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Report of the **RSMC Work Content Committee**

Report of the **RSMC Hourly Rate Committee**

Canadian Union of Postal Workers
Syndicat des travailleurs et travailleuses des postes

cupw • sttp

REPORT OF THE RSMC WORK CONTENT COMMITTEE

Although the 2018-2019 round of negotiations ended before an arbitrator, the parties had agreed on certain points of contention. Two of these disputes were to obtain an hourly rate for RSMCs and to have an assessed workload that is more representative of the work performed.

Following applications from members who had indicated their interest, the National Executive Board selected Sisters Susan Wilson from Ontario Region and Barb McMillan from Central Region, and Brother Eric Saumier from Quebec Region as the CUPW members of the Work Content Committee.

The work of the Work Content Committee began on January 29, 2020. In April 2021, two of the three committee members were replaced. The new committee was comprised of Sisters Katherine Green from Pacific Region and Barbara McMillan from Central Region and Brother Jeffery Cook from Atlantic Region.

The basis of a route measurement system is to adequately assess the volumes to be delivered, then to determine the work methods in order to assign them the necessary times required to carry out the work in a safe manner.

The mandate of the Committee was to make a recommendation to the parties regarding how to best determine, assess and measure work content and workload associated with rural and suburban routes, while ensuring the route measurement system is fair, equitable and maintains pay equity.

The parties encountered obstacles along the way, but the most impactful obstacle was the pandemic caused by COVID-19. The inside activities of only two postal installations were observed prior to the pandemic lockdown.

The restrictions due to COVID, specifically lack of access into the postal depots, prevented the Committee to test and validate assumptions in order to determine the differences between theory and practice. With CUPW members and their experience on the work floor as RSMCs and CPC with their understanding of the work performed as management, assisted by their engineers, both parties kept working.

During that period, the parties held different points of view on the hierarchy of the steps to achieve the Committee's mandate. The Union's perspective was about developing work methods prior to determining which measuring method would best fit for each of them and the methods of measurement being a stopwatch, existing time values, developing new time values or others. The chosen work methods and measuring methods need to ensure that the system is safe and maintains pay equity.

The parties decided to work independently for a few months to find solutions to be shared when at a time shortly thereafter when further analysis was made. When meetings resumed, they were held virtually via Microsoft Teams. In these meetings, CPC put forward an outline of a proposed route measurement system, which included some: LCMRS values for some work, urban averaged distances using LCRMS values, new work methods using the MOST to calculate values, formulas and existing values. CPC also provided provisions for an exception process.

CPC's proposal started with an automated volume collection, which consisted of a portion of the volumes that are route and depot specific and another portion that was based on counting the number of containers for a facility and then multiplying the number of containers of each type by a number of mail pieces, called conversion factors, to get an approximate mail volume. This mail would be then distributed between the RSMC routes, the urban routes if applicable and post office boxes. This proposal failed to include mail items that are mailed directly to the facility where the RSMC routes that will deliver this mail are located. Mail items that do not get processed at the mail plant and consequently are not counted as part of the workload. The Union could not validate the accuracy of this proposal because CPC was unable to provide a real-life set of data obtained from the postal plant. CUPW Committee members could not accept these estimates as viable without validating them. However, the Union presupposes that for the urban coded offices, where the majority of the mail goes directly to the routes, this method proposed by CPC would be more accurate than in rural coded offices, where most mail goes to the office, and not the route.

Another aspect of CPC's proposal was the time values at the postal installation. The time values of the proposal are the values of the LCRMS for the interior values. Then, for the loading and unloading time, Canada Post uses the times measured from the urban bargaining unit and divides them by the number of letters, packages and parcels in order to create a ratio of time per item to be used. This division is troublesome for the Union because even from a theoretical point of view, it does not seem adequate. In this formula, the same time is allocated for loading a letter as for loading a parcel. So according to this logic, a route with 500 letters and 25 parcels to load would have the same time credited as a route with 25 letters and 500 parcels to load. As it is, this assertion is absurd. The accurate method to assess time values is to use a stopwatch method, which recalculate periodically the time used for loading and unloading different products (letters, packages and parcels). This method makes the load/unload time to follow the fluctuation of products. This is what is done in urban postal installations.

Also included in CPC's proposal was outside duties. Their proposal consisted of a mix of values from LCRMS and values developed specifically for RSMCs. According to the Corporation, the distances to travel to get to an RSMC receptacle are averages of the average distances traveled for the same type of receptacle for urban mail carriers. For example, the distance credited for the round trip to a community mailbox is 42.4 feet, which is the average distance of urban routes. On the urban side, the total distance from the vehicle to each CMB and back is calculated individually. CPC has developed a new CMB reload value for RSMCs. On the urban side, a stop value is for each CMB site and in the event of more than three modules on a site, an additional stop is credited for each group of 3 modules.

