

You Ought To Know

ISSUE: 16

If we do not have a Joint Proposal, does that mean there will be a labour disruption?

Not at all. Our Electrical Trade Bargaining Agency (ETBA) hopes we can negotiate a Joint Proposal with the IBEW. We feel strongly that this is the ideal outcome for our industry and clients. However, if the parties are unable to negotiate a Joint Proposal, they will conduct traditional collective bargaining. The goal of the ETBA will be to conclude collective bargaining with a fair deal and without a strike or lockout.

No other ICI trade has an agreement like our Joint Proposal, and most conclude collective bargaining without a work stoppage. During the last round of bargaining, five of the 25 trades exercised their right to strike ranging from 7 days to 15 days out of work. All trades were eventually able to reach a ratified agreement. We believe neither party wants a work stoppage and, in the unlikely event we are unable to negotiate a Joint Proposal, we will work hard at the bargaining table to ensure a deal is reached. After all, our members want to be there for our customers.

Were you working in the unionized construction industry before 1992?

If so, you might recall the labour disruptions in the years prior to the first Joint Proposal, following the new legal requirement for provincial bargaining as of 1978. If not, you are encouraged to read an article written by Scott Thompson, a recognized authority on provincial bargaining. He provided an overview of provincial bargaining in a past issue of ECAO's Electrical Contractor magazine to educate our members on the changes to the Labour Relations Act, and the development and progress of the Joint Proposal. Access the issue [here](#) and scroll to page 10 for Scott's article.

The chart below shows a high-level overview of bargaining before the Joint Proposal. There were four labour disruptions totalling 15 weeks out of work from 1980 to 1990. The "before strike" column shows the ETBA's last wage offer before the labour disruption, and "final settlement" was the result. In 1986 and 1990, the final settlements were reflective of settlements of a few other trades.

You will notice that, in 1990, ETBA declared a lock out after the strike began. A lot of IBEW members were still going to work during the strike, while others were not. This did nothing to encourage the parties to reach a settlement, and therefore ETBA sent out cease and desist orders to contractors who had IBEW members working during the lock out.

Round	Status	Before strike	Final settlement
1980	No strike	N/A	\$2.50 over 2 years
1982	1-week strike	\$3.50 over 2 years	\$4.00 over 2 years
1984	No strike	N/A	\$1.00 over 2 years
1986	3-week strike	\$1.50 over 2 years	\$1.87 over 2 years**
1988	3-week strike	\$3.00 over 2 years	\$3.00 over 2 years
1990	8-week strike and lock out	\$3.00 over 2 years	\$3.85 over 2 years***

** based on average of bricklayers and plumbers.

*** based on sheet metal and plumbers/pipefitters. Removed 10 cents from travel.

The work lost during the above-noted strikes incited the parties to work together to explore methods of resolving disputes without resorting to the strike/lockout procedure, which resulted in the development of the Joint Proposal. Both the IBEW and the ETBA recognized that the increasing duration of the work stoppage, lost person hours and lost market share caused by work stoppages was detrimental to both parties, and it certainly had a negative impact on customers.

Why would our employees “give up” their right to strike for a Joint Proposal?

By agreeing to a Joint Proposal, IBEW members do not give up their right to strike. They are deferring their right to strike until the next round of bargaining in exchange for a reasonable wage increase, a Post Negotiated Wage Adjustment (PNWA), and the certainty of being able to continue to work without a work stoppage.

As we’ve discussed in previous issues of You Ought to Know, the PNWA has always been part of the Joint Proposal. In more cases than not, the PNWA has benefitted IBEW members by adding money to the negotiated wage increase – to the tune of \$6.05 since 1992. You can see the numbers below, which begin in 1978.

Look at 2007. That year, which many of you have likely heard about if you were not yet in the industry, was the year one of the 26 ICI trades negotiated a large wage settlement. That settlement resulted in an additional \$2.15 being added to the negotiated wage increase. At the time the 2007 Joint Proposal was negotiated, the “catch-up” money negotiated by the Demolition trade was not anticipated. This resulted in the 2010 Joint Proposal including a cap on the PNWA and the list of “comparator” trades was reduced to 8. The ETBA has requested a cap on a few other occasions to maintain a reasonable increase to the wage package.

	BEFORE THE JOINT PROPOSAL														
	1978		1980		1982		1984		1986		1988		1990		
	Year 1	2	Year 1	2	Year 1	2	Year 1	2	Year 1	2	Year 1	2	Year 1	2	
Wages	\$ 0.75	\$ 0.75	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.25	\$ 2.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 0.25	\$ 0.75	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.87	\$ 2.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 1.85	
Work Stoppage	none		none		1 week strike		none		2.5 weeks		3 weeks		8 weeks		
	AFTER THE JOINT PROPOSAL														
	1992			1995			1998			2001			2004		
	Year 1	2	3	Year 1	2	3	Year 1	2	3	Year 1	2	3	Year 1	2	3
Wages	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.20	\$ -	\$ 0.70	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.25	\$ 0.75	\$ 0.85	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.90	\$ 0.85	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.20
with PNWA	\$ 1.30	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.20	\$ -	\$ 0.70	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.25	\$ 0.75	\$ 0.85	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.50	\$ 0.90	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.60	\$ 1.20
Differences	\$ 0.20	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.60	\$ 0.05	\$ -	\$ 0.50	\$ -
PNWA Cap (if any)															
	2007			2010			2013			2016			2019		
	Year 1	2	3	Year 1	2	3	Year 1	2	3	Year 1	2	3	Year 1	2	3
Wages	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.45	\$ 0.65	\$ 1.05	\$ 1.55	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.50	\$ 1.50	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.05	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.40	\$ 1.40
with PNWA	\$ 1.10	\$ 3.40	\$ 1.45	\$ 0.65	\$ 1.30	\$ 1.80	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.55	\$ 1.55	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.44	\$ 1.49	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.49	\$ 1.48
Differences	\$ -	\$ 2.15	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.25	\$ 0.25	\$ -	\$ 0.05	\$ 0.05	\$ -	\$ 0.39	\$ 0.39		\$ 0.09	\$ 0.08
PNWA Cap (if any)				*\$0.50 cap									\$1.00 cap		
		2022													
	Year 1	2	3												
Wages	\$ 3.00	\$ 1.65	\$ 1.40												
with PNWA	\$ 3.00	\$ 2.15	\$ 1.90												
Differences	\$ -	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50												
PNWA Cap (if any)	\$1.00 cap														

Do you know what You Ought to Know?

We hope that you’re benefitting from the facts and insights we’ve shared through the publication thus far, and we welcome your questions and content ideas for future issues at any time. Contact Jodi Travers, ECAO’s Labour Relations Manager, at jtravers@ecao.org. You can find all previous issues on the ECAO website under Publications.