



December 2013

Hello Brothers of Mansour Mining Tech. Inc.,

It is almost time for Christmas which means that we're in the season for giving. So, in saying that, I would personally like to say to you all that I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a very Good New Year. Enjoy your time with your family and friends and have a great holiday.

Moving forward, I would like to inform you all (who may be interested), we have a small election coming up. Due to complications, the cut off date for the nominations for the open Steward position will be December 3rd – 17th, 2013. The election itself will be held in the New Year. So far, there are two people who have voiced that they would like to run, Chad Nelles of the Welding department and Brad Wilson from the Labours department. If there are any others whom would like to run for this position, then please let me know and I will give you a nomination form that is to be delivered to the union office.

This is a reminder to all members that our contract will be expiring March 31, 2014. We will be going into negotiations with the company at the beginning of next year (somewhere around March), but the official date has not been set yet. I ask of you all to start thinking of what is important to you as we prepare our proposal package. What do YOU want to have done with your next contract (collective agreement [CA]). There will be a survey going out to you all soon and this is where you can convey your wishes for the new contract. Please do not let this document end up in the bottom of your lunch pail (forgotten). Fill them out as quickly as you can and make sure to hand it in to one of your bargaining unit members. The information that you provide will help the bargaining committee put together a set of proposals that you, the members, have brought forward. It will also help us to negotiate a contract that you all want.

Not too long ago, near the end of November, your union had set up a unit membership meeting for you all. Though not too many showed up, a lot of information was passed on to your leadership and on behalf of myself and the rest of the leadership, thank you.

With the list of concerns that was given to your union leadership, I had the chance to sit down with the Union President, Anne Marie MacInnis and go over the list of concerns that were brought up. I trust that the following will address most (if not all) concerns.

- Problems with ventilation on the cut down and rebar cutter. These are matters that your Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) are dealing with. With matters such as these, please inform your JHSC members so that these matters can be addressed as soon as possible. If you are wondering if they have been mentioned, please see the JHSC minutes that are posted every month. This matter with the cut down is an ongoing concern and the JHSC is doing everything they can to come to a resolution.
- The problems with the heaters in the shop (not working), if you have or have not already told your supervisors, let your JHSC members know which ones they are and they will be addressed right away. There is no need for workers to have to work in the cold.
- There was mention of paid sick days. This is something that would have to be negotiated into the next C.A.. As it is right now, we do not have paid sick days and we cannot enforce something that we don't have.
- People getting reprimanded for numbers while others don't. Unfortunately again, though this is truly unfair, we have nothing to fight with. With something like this as part of the proposals for the upcoming negotiations and having some language put into the C.A. in this regard, your union reps could definitely do something about it then. So, I recommend that you let your bargaining members know you want them to fight for this as well.

