

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE AND NATIONAL LABOUR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT NOVEMBER 2023



The National Executive once again met with the employer for our regular Labour-Management meeting in Ottawa, from October 30 to November 3, to discuss issues affecting UCCO-SACC-CSN members all across the country. As this meeting took place over Halloween, it was obvious that a “trick” would be required to denounce the Prison Needle Exchange Program (PNEP). For more pictures of this action, please look at your union’s social media pages. The National Executive and the National Mobilization Committee were fortunate to have Caroline Beaucage, President of Joliette, as an observer for the week’s meetings. We thank Caroline for all her hard work and determination. Although our local and national situations may differ in some respects, at the end of the day we are all UCCO-SACC-CSN.

Here is a summary of the meeting.

Scheduling Issues

After the employer amended the scheduling bulletin in the midst of a scheduling exercise affecting most locals, thereby removing the ability to schedule 9-hour shifts, the union filed an unfair labour practice complaint. The employer was very clear about their objective here: to replace 9-hour shifts with 8.5-hour shifts, in order to reduce overlaps and add 6 days of work to CXs over the course of the year, for the same salary. Until there is a decision on this complaint, we will continue our opposition to the unilateral application of this bulletin. The employer did indicate that they have no intention of imposing schedules and wish to have our complaint heard before moving forward. Paradoxically, however, they are still applying pressure on local scheduling committees to apply the latest scheduling bulletin. Each

local has been given clear instructions on the procedure to be followed if a local meeting is requested for purposes of working on scheduling options. So far, any such work undertaken locally has proven to be a fruitless exercise. The ball is in the Commissioner's court. The employer has thrown a wrench in the works, which needs to be cast aside if they wish to have a positive impact upon employees' morale and quality of life.

Prison Needle Exchange Program

Earlier this month, Mountain Institution in the Pacific region saw two fatal inmate overdoses. In addition, two correctional officers were exposed to fentanyl while responding to one of these emergencies. In its efforts to implement a needle exchange program at Mountain in the next month, as well as other sites this year, the Correctional Service is on the wrong track. UCCO-SACC-CSN has been very vocal in the media and has been meeting with various political leaders to denounce this program, which will only serve to increase these kinds of overdoses. CSC is choosing an ineffective, less expensive program in lieu of a better-defined, safer option. Once again, the almighty dollar takes precedence over employee safety.

Drones

The drone problem is growing with every day, in almost every facility across the country. Once again, the Commissioner has expressed frustration with the increase in drone deliveries. Unfortunately, however, little has been done to address the issue. We have provided the employer with a list of interim measures to limit this growing threat, yet in every facility currently experiencing this problem, we are still waiting for concrete action to be taken.

Work Tools

As the need for better safety equipment becomes more pressing than ever, the

tendering process for body scanners, dual threat vests, and puncture-proof gloves continues to move too slowly. Your National Executive will be requesting a meeting with the Minister of Public Services and Procurement to obtain an expedited procurement process for situations where the required tools have a direct impact on officer health and safety.

The tender for the dual threat vest was concluded with one bidder, and we were advised that the CSC and Public Service and Procurement Canada are now assessing whether the bidder meets all the criteria set out in the call for tenders. We should have more details in the coming weeks.

Working on the Edge in Virtual Reality

The National Executive has approved an ambitious virtual reality (VR) project that will depict the realities of working as a correctional officer. Listo Films – the same company that has produced other video projects for the union, including Working on the Edge and Bloody Cells – will begin filming in Kingston before the end of the year. Once complete, this new VR tool will be used to raise awareness about the important and difficult work performed by correctional officers. The project will be available to the public, political leaders, and even family members.

Stay safe! And once again, thank you to all members for your continued professionalism in the face of very difficult working conditions – even if, too often, these contributions are not recognized by our employer.

In Solidarity,

Your National Executive