



Impact

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COMPENSATION EMPLOYEES' UNION

Why are there so many RLTT positions?

Since June 2004, job seekers have been seeing notes on job postings for temporary vacancies which say: "This assignment is a Reorganization Long Term Temporary (RLTT)." The note then states that it is one of four types of RLTTs:

1. Placeholder
2. Future Redundant
3. Project Work
4. Domino

If you are a job seeker – regardless of whether you are a temporary employee trying to get a permanent job or a permanent employee looking for a promotion – you may have felt frustrated to see so many temporary postings over the last few years. This article describes why RLTT positions were created and the purpose of the different types of RLTT postings.

Why were RLTT positions created?

RLTT positions were created because we know that when CMS is introduced jobs will be lost.

In 2002, we lost the clauses in our collective agreement which guaranteed job security for permanent employees. We then went through a painful downsizing process, which included layoff and bumping of permanent employees. No one wants to go through such a distressing experience again.

In 2004, the majority of CEU members supported early bargaining (i.e., renewing the collective agreement before its term expired) because we saw it as an opportunity to negotiate employment security.

By this time, the employer was well into its planning for the CMS system to replace its main legacy systems. The employer's business case for the new system was predicated on eliminating many jobs at the front end of

the claims cycle. So, the challenge was how to provide employment security, knowing that job losses were looming on the horizon. The answer we came up with was to create RLTT positions.

Where are RLTTs in the collective agreement?

All unions are interested in limiting the number of temporary positions that exist in their bargaining units. That's why our collective agreement contains article 15.09, Permanency Defined. It says:

Permanency is indicated when it is apparent that there was or is likely to be an ongoing requirement for an employee in one classification at one work location for more than ten (10) months in any twelve (12) month period.

This means that the employer can't keep employees in temporary positions indefinitely. Since there are legitimate needs in some circumstances for temporary workers for longer than ten months, the article also allows exceptions to fill vacancies. These exceptions are vacancies resulting from the absences of employees on long-term disability; workers' compensation leave; maternity, adoption, and parental leaves; secondments; the trial period for job shares; and general leaves of absences.

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The Memorandum of Agreement – Employment Security (MOU) negotiated in 2004 added another exception to this list:

...the parties agree that permanency will not be indicated where the position is being held to create a vacancy for permanent placement of future redundant employees, to provide a skill set to facilitate reorganization or to avoid a future redundancy of a permanent employee where the position is clearly for a temporary period.

The 2004 MOU was originally to expire in December 2007, but the CEU was successful in negotiating it into the April 2006 collective agreement. The MOU is now in effect until December 31, 2010. Thus, the MOU is the origin of the four types of RLTT positions listed at the beginning of this article.

Here is a definition of each type of RLTT:

- **Placeholder** – Whenever a position that would normally be posted permanently (e.g., a vacancy exists due to a retirement or resignation), Human Resources (HR) looks to see if it should be filled under article 15.01, Pre-posting Placements (e.g., a return to work placement). If not, HR assesses whether it's a position that a future redundant employee would likely qualify for under vacancy placement in the MOU. If so, HR then offers it to an employee in the department who has backup training for the classification. If a backup-trained-employee is not available, HR then posts the vacancy as a placeholder RLTT.
- **Future Redundant** – Until the CMS system is implemented, the Board needs people in the positions that are targeted for redundancy. When a vacancy occurs in a job classification expected to be affected by redundancies, the Board posts it as a RLTT-Future Redundant.
- **Project Work** – While the CMS system is being developed, the Board needs some people who have special skills (such as business analysts) to work on the project. These positions will not be needed when CMS is implemented. So, when vacancies in this category are posted they show as RLTT-Project Work.
- **Domino** – A permanent employee, not in a position expected to be affected by CMS redundancies, could be in an RLTT job. This could be

a temporary promotion or a chance to get different work experience for that person. As this person is a permanent employee, his or her permanent job is filled temporarily through backup or posted as an RLTT-Domino. This is how the Board ensures that this employee has a permanent position to return to when the RLTT ends.

Is the strategy of creating RLTTs working?

Yes. As announced in the recent WES meetings on CMS implementation and its "future state" model, about 130 permanent positions will be declared redundant and there are about 190 jobs that are available as placements. This is before redundancies are reduced through the CIP (cash incentive program). When the process is finished, there will be jobs for permanent employees in redundant positions to move into. There will also be some permanent jobs posted that temporary employees can apply for.

