

STRIKE MANDATE INFOSHEET

CONCILIATION



WHAT IS CONCILIATION?

“Conciliation” occurs when one or both bargaining parties believe that a third party can move negotiations forward. In this instance, OPSEU/SEFPO is requesting neutral, third-party assistance to help resolve their differences. A request for conciliation is a common occurrence during collective bargaining.

After the request for conciliation is filed, a Conciliation Officer is appointed by the Minister of Labour to meet with the union and the employer to try and help the parties work through an impasse and reach a settlement.

WHAT DOES A CONCILIATION OFFICER DO?

A Conciliation Officer (or “Conciliator”) is an impartial third party, appointed by the Minister of Labour, who has experience in mediation and alternative dispute resolution. Conciliation Officers work with both the union and the employer, using their expertise to try to help both sides find mutually agreeable solutions to outstanding issues they might not have considered during bargaining.

WHY DO WE NEED A STRIKE MANDATE?

Conciliation is a tool that can help move the parties forward – but to be successful in moving on our key priorities, we need to enter conciliation with a high-participation, strong strike mandate as a demonstration of member support. A Conciliation Officer will help the parties to work toward a fair resolution, but they need to know – as does the employer – that the membership stands with the bargaining team. In addition, we need a strike mandate before engaging in any job action such as a strike.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A ‘YES’ VOTE?



We get the collective agreement for which we are willing to fight.

This round of collective bargaining is critical to securing strong, enforceable protections for hybrid work arrangements. Your bargaining team believes it is likely we can reach a deal before any strike action is necessary, minimizing the risk to the employee.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS OF A ‘YES’ VOTE?

1

Worst-case scenario: Lockout or strike

If mediation does not lead to meaningful movement from the employer, job action could still occur, including a lockout or strike.

2

Financial impact during job action

Strike pay would be \$450 per week, which means financial hardship while we advocate for better wages along with other outstanding issues.

Your bargaining team would advocate strongly for financial top-ups from our Local and the OPSEU hardship fund to help mitigate this impact.

3

Short-term uncertainty and commitment

We will be conducting **one strike vote** only. A ‘yes’ vote means a collective commitment to support the bargaining team and one another, regardless of the outcome, should job action become necessary.



A STRIKE MANDATE IS A TOOL FOR INCREASING OUR LEVERAGE, NOT A DESIRE TO GO ON STRIKE.

It strengthens our ability to secure binding protections where employer intentions and goodwill are not enough.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS OF A 'NO' VOTE?

1. NO HYBRID WORK PROTECTIONS

- Hybrid work is not enshrined in the collective agreement.
- Without contractual language, the employer can impose return-to-work mandates without consultation or notice.
- A full return-to-work five days per week remains a real risk and is not unprecedented in comparable workplaces.

2. WAGES DO NOT KEEP UP WITH INFLATION

- The employer's offer of a four-year agreement with wage increases of 2.5%/2%/2%/2% per year is significantly less than the last agreement (4%/3%/3% per year) and does not keep pace with inflation.
- Real wages decline when increases fail to match the cost of living.

3. MINIMAL GAINS FOR LONG-TERM EMPLOYEES

- Members already at Step 5, or those who will reach Step 5 during the next few years, will see very little real wage growth over the life of the agreement.
- Long waits for increases in vacation entitlements does not incentivize retention.

5. NON-STANDARD HOURS OF WORK

- No enforceable limits on travel requirements or overnight stays.
- Many members will continue to be scheduled regularly for 8-12 hr shifts, in violation of our CA.
- Members continue to face uncertainty in scheduling that impacts work-life balance, caregiving responsibilities, and mental health.

4. GRID PROGRESSION AND WAGE FREEZE AFTER CA EXPIRY

- When the collective agreement expires, grid progression freezes, creating a financial incentive for the employer to delay bargaining, as wages remain static.
- Members who leave the organization after expiry but before ratification are not entitled to their step increase, resulting in direct cost savings for the employer.
- Waiting until ratification for grid progression means less money in your pocket when you need it and larger lump sum payments may result in impacts to income tax.

7. PARENTAL TOP-UP FALLS BEHIND SECTOR STANDARDS

- The current lack of parental leave top-up results in significant decreased income for members who take parental leave.
- Approximately 70% of comparable units receive better entitlements, leaving our members behind.

6. LACK OF FLEXIBILITY

- While members can request alternate work arrangements, these requests are routinely denied.
- There is no transparent process, no clear criteria, and no right to flexibility, it is only at employer discretion.



WITHOUT A STRONG STRIKE MANDATE, THESE ISSUES REMAIN REQUESTS INSTEAD OF REQUIREMENTS.

A strong mandate signals unity and resolve. After 9 days of bargaining at impasse, your bargaining team needs your support to move forward and continue to fight for the issues that are important to YOU!