

EPL UPDATE #7

December 19, 2020

Dear EPL Colleagues and CSU 52 Members,

We are once again faced with the Temporary Lay Off (TLO) of a vast number of members throughout the EPL system as a result of COVID-19. This TLO impacts administrative and professional roles, operations, as well as many members in Branch Services.

Resulting from the provincially mandated closing of libraries, the layoffs came about very quickly, and quite unexpectedly. We were focused on advocating for mask mandates, improved COVID safety measures and concerns raised from our November 12 EPL Unit meeting when we were required to shift gears and work to create [Letter of Understanding \(LOU\) #12](#).

LOU #12 again suspends Clauses 12.01, 12.02 and 12.03 (permanent layoff language) of our Collective Agreement, and for those who elected to take the vacation option, Article 9.02.09 (conversion of vacation to sick time) shall not apply; all other terms and conditions of the Collective Agreement remain in place.

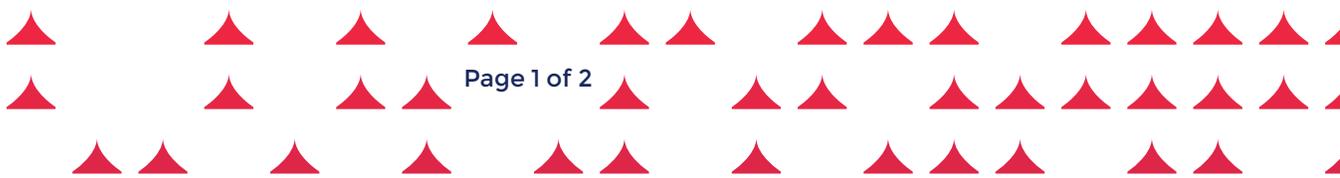
Much of LOU #12 remains the same as LOU #11; however, LOU #12 includes the deferral of temporary layoff through use of vacation option and also better respects seniority in the layoff and recall processes; lessons learned from the previous TLO. Given the circumstances, our goal continues to be to work with EPL to provide you with as much support as possible. This was a negotiation under pressure for both EPL and CSU 52; time constraints were tight. There is no easy or perfect way to do this.

Many people are wondering why EPL had to do layoffs instead of retaining staff on a leave with pay. EPL is funded primarily through the taxpayers of Edmonton. At the time of the Province's closure announcement the City was in budget deliberations looking at ways to hold property taxes at a 0% increase, which was getting a lot of media coverage. Given that EPL is primarily funded through municipal taxes and is accountable to the citizens, we suspect that the optics of keeping all staff on leave with pay would not be received well by citizens. The City of Edmonton is also laying off staff due to recreation facility closures.

EPL recognized that layoffs and a loss of income are difficult at any time, but perhaps even more so at this time of year. While it's not the best case scenario, the offer to allow people to use vacation helps as it allows employees to continue to be paid their normal wages and for pension contributions to continue. I know this doesn't make our situation any easier.

While the Union office is now physically closed to the public as a result of the Government of Alberta's direction for mandatory work from home measures, the office does remain available to our members. The best way to reach someone is to email info@csu52.org or leave a voice message at 780.448.8900.

I am also here to support and represent you, answer your questions and do what I can to assist you. Don't hesitate to reach out.



This continues to be a difficult year, one which I think we are all looking to close. We are living through a grave and uncertain time right now. The measures that have been put in place by the Province are not without consequence, but with them the goal of a safer and healthier new year for all may be achievable.

I wish you and your loved ones good health, serenity and a much more prosperous new year in 2021. Be kind to one another, and don't be afraid to reach out for help.

Sincerely,

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