Concerns about RLTTs

While it's fair to say that the RLTT strategy is working in creating places for permanent employees to "land in", we know that there will continue to be some frustration associated with RLTTs.

Here are a few examples of concerns with RLTTs:

- There are some people who are currently in placeholders whose permanent positions are expected to become redundant. Some would like to be able to bypass the vacancy placement process and assume their current placeholders as their new permanent positions. This can't be done because the fair way to fill these vacancies is by seniority. The people who are presently in them may not be the most senior, qualified candidates needing placements, when the redundancies are declared.
- Friendships and attachments have formed where people have been in RLTTs for long periods. When assignments end, it will be difficult for the person in the placeholder position and the colleagues in that department to say goodbye to each other. It will also be difficult for the people who obtain these positions as their new permanent jobs to leave their old friends and departments and to join a group where they know their new colleagues may be missing the person who just left.

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- There are many temporary employees who would like to remain working at the Board. Some will compete successfully on the permanent vacancies that will eventually be posted after vacancy placement is complete; others won't have enough seniority. Some will be able to continue to get temporary work here, but others won't.

In all these examples, the root cause of the frustration is really not the fact that we have RLTTs, but

rather that the employer has chosen to develop a new computer system. The RLTT process is one which is meant to mitigate the effects of the job losses resulting from technological and organizational changes. As we go through change at the Board, we need to be aware of how others may be feeling, and recognize the many ways that the change will impact each and every one of us. We need to be careful not to take our frustrations out on others.

High praise given to union education

Five CEU members attended the 2007 BC Summer Institute for Union Women, an intensive week of education for women trade unionists. The purpose of the institute is to give participants the opportunity to develop activist skills. It's an annual event sponsored by the British Columbia Federation of Labour (BC Fed).

The 2007 institute was held at the University of Victoria, July 4-8. This year's theme was Strong Women Taking Action.

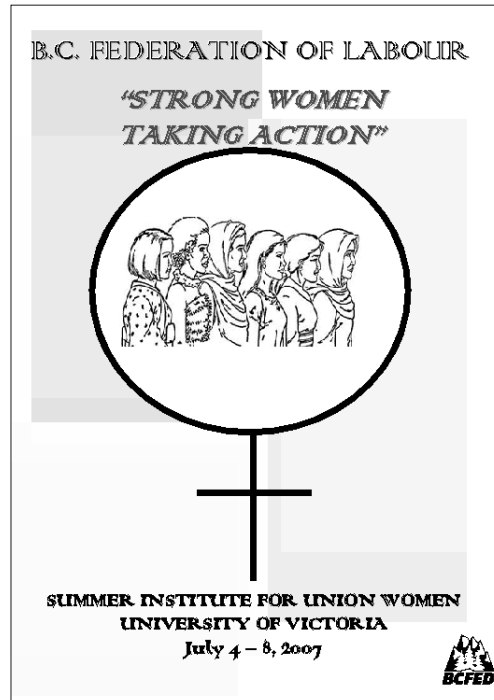
The CEU sends a few members to the institute most years. Rachel Barbour, Colleen Glynn, Robin Levey, Ann More, and Cheryl

Rimer attended this year's event. Participants always praise the event very highly when they return. This year was no different as you can see from the following excerpts from essays by three of the participants.

**Colleen Glynn, Admin Assistant,
Vancouver-Richmond**

"...I took two workshops – one on public speaking and one on facilitating. These were excellent workshops and gave us lots of hands-on experience.

For the public speaking one, they had promised that we would learn to "think on our feet". I have to say they really followed through on that – we all had to perform on camera, pretending we were union



officials talking to the press in the middle of a controversial strike. Even though it was nerve-wracking, it was a great experience. Our big assignment at the end was to give a three minute speech on stage in front of our classmates. We chose our topics from a list our instructors created and were given about 20 minutes to make notes. Three minutes is not a very long time when you're speaking about something that is quite meaningful to you. I chose the topic "The Greatest Threat to World Peace is...".

...The most positive experience for me was the chance to meet all the incredible women. This year, the BC Fed also invited women from community organizations. I was very fortunate to find myself at breakfast one morning with a young Latina woman who works with a group defending Mexican migrant workers. She couldn't have been more than 20 years old, but here she was doing such important and sometimes dangerous work. I found her quite inspiring.

