

Historic Victory for Postal Workers

Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers Ruled Equal to Letter Carriers in Landmark Pay Equity Case

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Ottawa – Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMC) earned a long-awaited victory, as an arbitrator ruled they do work of equal value to urban letter carriers and that there is a wage gap between the two groups. Arbitrator Maureen Flynn also rejected how Canada Post assessed RSMC compensation, accepting instead the methodology presented by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW).

However, arbitrator Flynn has asked CUPW and Canada Post to determine the compensation award. The parties must come to an agreement by August 31, 2018 or she will decide the amount of the award.

“This is a great victory for RSMCs and all women,” says Nancy Beauchamp, Pay Equity Committee Member and Chief Negotiator for the RSMC bargaining unit. “Women in the workforce deserve respect, and that includes earning equal wages for doing a job of equal value to a man.

Barbara McMillan of the committee adds, “RSMCs will no longer feel like second class citizens in their workplace.”

Nearly two-thirds of RSMCs are women. They make about 25 percent less per hour than letter carriers, the majority of whom are male. They also receive fewer benefits.

The decision follows months of hearings and an almost two-year process which began in 2016 during collective bargaining when CUPW and Canada Post agreed to an expedited pay equity process for RSMCs. A joint committee was established to study pay equity issues and implement changes in a timely manner.

“While we are happy with the decision, we are anxious to get back to the bargaining table to finalize compensation for our workers,” says Cathy Kennedy, Pay Equity Committee Member.

Canada Post is a serial offender when it comes to pay equity. The Public Service Alliance of Canada launched a case in 1983 and it took almost 30 years for employees to be compensated. The Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association began its case in 1993 and is still waiting for a resolution.

“Our case was considered one of the more complex of its kind but we’ve shown that an accelerated process is possible. There is no reason for women to wait for equal pay and benefits,” says Kennedy.

“With this ruling, it is finally proven that RSMCs perform work of equal value to letter carriers,” says Mike Palecek, National President, CUPW. “The days of Canada Post’s exploitation of women are coming to an end. RSMCs deserve equality and we settle for nothing less.”

CUPW pay equity committee members and Canada Post will begin compensation discussions shortly. How this will affect upcoming collective bargaining negotiations between Canada Post and CUPW remains to be seen.

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