



***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

#3 Rest Between Shifts



BARGAINING FOR REST BETWEEN SHIFTS

Since you asked.
This is why periods of rest
between shifts is
important.

THE ORGANIZATION OF WORKING TIME is a major bargaining priority for workers, unions and employers. Long working hours lead to inadequate rest, can disrupt personal and family life, have been linked to a higher risk of heart disease and can worsen existing medical problems.

Five jurisdictions in Canada have enacted labour legislation to deal with this problem. Labour legislation in British Columbia, the Yukon, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, and Alberta compels employers to provide a minimum rest period for their workers. Workers in B.C. and the Yukon must be given at least 8 consecutive hours free from work between shifts. In Saskatchewan and Newfoundland workers are allowed a minimum of 8 hours rest in each 24-hour period. Alberta labour law states that “an employer must not require an employee to change from one shift to another without at least 24 hours’ written notice and 8 hours of rest between shifts.”

It’s important to note that minimum rest periods can also be achieved in labour law by setting maximum daily hours of work. Labour law in Ontario, Alberta, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut contains varying provisions dealing with maximum daily working limits.

Reasonable, reliable working hours and family friendly workplaces are needed to ensure healthy, happy and stable working lives. Dividing time between work and family is diffi-

cult and often dismissed by employers who see it as a family issue and not a work issue. This is especially the case in provinces where no labour legislation exists in this area. Therefore, to reduce stress and enable people to balance their work and family commitments, unions must bargain worker-friendly provisions regarding time-off between shifts.

Adequate time-off between shifts allows workers to spend quality time with their families. It allows workers enough time to recover mentally and physically from their previous shift. And it prevents overwork which decreases job satisfaction.

PUT IT ON THE TABLE

Getting some rest. Effective contract language makes the difference.

Collective Agreement between the Queen Elizabeth 2 Health Sciences Centre and the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU / NUPGE) 1997 – 2000:

With the exception of employees who are working shifts greater than seven and one-half (7 ½) hours, every reasonable effort shall be made by the Employer to avoid scheduling the commencement of a shift within sixteen (16) hours of the completion of the employee’s previous shift.

Collective Agreement between the Government of New Brunswick and the New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees Employees (Para Medical Group) 1996 – 2000:

Except by mutual agreement between the employee and the Employer or in the event overtime is worked, time-off between shifts shall not be less than fifteen (15) hours.

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.

Working excessively long hours is a very important health and safety issue.

The National Union has various materials which speak about the struggles of different sectors in tackling this issue.

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

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