work at any given time, each group taking its turn. A Sympathy Strike is a strike by workers not directly involved in a labour dispute - an attempt to show labour solidarity and bring pressure on an employer in a labour dispute. A Wildcat Strike is a strike violating the collective agreement and not authorized by the union.

**STRIKEBREAKER / REPLACEMENT WORKER / SCAB:** A person who continues to work or who accepts employment to replace workers who are on strike. By filling their jobs, they weaken or break the strike.

**STRIKE VOTE:** Vote conducted among members of a union to determine whether or not to go on strike.

**TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE:** Technical changes in operational machinery or office equipment, new production techniques, change of work processes such as homeworking/teleworking and outside normal work locations. Technological changes often are applied to extract more productivity from workers without an increase in either pay or workforce.

**TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM):** TQM is a complete re-organizing of the work process and the workplace by application of principles of "teamwork" and work "teams" that are supposed to involve the worker and give them greater control in their work. It involves "teams" of workers monitoring and controlling each other in their work process, production and application of agreement or employer policies. It results in a scaling down of the workforce and increase of low morale. Some researchers have described TQM as "management by stress."

**TRADE UNION:** Workers organized into a voluntary association, or union, to further their mutual interests with respect to wages, hours, working conditions and other matters of interest to the workers.

**UNION LABEL/BUG:** A tag, imprint or design affixed to a product to show it was made by union labour.

**UNION SHOP:** A place of work where every worker covered by the collective agreement must become and remain a member of the union. New workers need not be union members to be hired, but must join after a certain number of days. See Union Security, Modified Union Shop.

**WHITE COLLAR WORKERS:** Term applied to workers in offices and other non-production phases of industry.

**WORKFORCE ADJUSTMENT:** This is a process that is used to deal with a workforce whose jobs are abolished or otherwise disappear. Federal public service employees are governed by a Workforce Adjustment Directive arrived at through the National Joint Council.

**WORK-TO-RULE:** See Slowdown.

**WORKING CONDITIONS:** Conditions pertaining to the workers' job environment, such as hours of work, safety, paid holidays and vacations, rest periods, free clothing or uniforms, possibilities of advancement, etc. Many of these are included in the collective agreement and subject to collective bargaining.