



Booking Time Off - It's Not Rocket Science!

Brothers and Sisters,

Once again, the employer has decided to unilaterally change how time off is to be booked, without consulting the Union, thereby disrespecting the Union and the membership.

The latest move comes out of Reduction where CSO's and other types of leave are to be booked through the workforce coordinator. Traditionally, time off requests after the regular vacation booking period are done on a first come, first serve basis. Supervisors were at one time deemed capable of doing this.

There are a few ways this would have played out:

- *Scenario #1:*
Member – “Hey boss, can I have tomorrow (Sunday) off using CSO's?”
Supervisor – [Checks time off book], “Sure, no problem. No one else has it off”. [Enters CSO's in time gathering]
- *Scenario #2:*
Member – “Hey boss, can I have tomorrow (Sunday) off using CSO's?”
Supervisor – [Checks time off book], “Sorry, there's already too many off tomorrow, but take a look at the book and see if there's another shift you might want off”.
Member – [Checks book, sees next Thursday and Friday are available and asks to take them off using CSO's].
Supervisor – [Enters time for those two shifts in time gathering]

See, it's not rocket science, but supervisors have been emasculated and a simple task has been taken out of their hands.

In addition, 17-LU-#2(7) states: “**When an employee requests [CSO] hours off, they will be given the answer within four (4) regular working hours**”. This was originally negotiated in 2002 with little trouble as it was such an easy thing for a supervisor to do.

Now, forms are submitted to the coordinator, which can cause delays in getting an answer if the coordinator is away, or not being able to get the time off at all if the request is made on a weekend. Moreover, the system is also inherently inefficient as members would have to re-issue requests if the original time requested was unavailable.

Grievances, where appropriate, on this matter have already been filed.

Situations like this, which effectively amount to the company writing the Union's bargaining demands, mean that negotiations will be bogged down as a result of having to negotiate clearer language covering every aspect of workplace administration, such as simple time off requests.

It appears that the Union will have to bargain supervisor duties into the collective agreement!

Undoubtedly, this will be a make or break round of negotiations where the “rules of the workplace” will have to be spelled out in clear, unequivocal language, most of which, believe it or not, will not add costs but will add certainty as to how things must be done.

Upper management has given lip service to improved relations with the Union, but the message obviously hasn't filtered down. Based on our ongoing experiences of unnecessary aggravations for the membership week in and week out, labour relations are at an all-time low. However, the Union will be meeting with management on the morning of January 10th to discuss this issue.

As bargaining approaches, the company has in its wisdom decided to get members worked up to the point that regardless of how good a contract is offered later this year, the chances of it being rejected are increasing. In the current climate, a labour dispute this summer is all but inevitable.

It is up to all of us to make sure management understands we stand united!

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