- The concern of the bonus system being put into the C.A. is something I totally agree with. This is something your bargaining committee should know and I'm sure they will do their best to get this put in the C.A.
- The bonus pay being on the second week of the month or any week of the month will be and should be part of the C.A. I'm sure it will be addressed along with the previous concern.
- Seniority! This concern with others on the cross shift operating who are of lower seniority than you. The only thing at this time that can be done is when you hear that someone else is being trained on the cross shift, you would have to demand that you be trained instead of that person and I am sure that you would also have to leave the shift you're on now to go on to the same shift as that person. As for people on your same shift, as soon as you see it happening, inform staff that you want to be trained because you are of higher seniority than them. If they don't allow this, let your union reps know immediately so that they can make sure that you get trained. This would be a violation of your C.A., (Article 8 & 22). Of course, we should get better language in our C.A. on this matter.
- The voting for Christmas ordeal: Last year, it had become a last minute thing and the company needed the "ok" from the union/membership, before they could change the schedule. This year the company didn't want such a fuss and along with what most people were saying that the company should give the week off....well, they did. They let everyone know that they would be shut down for the Christmas week back in June/July. This gave those who had vacation time left, time to book for Christmas and for those who didn't have enough money, time to save some up for the missing time. So, at this point, the company IS allowed to do the Christmas shut down. It is their right to manage and they did give us notification. There is nothing in our C.A. or anyone else's that I have ever heard of where it guarantees 40 hours (or any hours) per week. So unfortunately, they do have the right to shut down. If we had wording in our collective agreement that could help prevent such things, this would be better for all of us.
- Loader operator: Yes, this is a unionized only job. Right now the company allows their supervisors to do our work for short times because we do not have good enough language in our C.A. This is something I do hope to have fixed in our next round of bargaining, but as for our Lead-hands doing the work, there is nothing to be said. Though most of us do not agree with it, they are our union brothers doing unionized work. Once again, the company has the right to manage and they have made one specific member the only loader operator.
- The matter of the ready to work from buzzer to buzzer, 5 minutes before start and end of shift. It is something that we use to do in the past. Our old owners had the motto of "if you dirty the workers, you clean the workers". The new owners do not think this way for some ungodly reason. So, once again, I recommend that you let your bargaining committee know that you want this and let them fight to have it put back the way it was. It not only helps the workers, but the company has also forgotten it helps them out as well. The 5 minutes where the two cross shifts can talk and explain what's going on with what machines and what to look out for. It almost seems like the company doesn't care about quality anymore. However, like I mentioned earlier, let your bargaining team know you want this.
- Bonus structure **SHOULD** be looked at and restructured, but as it is now, we, the union, don't have much we can say on this until we can put the language into your C.A. Let your bargaining committee fight for this and mark it down in your survey.
- Union meetings near contract time: Just so you all know, I strongly encourage you all to go to your general membership meetings. Concerns such as these can always be brought up there and on top of all of this, the President and myself have agreed to have unit membership meetings for the members at Mansour so that you can and should attend and once again voice your thoughts. You **ARE** the union.
- Air quality checks: your union can do these health and safety testings with permission from the company. It would have to be brought up and talked about. If approved, it will be done. As for the time assessment testing, this isn't part of our duties. But remember, we can always try and have such things put into our collective agreement. (C.A.)
- Solo safety checks: I agree. This is something that would have to go through the JHSC and be approved by the committee. I am sure there will be a fight on this one, but I could be wrong.

- Rapid return to work: If a worker is injured inside or outside of work, by law, the company has to accommodate that worker. There are steps to be followed and I'm sure they have been explained. However, if you are an injured worker and the company is not accommodating you, contact your union representative immediately and your rep will fight this through the grievance procedure for you. Do not delay in reporting as there are time lines on this process.
- Lengthy grievances: Grievances have a procedure and time lines that need to be followed. Due to these time lines, sometimes the grievances can take what seems to be forever to come to a head. To fully understand this process, please refer to the collective agreement and if needed, discuss this with your union rep.
- Difference between a Union Collective Agreement (C.A.) and the Ministry of Labour (E.S.A. - Employment Standards Act) (**aka Labour Board**): Well, I could go on and on about this one but there are so many things to be said, so I will give some simple and easy answers. With the union, you have someone there representing you all the time. Someone you can talk to and ask your questions to. With the E.S.A., you have to wait to call and hopefully get through right away. Now the most prominent difference that I would like to mention is for you to look at your C.A. You have everything that is in the E.S.A. or better. You also have Human Rights and the Occupational Health and Safe Act (OHSA). Your collective agreement affords us all with the standards that fall under (or are even better) than the various laws, acts, etc. With just the E.S.A., you do not have a guaranteed wage increase and your benefits are what the company wants to give you, and so on. With the C.A., you have more than two weeks vacation after 5 years. In the E.S.A., you still would only get 2 weeks after 5 years. Now, take a look at the collective agreement and compare. With the Union and a collective agreement, you have a dental plan, drug care, glasses and more. With the E.S.A., you have nothing but two weeks. No benefits and no voice to improve your working standards. In addition, you don't have representation to negotiate better working conditions of a safer working environment. You get what is in the E.S.A., and that's it. Also, with our collective agreement, you cannot be dismissed outside of seniority. Without the collective agreement, you can be dismissed anytime and you would be left on your own to fight the dismissal and the cost would solely fall on you for this process. This list can go on and on, so I encourage you to look through your C.A. and realize just now much more you have with a union than you do without. Not knowing (or understanding) your collective agreement (or the union for that matter) and its many benefits are very damaging to any decision making process.
- Communication between company and union during a grievance: There are discussions that go on between the union and management. You might not see or hear much about it because of confidentiality and investigation purposes. As long as the company is willing to sit down and discuss matters, your reps and union leaders are always there to represent you. I, myself, may not keep the person whose grievance I am dealing with in the loop as much as I should and I apologize for this. I plan on changing that right away.
- Qualifying Days (4 hrs vs 8hrs): This has been explained to the company and has been explained to most of you at some meetings. Many arbitration decisions in the past state that 4 hours is considered a full day's work when it comes to qualifying for a holiday. **HOWEVER**, that person must have the permission from his supervisor (or person of authority) before he may leave. And the company obviously will not just say yes to anyone who does not have a good reason to leave early will likely request proof that the individual needs to leave early.
- Lead-Hands/Supervisor: Right now with the current C.A., the company is allowed to use Supervisors as Lead Hands. Do I agree? No, but this isn't up to just me. It is up to you all, the "Union" to decide if you want to have better wording put into the Collective Agreement. Let your Bargaining committee know what you want.
- Retaining Operator wages no matter what: The current language in our collective agreement is not strong enough to argue this with the company. Even worse, the current language leaves this matter up for nasty interpretation. If you would like, let your Bargaining committee know that you want to see improvements in the language. Read your C.A. Article 9, and 19.03 at the end near article 19.04 to see the current language and if you would like to see better language, mark it down on your survey.

