



Insufficient Workforce Levels: Urgent Feedback Required

Brothers and Sisters,

In recent weeks, the Hall has received an increase in reports from members stating that insufficient workforce levels throughout the plant are resulting in untenable increases in workload and staff performing hourly work (e.g. moving of scrap metal in Casting, control operator work in ABF, ARS and GTC, etc.).

Moreover, any process upset, as was experienced over the Christmas weekend in Reduction and Casting, has the real potential of incurring mandatory overtime. Clearly, the company does not have enough flexibility with its workforce levels to run the plant safely and efficiently.

The Union has expressed these concerns with workforce levels to management prior to and during the start-up of the new smelter and has repeatedly demanded that in order to have a safe and productive operation workforce levels must be augmented accordingly. The options are simple: More regular workers for normal operations and a temporary workforce to effectively respond to process upsets or spikes in absenteeism.

Contractors are not a viable option as the company should already be transitioning away from the use of contractors in order to respect its obligations under 24-LU-#5, where core production work will be wholly under the jurisdiction of Unifor 2301 members when the letter takes effect in June of next year.

Staff performing hourly work and excessive workloads are unacceptable and are violations of important provisions of the collective agreement:

6.01

Except in case of emergency, or for the purpose of giving or imparting instruction or training, or for the purpose of determining the nature of work which has been or is to be performed, no staff employee of the Company shall perform any work normally performed by a person who is one of those described in Section 1.01 of Article 1 (Application) of this Agreement.

20.01(b)

Workloads when set will not be detrimental to the health, safety and general well-being of the employee, and to this end adequate rest intervals will be provided for those

Continued on next page...

employees who are exposed to heat and smoke and/or other adverse working conditions which produce more than normal fatigue.

Where these violations occur, grievances need to be filed and appropriate measures, such as health and safety initiatives/improvements or workforce level adjustments, must be put in place to prevent their continuation. As well, workers always have the right to refuse unsafe work.

In addition, the Hall must be informed of all of these occurrences, and the specific details of each, as they will be referred to the Bargaining Committee to substantiate bargaining demands to address these issues.

The company often cites high absenteeism as one of the biggest impacts on workforce levels, but there are multiple reasons why people are not at work. Absenteeism isn't just because workers are "blowing shifts" because they couldn't get time off! The main reasons are short and long term illness or injury.

The Union has as much interest as anyone in members being at work rather than at home, and is willing to work with the company on improving attendance, particularly through an improved workplace accommodation program.

However, with the smelter running with a workforce as lean as it is, the workers who do make it to work are left to absorb the shortfall when increases in absenteeism invariably occur (e.g. cold and flu season). There's no flexibility, such as a temp pool, to respond to workforce level fluctuations. Indeed, there are reports of staff performing hourly work even with a full crew compliment (Casting)

The Union has always been committed to working with management to improve operations conditions and efficiency, but process and other problems can and will happen, and when they do the appropriate contingencies must be available which respect health and safety, and work ownership.

Your Union requires your feedback and engagement, and above all your solidarity, now and throughout the bargaining process to best equip your Bargaining Committee so they can address all of the issues important to the membership (job security, access to earned leave, safe workloads, etc.) and to ensure a successful round of bargaining next year.

At the end of the day the company is the author of all of the challenges facing the membership, but only with the membership and leadership united in solidarity and resolve will these challenges be overcome!

We are Community, We are United, We are Unifor!

