



## Bargaining Info Sessions – Q&A

*Compiled from Oct 30, 31 & Nov 5<sup>th</sup> Sessions*

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**Q: Is CUPE negotiating wage increases and pay grade adjustments similar to IBEW's 2025 and 2026 contract terms, and is wage harmonization with IBEW under consideration?**

- Yes, wage harmonization is a priority, as it's been a longstanding concern for our members. This remains central to our discussions with the corporation, and we're exploring all options to align wages equitably across our jurisdiction.

**Q: Given recent corporate hints about possibly removing Work From Home (WFH) days, can remote work be included in our contract?**

- Protecting our current remote work policy is a priority, and we are dedicated to advocating for its continuation. The corporation understands the importance of the work-from-home policy for employee retention and attraction, and there are currently no plans to discontinue it. CUPE successfully secured remote work options for the Customer Engagement Center and parts of the Digital and Technology department—an achievement that underscores the stability of our existing remote work policy.

**Q: Is there a list of our bargaining priorities?**

- While we can't share specifics during active negotiations, we will provide a comprehensive update to members as soon as we are able to.

**Q: Why is a 3-year contract being considered? Could this lead to delays with the next contract?**

- Aligning with government contract cycles is strategic, especially with a union-friendly administration. Currently, most agreements trend toward three years.

**Q: Could wage increases and harmonization impact our pensions?**

- Absolutely. Increased wages contribute to higher pension benefits, which is beneficial to all members.

**Q: Wage harmonization has historically been challenging. How can CUPE ensure lasting alignment across unions?**

- Achieving and maintaining wage harmonization is complex and requires ongoing advocacy. While previous efforts (2009, 2018) achieved temporary alignment, we've been actively working to establish more sustainable solutions.

**Q: Is wage harmonization targeted for specific roles or across the board?**

- We're addressing harmonization both collectively and through specific reviews of all areas specially those key groups who have reached out to the union directly such as Customer Engagement Center, Procurement, Energy Service Advisors, Design Group, Digital and Technology, Administrative Reps and Technical Assistants. Your bargaining team remains fully committed to advancing this issue.

**Q: Will we consider a step-based system, like IBEW's, for positions such as Technical Assistants (TAs)?**

- We're exploring compensation models that recognize experience and skill, including the possibility of a unified pay grade system to address disparities.

**Q: When might members expect an offer?**

- While it's challenging to provide a timeline, our priority is achieving a fair and beneficial agreement. We're committed to not rushing this process and will update members as progress is made.

**Q: Can we expect an agreement by year-end?**

- MB Hydro aims for a contract by December 31st, a goal we share. However, we will not compromise on quality to meet a deadline.

**Q: Why can't we get more updates on bargaining?**

- Due to active negotiations, we're limited in what we can share. Rest assured; we'll provide detailed information as soon as we're able.

**Q: Are there options for a rotational strike?**

- We are not in this position but to answer your question some strike options include Work-to-Rule, Rotational Strike, or Full Strike. A final decision will depend on negotiation outcomes and how our membership wants to proceed. Right now the bargaining team is optimistic we will get a fair and reasonable contract.

**Q: Will signing or retention bonuses be structured to ensure all members are eligible, including those on leave?**

- Yes, we're addressing this to ensure eligibility for members on leave.

**Q: Any updates on the LOU for ESA's?**

- The LOU concludes at the end of Dec 2024.

**Q: Are there significant wording changes in the Collective Agreement?**

- Some language revisions are under consideration to improve clarity and consistency.

**Q: What does long-service recognition entail?**

- This is a one-time payment, subject to taxes, to honor years of dedicated service.

**Q: Is OT standby time pensionable?**

- No, per CRA guidelines, overtime and standby time do not count toward pensionable earnings.

**Q: How many CUPE members are there?**

- Approximately 900.

### Q: When did negotiations begin?

- Negotiations started on August 15th, with the most recent session held on November 5th.

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*This streamlined Q&A highlights CUPE's commitment to securing equitable, beneficial terms for members and reinforces the importance of key bargaining topics like wage harmonization and remote work retention.*