- Now, I've been told a saw needs a guard? This should be told to your supervisor **RIGHT AWAY!** If this saw, whichever one it is, is not properly guarded and you feel your health and safety is at risk, then use your right to refuse unsafe work and let your union and your health and safety reps know of this all. This matter should be taken care of right away.
- Bay doors and ground outside doors need repair: This is a maintenance matter and as we all are aware of the forms, please fill one out for this. If you do not wish to do this yourself then tell one of your safety reps or union reps for help and they will do it for you. The rep will need to know which doors and entry ways need repair. If you cannot reach any of your reps, let me know and I will fill in the form and submit it.
- Pin nut bonus quota doubled: Again the union doesn't have much it can fight on in this matter but as soon as 'bonus' is put into our C.A. it will give the union reps the arm needed to swing the bat.
- Jobs lost compared to created: Well, the ones that have come in are the weld cell, roll form, and washer plate. Lost... kinda/sorta, however, they are still on file and will be pressed harder if anyone is laid off due to lack of work or jobs. These are; Mesh cutting, hex bar tip cutting and from what I've recently been told, threading of cable terminals (20 T. Terminals)
- Pin Nut Final Inspection: Due to the fact that the person doing the Pin Nut is vertically the last person to handle the bars, it is expected that they know what they are doing and should not be putting out faulty work. Now, with that said, why aren't the supervisors not checking your work? Where/when is the Q.A. Manager checking the quality assurance of the product? I truly believe the company should be issuing out the job orders that you are to be doing on paper so that you know exactly what is to be put on the material you are working on. This would, I'm sure eliminate a lot of the problems.
- Cutting Angle Iron as Operator job: I agree, I don't see much of a difference with a lot of the other jobs and think it should be. However, until this is put into your C.A., it remains status quo. Again, and I know I'm repeating myself, talk to your bargaining committee and ask them to fight to have this put into the agreement.

There is a way to address all of these concerns and that is through collective bargaining. In order to improve the workplace and its safety for us all and have the language to protect us as we move forward, we need to all come together as a unit and get the language in our collective agreement. (Just a tip, the E.S.A. is not negotiable, but your collective agreement is.) NOW is the time for us all to come together and be a team!!!!

In closing, I realize that this has been a lengthy letter and hope you all don't fall asleep reading it. I simply wanted to bring everyone up to speed and give some answers to the concerns that were addressed at the last meeting. Please feel free to contact me should you have any further questions or concerns.

Once again, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Solidarity is what keeps us strong!!!

James Hihnala

James Hihnala

Unit Chair/Co-Chair