Attending this institute was really the highlight of my summer. It was heartening to see so many talented and dedicated women. It was especially wonderful to see so many young women who were incredibly articulate and just full of energy."

Robin Levey, Case Manager, Vancouver-Richmond

"...It was unbelievably energizing to listen to the plenary speakers. Their welcoming comments set the stage for my core workshops, which included Skills for Union Education, Acting My Part, and Finding my Balance.

Skills for Union Education was facilitated by two incredibly dynamic women – Lynda Morrice, a staff representative from the BCGEU (BC Government and Services Employees' Union), and Amber Hockin, an adult educator with the Canadian Labour Congress. As participants, we were provided with the core skills key

to facilitating workshops and acting as instructors to diverse groups with variable backgrounds. Both instructors were extremely skilled in drawing upon the experiences of all the group participants. I particularly enjoyed pairing up with other women to give mini presentations. That was certainly effective in breaking down those barriers that often exist between strangers. Over the

course of the next two days, we were given many opportunities to process what we had learned by facilitating in small groups and to the entire group.

...Attending the Summer Institute was a wonderful experience for me. Foremost was the opportunity to meet and network with some amazing women – not only those who have been union activists for most of their adult lives, but also women young enough to be my daughter. They were enthusiastic about what they were able to take back and share with their unions about their experiences. The Summer Institute is a wonderful way to commit to learning about union activism and sharing one's personal experiences in a secure and supportive environment."

Ann More, Team Assistant, Victoria Office

"I just want to start with THANK YOU for the opportunity to attend the Summer Institute. It was an experience I will always remember. ...

I learned so much about where women are in the labour force in BC. I learned that old battles are still being fought by many of our sisters. I learned that women of other nationalities and new immigrants in the workforce are realizing that they do have rights in their workplaces. They are beginning to spread their wings for better conditions and pay.

I highly recommend this summer institute for any

woman wishing to be more active in labour, and to be inspired by the cause.

I met a 45-year-old woman who described how her son's false arrest and mistreatment by Vancouver police officers forced her to be more vocal against injustices, not only in her ethnic environment but also at her workplace.

I met a 32-year-old woman whose husband's tragic death has lead to her activism

against unsafe work practices.

I met a 24-year-old woman who, having been extremely active in student unions, is now graduating and looking to go further in the labour movement.

I met a 65-year-old woman who after having been active in her youth, and seeing the old battles she helped win, now being lost, has come out of retirement to be more active on behalf of her grandchildren's future.

The facilitators were excellent. They MADE this conference for me. They kept everyone on track, yet gave enough space to keep everyone involved and heard."

CEU participants in the 2007 Summer Institute for Union Women. Left to right: Robin Levey, Cheryl Rimer (centre back), Rachel Barbour (centre front), and Colleen Glynn (Missing from photo-Ann More)

Labour rights are human rights

In the past 25 years we Canadians have endured a serious erosion of our right to free collective bargaining and the right to strike, which are considered to be fundamental human rights. Rather than protect these rights, our governments are more and more likely to provide the legal means to abuse or ignore them. Since 1982, federal and provincial governments have passed 175 pieces of legislation that have restricted, suspended, or denied collective bargaining rights. This has hurt the labour movement's ability to effectively represent its members and to organize the unorganized.

NUPGE (National Union of Public and General Employees) and the UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers) believe it's time to campaign to expose, resist, and reverse this trend. The foundation of the campaign is their study, "Collective Bargaining in Canada: Human Right or Canadian Illusion?" The two organizations have designed LabourRights.ca as part of that campaign.

Did you know that...?

If you go to LabourRights.ca, some of the facts you will find there will probably surprise you. For example:

- Canada now has one of the worst records of any Western country on labour rights advocated by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The ILO is the United Nations agency that promotes improvement in working conditions, living standards, and the equitable treatment of workers.
- Of the ILO's 185 conventions (standards), Canada has only ratified 30. The ILO considers eight of these to be core conventions. We have yet to ratify conventions on forced labour, the right to organize and collective bargaining, and the minimum working age.

- Since 1982, unions in Canada have filed more complaints with the ILO's Freedom of Association Committee than the labour movements from any of the ILO's 178 member states.
- 76 complaints have been filed against Canadian federal and provincial labour legislation since 1982.

