

Postal Workers take Pay Equity fight to Arbitration

Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers make 25% less than their Urban Male Counterparts at Canada Post

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OTTAWA - Hearings begin next week into the largest active pay equity case in Canada. At the end of collective bargaining in 2016, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and Canada Post reached a separate agreement to expedite the pay equity process for Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMC).

A joint committee was established to study RSMC pay equity issues and implement the changes within a 19-month timeframe. Now, the findings are in dispute and CUPW has been forced to go to arbitration to settle the matter.

“Canada Post says that there is no wage gap, but RSMC’s can see the difference on pay day,” said Nancy Beauchamp, Pay Equity Committee member and Chief Negotiator for the RSMC bargaining unit. “While we made some gains to wages and benefits during our last round of negotiations, they were nowhere near enough to erase the gap and make RSMC’s equal.”

Nearly two-thirds of RSMCs are women. They make approximately 25% less per hour than their equivalent urban counterparts, the majority of whom are male. RSMCs also receive fewer benefits.

This isn’t the first pay equity case against Canada Post. CUPW is aware of at least two others. The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) launched a case in 1983, which took almost 30 years to pay out. The Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association (CPAA) started its case in 1993 and is still waiting for a resolution.

“Canada Post is a serial offender when it comes to pay equity. We agreed to the joint committee to ensure that our members would not have to wait decades for equal pay,” said Mike Palecek, National President of CUPW. “It’s 2018 and everyone but Canada Post is on board.”

The government intends to create proactive pay equity legislation for federally-regulated workplaces – including Crown corporations – by the end of this year. The government also recently stated it wants to improve labour relations at the Crown Corporation. Canada Post’s approach is doing little to help.

“Pay equity is a fundamental issue that the government has acknowledged needs to be fixed in the federal sector. Women must be paid the same as men for work of equal value,” said Beauchamp. “We’ve completed our research and could start to fix this immediately. We don’t need to wait for legislation that could take years to have an impact.”

Hearings begin Sunday, February 18 in Ottawa. They are not open to the public.

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