



The Canadian Merchant Service Guild

A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MASTERS - MATES - PILOTS - ENGINEERS AND OTHER MARINE OFFICERS

La Guilde de la Marine Marchande du Canada

ASSOCIATION NATIONALE DES CAPITAINES - OFFICIERS DE PONT - PILOTES - MÉCANICIENS ET AUTRES OFFICIERS MARINS

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Collective Bargaining Update

for Guild Members Employed as Government Ships' Officers (GSO's) at DND and CCG - May 2016

- October 2013 – The Guild issued a “Call for Proposals” to Members working as GSO's with a deadline of January 2014.
- December 2013 – The federal government passed legislation changing the federal bargaining process. The transition measures contained in Bill C-4 removed our option of resorting to binding arbitration in the event that an impasse is ever reached in this current round of bargaining. Our final dispute resolution mechanism is to go on strike. This bill also gave the employer the authority to unilaterally designate which employees in each union are essential for safety and are not permitted to go on strike. The bill removed any recourse mechanisms in the event of dissatisfaction with the number of these designated employees. In the case of the Guild, the employer has notified us that 96% of the members of our GSO bargaining unit have been designated as essential and are not be permitted to engage in a strike. A number of appeals of these outrageous provisions of Bill C-4 are pending and are described on the Guild website. The new Liberal government has made commitments to review the legislation, however, in the meantime these rules brought in by Bill C-4 prior to last fall's federal election are still in place.
- February 2014 – The employer served the Guild with a Notice to commence bargaining a new contract.
- June 2014 – The Guild bargaining committee met to carefully review the Guild proposal package and proposals were exchanged with the employer later that month.

- July 2014 – The Guild and the employer proposal packages were translated and posted onto the Guild website.
- The Guild bargaining committee conducted negotiation sessions with the Treasury Board in Ottawa in November 2014, February 2015, July 2015 and May 2016.
- The Guild has held regular meetings with the Presidents of 17 other federal bargaining agents and legal counsel to review all the legislative changes that impact negotiations, to monitor all the negotiations that are underway with the Treasury Board, and to carefully consider the way ahead.
- Guild members continue to be represented at the bargaining table by a strong and capable team comprised of Guild elected representatives working as GSO's from various regions of the country, as well as a number of highly-experienced Guild staff.
- These Guild GSO negotiating committee members were in Ottawa again on May 10-12, 2016 for another bargaining session with the federal treasury board. Some encouraging discussions took place and some common ground was reached on a few non-monetary items however, there remains a great deal of work to be done. The Guild negotiating team is fully committed to securing an improved collective agreement.
- As reported in previous bulletins, the employer has a keen appetite to introduce wholesale changes to our Members' sick leave provisions. These proposed changes are viewed as significant concessions. At the most-recent bargaining session, the employer presented an improved version of their new sick leave plan with movement in a number of areas, however the proposal still has very significant gaps and problems compared to the current contract coverage afforded to our GSO Members.
- It is not unusual that the employer-side is seeking concessions, while the Guild is seeking improvements. What is unusual is the legislative strategy that was put in place by the employer prior to the federal election, to attempt to gain the upper hand. It is early in the new government's mandate, but there may be an impact on the way ahead with the new political climate in Ottawa.
- Bargaining is still in the early stages and is progressing. The Guild will continue to keep GSO's informed of developments and in the meantime, if Members require further information, they are encouraged to contact their regional Guild office.