



Updated April 30, 2013

Frequently Asked Questions about the proposed change to a 37.5-hour work week

Q: I am in a 0.8 position. Does the change in the work week hours affect me, or does it only affect full time staff?

The change in work week hours will also affect you. Whereas you are presently working 0.8 of a 36-hour work week, you will now be working 0.8 of a 37.5-hour work week. In other words, you are presently working 28.8 hours per week, and after we move to a 37.5-hour work week, your 0.8 FTE will mean you are working (and of course being paid for) 30 hours per week.

UPDATE: Since the time we first answered that question, it has become clear to us, after obtaining interpretations of the language, that we cannot insist that the hours of work for a part timer be increased.

We still think that this will happen in many cases, since it makes scheduling much easier in departments with both full-time and part-time members -- and we encourage that.

However, if your hours of work are not increased, that will not be grievable.

NEW QUESTION: I've heard from my employer that all part timers will have their hours reduced to give increased hours to full-timers. Can they do this?

Employers are misinterpreting Article 9.07 of the collective agreement and believe a reduction of hours to a part-timer is not a lay-off.

We disagree, and will be grieving each instance of this -- both on the grounds that a reduction of the workforce must be done in reverse seniority order, and that it's contrary to the "no lay-off" provision of the 37.5-hour work week memorandum.

Please contact your steward and/or the HSA head office immediately if you're aware of this happening to any member.

Q: My department operates on an 8-hour shift basis. What does the change in the hours of work in the work week mean for me?

You will still be moving to a 37.5-hour work week. But that standard work week can be modified by using *Appendix 7: Memorandum of Agreement on Extended Work Day or Extended Work Week*. Your employer could still agree with a proposed schedule that keeps an extended work day, such as 8 hours. But the calculations will require the schedule of days worked/off to be amended from what you currently have.

Q: I have been working for the past 12 years on a 7.2-hours-a-shift basis. The change to 7.5 hours means I will lose some vacation days. That doesn't seem fair.

You have accumulated vacation on the basis of the hours you have actually worked. Benefits will adjust on a go-forward basis, including vacation. Adjustments to banked time will need to be addressed by the transition committee. But the bottom line is that you are entitled to all the vacation time you have earned -- no more, no less.

Q: I work at a small child development centre. Our employer relies on pretty thin funding to get through the year. They will not be able to fund the increase in hours. Does this mean there will have to be layoffs?

The language could not be more clear when it states in the agreement that implementations of the 37.5 hour work week “will not result in any layoffs for health science professionals.”

UPDATE: But we are also aware that some of the smaller affiliates, such as child development centres, have special funding challenges not just for the 37.5-hour work week implementation but also for both general wage increases.

We are committed to working with those employers to lobby the government for more funding and to find creative solutions.

Q: I rely on my nine-day fortnight for the child care arrangements I have had in place for the past two years. If I lose that day off, I won't have child care one day every two weeks. This is a major concession and we should never have accepted it.

The 37.5 hour work week will not be implemented until September 1, 2013. This should allow enough lead time to identify alternative child care arrangements, and other arrangements you would need to make to address any change in your work schedule.

Q: When we moved to the 36-hour week in the early 1990s, the deal was we still made the same amount of money, but worked 1.5 hours a week less. The move back to 37.5 hours actually means I lose money, even with the so-called 3% wage increase, because I have to work 1.5 hours a week more to get my salary.

No, this is incorrect. You will be paid your hourly wage for the additional 1.5 hours and your hourly wage will have been increased by a General Wage Increase of 3%, for all disciplines except Pharmacy.

Q: I work as a casual. Most of the shifts I get are to cover people who are off on their EDOs. This change in the work week pretty much guarantees I will lose most of my hours, doesn't it?

When the parties were in negotiations, there was considerable discussion of the alarming number of unfilled vacancies. The value to the employers of a move to the 37.5 hour work week presents one means by which vacancy rates can be reduced. Of course it is far from a complete answer to problems caused by skills shortages. It is rare for casual assignments to be comprised entirely of EDO backfill, and while there may be some loss of shifts for casuals we should not forget that most disciplines are suffering from chronic shortages.