



***NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC
AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES***

B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union
Health Sciences Association of British Columbia
Health Sciences Association of Alberta
Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union
Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union
Ontario Public Service Employees Union
Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers
New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees
Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union
PEI Union of Public Sector Employees
Newfoundland & Labrador Association
of Public and Private Employees

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Collective Bargaining Series

#1 Casualization



BARGAINING RESTRICTIONS ON CASUALIZATION

Since you asked.
This is why bargaining
restrictions on
casualization are important.

AFTER A DECADE of privatization, downsizing, contracting out and restructuring, there is a genuine fear from workers about their jobs, wages, and work conditions. These fears have increased as employers rely more heavily on casual and temporary workers. Various factors have encouraged employers to avoid hiring permanent unionized workers. These arrangements that do not involve full-time unionized workers are called “contingent work”. And the process of creating a contingent workforce – replacing permanent jobs with temporary jobs – is known as casualization.

Casualization is driven by the employer’s desire to cut costs by paying casual or temporary workers less than full-time unionized workers and not offering them benefits. In many cases, the terms “casual” or “temporary” are misleading. Many of these workers work 40 or more hours per week and have spent years working for the same employer. Rampant casualization threatens job security, decent wages, health benefits and pensions for all workers.

For casual and temporary workers, casualization:

...destroys any possibility of career progression as casual workers find themselves stuck with low pay working on poorly funded projects which offer no room for staff development.

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...breeds insecurity which has serious financial, psychological, health and safety effects.

...increases vulnerability and the risk of exploitation which reduces not only the quality of employment but also the quality of the services being offered. A vulnerable worker is not the best worker.

...encourages discrimination because the casualization process affects women, visible minorities, persons with disabilities and other groups disproportionately.

In order to protect good full-time jobs from erosion it’s important for unions to negotiate restrictions on the use of casual and temporary workers. Unions can also reduce casualization by organizing and representing casual and temporary workers.

PUT IT ON THE TABLE

Restricting rampant casualization. Effective contract language makes the difference.

Collective Agreement between the Liquor Control Board of Ontario and the Ontario Liquor Board Employees’ Union (OLBEU / NUPGE) 1998 – 2000:

The Employers agree not to utilize permanent part-time employees or casuals to replace permanent full-time employees. Nor will the Employers utilize casuals to replace permanent part-time employees. Any utilization as referred to in this article will not adversely affect job training opportunities for permanent full-time or permanent part-time employees.

THE NATIONAL WAY

Helping you set the table. Helping you get a better deal at work.

•Describing why it’s necessary.
Your National Union researches, analyzes and challenges the reasons for bargaining this issue. We look at possible alternative approaches which might be preferable or more beneficial to our members. The National Union and its Working Groups are in touch with our members’ needs, explore various options for addressing these needs, and track national and provincial developments in this area.

•Communicating your rights province-by-province.
Connecting with its members about their rights at work is a big part of what your National Union does. Publications. Leaflets. Posters. Buttons. Videos. We produce a stream of these materials. What you need to know about your rights. When you need to know it. We’re always ready to help.

• Providing union education and training.
Working with our component education officers, the National Union develops and delivers union education and training courses designed to deepen our members’ understanding of issues like this one. These courses provide advice and support to frontline workers who must deal with issues like this on a day-to-day basis in their workplace.

• Campaigning: from silence to voice.
Your National Union is a campaigning union. We coordinate national campaigns on vital workplace issues like this one. We work with other national and provincial organizations active in this field to identify and distribute resource material to workplaces. We work hard to make sure your voice is heard by the larger policy community.

• Negotiating a strong deal.
Everything your National Union does is characterized by its commitment to the development and furthering of our main organizational goal of ensuring that strong collective agreements are negotiated and enforced on your behalf. We help our components develop the best negotiating resource materials, contract language, and strategies to defend our members and the services they provide.

GET OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

More information is just one click or call away. Check it out.

The National Union has been monitoring the issue of casualization for several years. Both the **National Union’s Collective Bargaining Advisory Committee** and the **Education and Training Working Group** have done a detailed analysis of this issue.

As well, the National Union has organized several national conferences on a sector-by-sector basis. Some of the more recent conferences were related to restructuring in social services, health care, and child protection. We have various materials which speak about the struggles of different sectors in tackling this issue and the need to be vigilant and not allow this issue to be pushed to the background. The material also speaks of our Union’s victories in the areas of collective bargaining, organizing, and broader public policy concerns with respect to this issue.

To obtain copies of this material, the OLBEU/ NUPGE Collective Agreement, or if you need further information, please contact the National Union at:

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