



Bargaining issues *first*

A short Q and A

Q. What's the plan for bargaining this time?

Your bargaining teams will bargain the issues first. The teams will only bargain Essential and Emergency Services if they come to an impasse with the government on issues bargaining.

Q. Why are we doing it this way, this time?

In the last round, it took six months to bargain Essential and Emergency Services (EES) and less than three months to negotiate a collective agreement. Members told OPSEU that they wanted more time spent on issues, and less time "bargaining a strike," which is how they saw the EES negotiations.

Q. Will the employer agree to this change in procedure?

In February 2007 an agreement was reached with the employer to bargain issues first and only negotiate EES if the teams reach an impasse.

Q. If there is an impasse, how long will EES negotiations take?

The only EES negotiations will be for those workplaces that have experienced significant change since the last EES agreements were negotiated. All other previously negotiated EES agreements will be in force.

Q. Does changing the order of negotiations conflict with the law?

Under the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act we must negotiate EES Agreements (for those workplaces that have EES workers) prior to going to on strike. The new procedure doesn't change this, it only changes the order the teams bargain.

Q. What are the advantages to the way we're bargaining this time?

There are many. The bargaining teams will know much earlier in the process where the union stands in terms of the employer's offer. There will be more focus on both sides to seriously bargain the issues. Bargaining won't drag on and on, and the first bargaining done will be on the issues – the things members really care about.

Q. What is the timeline for bargaining?

The teams will start issues bargaining Nov. 4. If the two sides have not reached a deal by Dec. 23, EES negotiations will begin and the teams will move toward a strike vote.

Q. Does this time frame give the employer and us enough time to reach a deal?

Yes.

Q. What challenges does this process present?

The teams need to build leverage to demonstrate to the employer they have the support of the members. If the employer doesn't see the members standing squarely behind their bargaining teams, they will not give the union anything at the table.

Q. How do the members get involved?

The first step is for members to fill out their bargaining surveys and attend their local demand-set meeting. Make sure members are plugged into the process, and that bargaining information is posted and distributed in the workplace. Check the OPSEU website frequently (www.opseu.org).

Your voice, your contract