One element missing from the proposal is that the outdoor parcel lockers have been installed on many RSMC routes and do not currently have a time value attached to that extra work. CUPW and CPC have been working together to develop an interim time value for urban. CPC proposed this value to be adopted for RSMCs. This work on developing an interim standard for the urban side is not complete, so the Union maintains that a value for RSMC will need to be developed.

A new time value for rural mailboxes (RMB) calculated with MOST has been proposed by CPC. This new value is less than the time currently allocated to RSMC routes and the Union has good reason to believe that it is not representative of the work performed. CUPW representatives on the Committee independently conducted validation exercises for driving times and stop times. The results demonstrated that in most cases, the current RMB time values were accurate and compensated for the accelerations and decelerations required to deliver to the RMBs. It is difficult to arrive at a conclusion other than that CPC is consequently devaluing the work of RSMCs by proposing lesser values than LCRMS. To be compliant with maintaining pay equity, not only must the compensation be equal but the work within the route measurement system must be equal.

The RSMC environment includes activities which, in some cases, are unique to one route, activities for which no time value has been developed, or where there is not enough time in the system for an individual activity to be performed. Both CUPW and CPC have put forward proposals to capture this work. CUPW's proposal includes a parameter to start the validation process which refers to timing with stopwatches to assess the work and to have new values incorporated in the route assessment, dating back to when the parameter was met. This will not result in reducing the value of the route. CPC has put forward an exception process that allows the Corporation to initiate the process, which could result in the value of the route being reduced. CUPW finds this unacceptable. Considering the tendency of CPC supervisors to pressure members to work faster and hence in an unsafe manner, CUPW foresees that permitting these time values to be decreased would only increase this tendency.

The Committee submitted a joint report in January 2022. The mandate has not been yet fulfilled, as there is no agreement on most of the values. While CUPW Committee members agree with the overall concept of how to attribute time values for activities, it is unknown if the automated volume data collection will work and it is equally unknown whether the proposed time values are accurate. The outstanding issues continue to be discussed with the Hourly Rate Committee.



Martin Champagne
4th National Vice-President, CUPW

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REPORT OF THE RSMC HOURLY RATE COMMITTEE

In June 2021, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers reached an agreement with Canada Post on a two (2) year extension of the collective agreements for the two (2) bargaining units it represents.

Submitted to CUPW members for ratification, the two-year extensions were accepted by a majority of the members in each of the units and led to the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement in September 2021 (see attached document).

The parties agreed to create two committees: a working committee and a steering committee. After calling for interested members to serve on the Working Committee, the National Executive Board appointed Sisters Barb McMillan, from the Central Region, and Angel Hoare, from the Pacific Region, along with Brothers Jeffery Cook, from the Atlantic Region, and Jean-Sébastien D'Aoust, from the Quebec Region, to represent the membership. In September 2022, Nancy Beauchamp, from the Quebec Region, replaced Brother Jean-Sébastien D'Aoust.

The Steering Committee is composed of Brothers Carl Girouard, National Grievance Officer, and Martin Champagne, 4th National Vice-President, and Sisters Barbara McMillan and Nancy Beauchamp.

Members of the Working Committee have been booked-off on a full-time basis since May 3, 2022, to meet virtually with the employer to develop an updated approach to workload and work content measurement. To this end, the parties discuss each of the tasks performed by RSMCs on a daily basis with the objective of determining how the work should be done, what equipment is used, how best to perform each task and what is the appropriate value for doing the work.

The Committee's work is divided into two distinct areas. The first area, and the one that is most likely to lead to disagreements, entails evaluating all workload and work content in terms of time value and volume of mail items processed. The second area of the Committee's work is the organization of RSMCs' work within an hourly system. How will overtime and additional hours be managed? How will routes and restructures be managed? What process will be used for bidding? And what changes will be made to the collective agreement?

For the first area of the work, the union representatives on the Working Committee take inspiration from the urban model and believe that the time values already developed for similar tasks should also be used for the rural unit. For tasks that are different or non-existent in the urban model, it is essential that they be evaluated to ensure that the right values are associated with them.

The parties agree on some time values and work procedures, while reaching an agreement on others is more difficult. How to account for mail volume is still under discussion between the parties, and we intend to travel to post offices across the country to determine the validity of the data that the employer wishes to rely on to determine mail volumes. As you know, the situation differs from one post office to another depending on the mail handling that needs to be done in each office. Some facilities receive almost all their mail directly by routes, while others must wait for the mail to be sorted and distributed by the postmasters. All these realities must be taken into account to ensure that nothing is missed and that the system measures everything that needs to be measured.

The area pertaining to the work structure and work rules remains to be determined. The union representatives on the Working Committee will attempt to replicate the urban structure, including obtaining a full-time employment status that would protect income and benefits despite volume fluctuations.



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4th National Vice-President, CUPW