

August 2, 2023

The Threat of Automation

In recent years, the postal and delivery industry has seen huge changes. The parcel business is ever-growing and becoming an important part of our work. For-profit corporate giants like Amazon are now building their own delivery networks, using non-unionized “gig” workers to keep their costs as low as possible.

These changes in the postal market are driving changes in our workplace. According to Canada Post, to grow its parcels business, the Corporation needs to make big investments to modernize its facilities and equipment.

This is why it has opened the new Albert Jackson Processing Centre and has started testing new technologies like Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs), Robotic Parcel Arms, Autonomous Mobile Robots (AMRs) and even Follow-Me Robots for letter carriers.

For postal workers, these new technologies are a clear threat. While technology could be utilized to make the work easier or more ergonomic, it is mainly used to eliminate workers and jobs and increase the employer’s control of the workplace.

Benefits Must be Shared

But it doesn’t have to be that way. Who “wins” and who “loses” from new technology is not written in stone. Workers can and have fought to make sure that the benefits of new technology are shared through safer work, higher wages and improved benefits.

Article 29 of the urban collective agreement and article 35 of the RSMC collective agreement protects us from “injustices” and “adverse effects” from new technology. This protection was only won through years of hard struggle.

Work Ongoing

Countering the threat of automation is a top priority.

We are meeting with researchers and reps from international postal unions to learn about how others are dealing with or have dealt with new technologies.

We are working closely with the Canadian Labour Congress to press the federal government to adopt pro-worker laws around Artificial Intelligence, automation, and other new technologies.

We have surveyed our members about the impact of new technologies on their working lives to strengthen our positions in consultation and bargaining.

And we continue to press Canada Post for service expansion, like postal banking and senior check-ins, to keep our jobs secure in the long term.

Heading into bargaining, we need to stand together to hold onto the gains we’ve won and mobilize to win new ones. Automation is a big challenge, but by working together, we can make sure its benefits are shared with postal workers.

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In solidarity,



Carl Girouard
National Grievance Officer

2023 - 2027 — Bulletin no.30

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