

Know Your Collective Agreement

Leaves you might not know about

At 234 pages, 74 articles, six schedules, two appendixes, and 25 letters of understanding, it's not surprising if you're not familiar with all the rights and benefits contained in the collective agreement. The CEU has been able to negotiate many leaves of absence which most employees know about, and many have used. For example, the five years to care and nurture children (article 35.09) and the self-funded, one-year leave through salary deferral (article 35.10) This column identifies some of the lesser known articles which also allow you to take time off at important times in your life, in some cases with pay. You may not need to use all of these articles during your work life, but when you do, you'll appreciate that you can.

Jury and witness duty (article 41)

When you are called to sit on a jury or are subpoenaed to testify at a legal proceeding, (provided you aren't the plaintiff, defendant, or accused), you will be granted a leave of absence with pay to perform this civic duty. When on such leave, if you are excused before the end of the day, you must return to work if it is still early enough to perform more than two hours of work.

You must submit any jury and witness fees you receive to Human Resources except for that portion of the fees in excess of five calendar days per week. The excess fees don't have to be submitted to the Board because your regular wages are based on a five-day work week.

Blood and bone marrow donations (article 42)

If you need to be a blood donor for a close relative, to fulfill a request from the Canadian Blood Services, or to donate bone marrow, you are entitled to a leave with pay for three days. If you need more than three days, you can use sick leave.

Armed Forces Reserve (article 46)

You may request an unpaid leave for a maximum of 10 working days per calendar year to attend training camps if you are a member of the Armed Forces Reserve, the part time component of the Canadian Armed Forces. Reservists are required to take the same levels of training to quality for their trades and ranks as do regular soldiers. This often involves attending training courses or exercises

of two weeks or more at least once a year.

In 2007, the CEU and the Board were awarded the Canadian Forces Liaison Council's Award of Excellence for Best Practices in Employer Support—Public Sector, for including this leave in the collective agreement.

Leave to write examinations (article 40.01)

You are entitled to take leave with pay to write examinations to improve your qualifications. To be eligible, the connection between the course and Board operations must be positive and direct. You should provide at least 10 working days' written notice of your need for leave. Your leave will be for the actual time involved writing the exam, not for the time you need to study for the exam. (If you need time to study, you can request an unpaid leave under article 35 or request vacation or ETO time.)

Leave for full-time public duties (article 35.07)

You will be granted leave without pay for a maximum of 90 days if you decide to seek office in a municipal, provincial, or federal election. If you are elected to a public office requiring full-time duties, you will be granted leave without pay for a maximum of five years.

Secondment to another employer (article 71)

Article 71 permits the Board to assign you to another agency, board, society, commission, or employer. This is referred to as a "secondment". The Board's Leave of Absence Policy says the work experience from a secondment "...must enhance an employee's value to the Board, or meet another Board objective."

Examples are rare. Several years ago an Occupational Safety Officer was seconded to the BC Employment Standards Branch. Secondments can provide an opportunity to work in an area of special interest for a limited time. (General leaves without pay under article 35.03 can't be used to temporarily work for another employer).

If the Board wants to second you to another employer, but you don't want to go, the article protects you. Secondments can't take place without your agreement. Your wages and benefits are also protected under article 71.02.