

TREASURY BOARD BARGAINING: the process at a glance

Contract expiry dates: EB, FB and PA: June 20, 2014
SV: Aug. 4, 2014
TC: June 21, 2014

Bargaining input

Members are asked to submit bargaining input well in advance of negotiations. This input is supplemented by an audit of the collective agreements by PSAC elected officers, staff and previous bargaining teams (e.g. the Program of Demands).

Election of bargaining teams and the national bargaining conferences

The bargaining teams are elected from the membership by the member activists from the bargaining unit at national bargaining conferences. The bargaining conferences also provide a forum for discussing bargaining input and provide feedback on bargaining priorities.

Finalizing of bargaining proposals

The elected bargaining teams review the bargaining input and the feedback from the national bargaining conference and compile a list of bargaining proposals and craft bargaining language to bring to the negotiations table.

Notice to bargain

Bargaining starts shortly after either side serves notice. Bill C-4 allows either side to serve notice up to four months before a contract expires. In the next round, the notice period will be a full year.

Negotiated settlement

If the parties achieve a negotiated settlement, the union conducts a ratification vote. If ratified, the team signs the collective agreement.

What happens if we do not reach agreement?

Either side can declare an impasse in bargaining and apply for a Public Interest Commission (PIC), which receives submissions from both sides and produces non-binding proposals for settlement. For groups that have 80% or more of the unit declared essential (i.e. not allowed to strike), the group proceeds to arbitration. C4 biases the process towards employers but it is important to note that the PIC process is non-binding, it remains to be seen how arbitrators and public interest commissions will react to the new biased criteria, and we are challenging the unfair and unconstitutional elements of C4 in the courts.

Essential Services: Bill C-4 and C-31 have changed the right to strike

All bargaining units must have an essential service agreement that outlines which positions are designated essential in the event of a strike. No legal strike can take place without one.

Bill C-4 gives the government unilateral control over which employees are designated essential. Bill C-31 revokes all existing essential service agreements and gives them over to the government to rewrite.

Under the new legislation, the employer has 60 days to consult with the union. After that, the employer has 30 days to come up with a list of designated positions. The employer then notifies designated employees "as soon as feasible."

Bill C-4 makes arbitration mandatory for any unit where more than 80 per cent of the employees are designated essential.

Who decides if there is going to be a strike?

The members of the bargaining unit decide whether or not there will be a strike. The PSAC National President may call a strike vote seven days after the PIC report is released. Within 60 days of a vote authorizing a strike, the PSAC National President may call a strike.

Mediation or further negotiations to reach a settlement are always possible at any stage.

