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OCAL 598/CAW NEWSLETTER

MANSOUR MINING TECHNOLOGIES



March 15, 2013

Dear Brothers,

There are several grievances in the system right now. The newest ones are for a member being suspended for insubordination towards a lead-hand. It is unfortunate that I cannot get into this in more detail or as much as I would like too, but I'm sure you all pretty much know what it is all about.

There are grievances in the system with the respect to the company disregarding the union seniority. At this time it is for a junior employee being awarded a job over a senior employee. On top of the grievances in the system, there is now another one in for the company contracting out our work. I have somewhat recently been made aware that we have not been cutting the hex bar tips for our black smith. These tips are forged into tips for the scaling bars that we make in the commonly know "Black Smith Shop" or "Eddie's Shop". This makes two grievances for contracting out. One for losing our Mesh cutting that the company has contracted out to a company overseas and this one the hex tips.

There was a visit from the M.O.L. recently due to the injury that happened on the band saw. After his review and investigation, he has issued a ticket for the company to guard the saw from a distance. He said to help prevent such an injury or worse, from happening again, he recommends that we put up a guard on the back and the front. This is why the band saw now has this big nice shiny new grill on the front and back.

A reminder to all members: The union is here to help protect your rights, *not your wrongs*.

For your information and please always keep these in mind. They are from your collective agreement.

ARTICLE 8- SENIORITY

8.01 *Seniority is the principle of granting preferences to the senior employees for promotions, demotions, lay-offs and recall after lay-offs in accordance with length of employment.*

- a) *In the event that the Company shall hire new employees on a preferred shift or create a preferred shift (being steady days, steady afternoon, or steady graveyard, the senior employee shall be given the opportunity for the preferred shift or new job, provided the employee is qualified to perform the normal requirements of the job.*

I have been investigating a discrepancy lately and it is dealing with our pension contribution plan. A mistake, an over site or what you will call it on both the Union and on the Company side. After some talks with the Plant Manager, Kevin Murphy, it was agreed that this matter will be rectified from January 2013 to the current date. So that you all have a little better understanding please keep an eye on your pension contributions and below is the article pertaining to this matter straight out of our collective agreement.

Article 19.09 – Pension Plan

The Employer shall pay the following amount on behalf of each full time employee to a Pension plan as selected by the Union to the Employer in writing and as follows:-

Every employee whose seniority is greater than two years service shall receive from the Employer a Pension Plan Contribution equal to 80 (eighty) cents per hour for each hour worked during the life of this Agreement.

At the written request of an employee, the employer will deduct additional amounts for Pension Plan Contributions from the employee's net pay and submit along with the regular monthly amount to the Pension Plan contribution as selected by the Union.

The Employer shall make the payments to the Pension Plan in the month following the month it was earned, with a copy of the contribution forwarded to the Union setting out the employee's name and the amounts paid.

For the purposes of the Pension Plan only, hours worked shall include absences due to Paid Holidays, Vacations, Sickness, or Accident for the period of time the employee is hospitalized for a maximum of thirty (30) days.

It is the last part of the above article that was the issue. Keep your eye on your pension contributions and report any discrepancies right away.

A reminder to all you brothers, anyone entering the office can stop the meeting right away saying, "I'm feeling harassed. I want union representation." The company is legally liable to step back right away and get you your representation. I recommend that no one ever go into the office without representation, even if the supervisor claims it's because they just want to talk to you.

On more of a health and safety side, Welders - check your respirator filters shelf life!!! Are you sure it's good for as long as you think it is? I have heard of others thinking that theirs were good for several months only to find out that it was only good for 4 DAYS! Keep yourself in the "know" and keep yourself safe.

Long term effects from things we are breathing could be devastating. We might think we are 'OK' now and even a few months from now to only find out that you have some other sort of ailment caused from something you were inhaling from work. Is the vapor or mist from of the coolant that you are breathing in going to cause any problems for you? Is the oil that you are absorbing through your skin from oil soaked clothing going to cause you problems in years to come? Everyone should be asking themselves these questions. Keep yourself safe. You also have the right to know. Check your MSDS sheets. **It's your right!!!** If you're not sure what your reading, don't hesitate to ask for clarification.

On a more serious note. There was a newspaper article passed around the shop a short while ago about bashing unions and such saying they have to go. Before you jump up and down with all the “nay sayers”, I ask that you think first. Ask yourself some of these questions...

- What do you think you will have without a union?
- Will you have the benefits you have now such as dental, drug plan and more?
- Do you think the company will not fire people more quickly without the union?
- Remember the attendance problem we had? How long would those people have stayed with us?
- What about your pension plan contributions? Do you really think that would still be there?
- (And I'm sure for most of you) do you really think your wages would be as good as it is now, even though you think it is low?

Remember, the company said that this is the pennies game now to keep contracts. Does this sound comforting to you? Without a Union, you would be on your own to represent yourself if you were disciplined, mistreated or terminated by the company (all at your own expense including the cost of a lawyer if you were to obtain one.) Your Collective Agreement and the Union protects your rights (which are a few steps up from the basic Employment Standards) and should you have an issue with the company, your union is there to represent you and enforce what they have fought for over the years. Every time the contract expires, the Union is there to negotiate an even better contract. These are the reasons why we pay dues. Without a Union, you are at the mercy of the company, the legal system (at your own expense) and furthermore, the process to challenge any wrongful discipline, treatment or termination is very lengthy...and did I mention...costly.

Secondly, where do you think all the labour laws came from? They were not just given to you from the generosity of the government or such. Your collective agreement has perks in it that are well beyond what the basic Employment Standards offers. This is because Unions have fought for many years and they continue to fight for better agreements and fair treatment in the workplaces for their members and the labour movement.

Do you think companies asked to give their workers two weeks vacation WITH PAY? Think again! Perks like this were put into place because of the efforts of Unions fighting for better benefits for their members. Keep in mind - It's the Unions that protected and fought for our fore-fathers rights and it's the same unions that are protecting you and your families now.

So... I ask that you, once again, think about where you would be without a union.

In Solidarity,

James Hihnala
Unit Chair/Co-Chair



United we stand, divided we fall