To date the ILO has found that freedom of association principles had been violated in 68 of them.

Support the Campaign

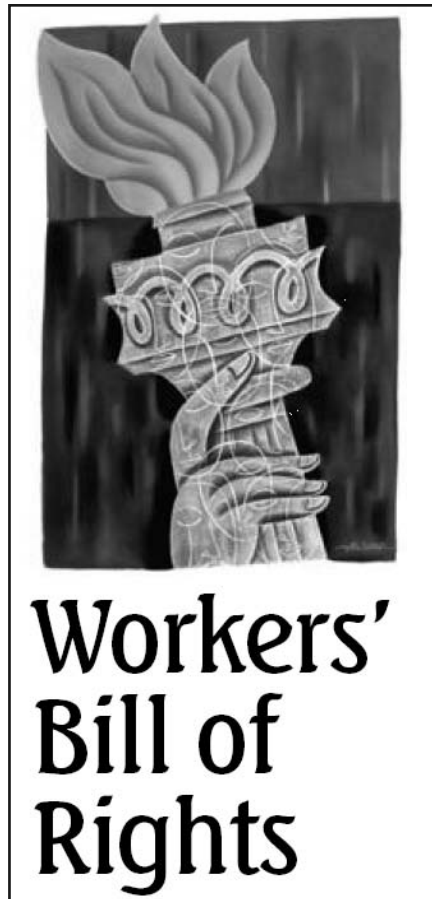
You can show your support for the Labour Rights campaign by visiting LabourRights.ca and adding your name to the list of supporters who have signed the "Worker's Bill of Rights."

Collective bargaining is a constitutional right

In 2002, you will recall that the BC government passed several bills which limited labour rights. In June 2007, a ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada departed from the prevailing trend eroding labour rights. The court ruled that the Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement Act, (a.k.a. Bill 29) trampled on the rights of BC health care workers, in particular their right to freedom of

association as guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Bill 29 effectively re-wrote collective agreements to facilitate the government's plan to contract out union jobs to contract workers and pay them less for the same work.

In 2003, several years before the June 2007 decision by the Canadian court, the ILO issued a blunt ruling stating that the BC government had violated rights guaranteed by its 1948 Convention No. 87 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, which Canada and all ten provinces signed in 1972.



You may be entitled to claim full costs of your eye exams

Who is eligible to claim 100 percent of the costs of an eye exam?

If you spend the majority of your work day monitoring a computer screen, you are eligible for full coverage of the costs of an eye exam. This is provided for in article 58.06 (a), Video Display Terminals, of the collective agreement.

What conditions apply to this coverage?

- You must be examined by an ophthalmologist or optometrist (of your choice).
- You can only claim this every two years.
- Staff who do not work the majority of the day at a computer monitor are not eligible.

What do I have to do to claim the costs of the eye exam?

- Have your manager notify Human Resources that the majority of your work is monitoring a computer screen, the next time you set up an appointment for your eye exam.
- Complete the Blue Cross claim form and send it to the Manager of Employee Benefits in Human Resources (currently Barb Messenger).
- Attach a note requesting full reimbursement under article 58.06 (a). You should be reimbursed for the full cost of the exam instead of the \$75 limit under the extended health benefits program.

Does this coverage apply to family members?

No, unlike extended health benefits, coverage does not apply to family members.

Some employees qualify for “computer” glasses



The Board will provide single vision “computer” glasses if you wear bi/tri focal or progressive lenses, and, if you meet specific criteria. Modifications to computer workstations can provide relief to most employees reporting neck, shoulder, upper limb, and visual discomfort. However, for some individuals who wear glasses with bi/tri-focal or progressive lenses, these changes may not completely alleviate discomfort. In these cases, single vision glasses may help reduce discomfort.

To be eligible for reimbursement of the costs of these glasses, you must work with a Board ergonomist. The Board won't pay the costs of “computer” glasses, unless:

- Other workstation improvements have been tried and have not been successful in eliminating discomfort
- A Board ergonomist thinks that single vision lenses may reduce your discomfort

For more information about the use of “computer” glasses, contact Corporate Ergonomist Emma Christensen or Joyce Lee. If you are experiencing discomfort which may be related to your workstation, submit an electronic Ergonomic Request Form. One of the ergonomists, or a member of your local Ergo Liaison Team, will then carry out an evaluation of your workstation.

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