

Update for Federal Government Ships' Officers (GSO's) – December 2022

The Guild and other federal unions have been working for years to attempt to force the employer to not only pay our members on time and accurately, but also to provide pay stubs that are clear and complete. While some progress has been made, there have also been many setbacks as well, and we continue to advocate for improvements that are long overdue.

The employer has announced the phasing out of the use of "Epost" for pay stubs and instead has commenced sending out pay stubs by regular postal mail. We have now been informed that the access to be able to view older pay stubs on Epost is scheduled to end on December 31, 2022. With this in mind, and with the low confidence level of the accuracy of the pay system, we recommend that members take the time to attempt to save or print paystubs prior to December 31st.

It is unacceptable that the federal payroll system continues to negatively impact Guild members and all public service employees. The employer has also been sending out letters to some Guild members indicating that they may have been overpaid in past years. Most members were actually underpaid, or paid late, and the Guild has been providing constant assistance to those members in order to recover wages that they were short-changed on. The Guild's work to assist members with pay problems is ongoing.

Some of the so-called overpayment amounts that the employer is seeking to attempt to recover are not recent and in the Guild's view may be based on scanty or suspicious information. The *Crown Liability and Proceedings Act* also contains a limitation period which prevents the employer from recovering overpayments that are more than 6 years old.

Guild members who receive an inaccurate overpayment notice from the employer, or a notice concerning a time period of more than 6 years prior to the date on the notice, should contact their Guild office to file a grievance.

The Guild intends to use the grievance process to obtain detailed calculations to reconcile whether or not an overpayment has occurred. It could well be that the information in the letter is incorrect or that the amount that is being referred to is "time-barred" from being recovered anyway.

The Guild has received inquiries regarding when to expect a decision from the Labour Board regarding the employer's complaint that the Guild has violated legislation by applying for the appointment of an arbitrator to award a new collective agreement (and thus resolve the impasse in collective bargaining for our GSO group). Members are understandably frustrated that this complaint by the employer has led to a lengthy delay. For public service bargaining groups, particularly those who are not able to go on strike, the rules are very strict; and there are mandatory requirements for every step in every procedure. The Guild submission to the Labour Board, with a very detailed response to the complaint, is posted on our website. In order for the process to obtain a new collective agreement to proceed, the next step right now, which is also compulsory, is to receive the decision of the Labour Board regarding the employer's complaint. Members will be kept informed promptly as soon as that decision is received.