

# You Ought To Know

ISSUE: 19

## Now that we have a ratified Joint Proposal, how does collective bargaining work?

Firstly, the Principal Agreement is one (1) agreement with four (4) parts:

- **Blue Pages** are negotiated provincially and are applicable on all jobs unless more specific language can be found in other sections. The Blue Pages should be read in conjunction with the local appendices (White Pages) to understand which provision applies in the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) sector for a particular area.
- **Yellow Pages** cover non-ICI Line work. Line work under the ICI sector is covered in the Blue Pages (section 1700).
- **Green Pages** cover Communications work (telecommunications, security systems, etc.).
- **White Pages** are the local appendices of the local Electrical Contractors' Associations (ECAs) and 11 local unions.

The local appendices are being negotiated throughout this month in the local areas. The Local unions have bargaining teams made up of local union representatives. The Electrical Contractors' Associations have bargaining teams made up of contractors and ECA staff representing their local area. Some areas utilize the services of a third-party mediator to assist with discussions and to keep them focused on local interests.

Secondly, the process of collective bargaining.

The Electrical Trade Bargaining Agency (ETBA) is our legislated Employer Bargaining Agent responsible for provincial bargaining and final approval of the Principal Agreement on behalf of all contractors who are signatory to the agreement. ETBA has representatives from each local area as well as from Line and Communications. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' Construction Council of Ontario (IBEW CCO) is the legislated Employee Bargaining Agent responsible for provincial bargaining and final approval of the Principal Agreement on behalf of their members. The IBEW CCO's bargaining team includes Business Managers from each local union as well as representatives from the International Office of the IBEW.

The ETBA and IBEW CCO will meet the week of January 27 to review the local appendices. Since the local appendices form part of the Principal Agreement, any changes must be approved by the Employer and Employee Bargaining Agents – the ETBA and the IBEW CCO. At that time, we also exchange our list of items we'd like to negotiate during provincial bargaining.

During the week of February 17, the ECAO has two separate committees negotiating changes to the Yellow Pages and the Green Pages with the IBEW CCO. Those changes must be approved by the ETBA.

## When are wages negotiated?

The week of February 24 has been booked for provincial bargaining. We start out with economic presentations from each party, and then discuss our proposed language changes. Once language changes are negotiated, the parties have up to four exchanges for wage and travel increases. We negotiate increases to the **Wage Package** (NOT the base rate) for each of the three years starting May 1, 2025, May 1, 2026 and May 1, 2027.

If, after four exchanges, we cannot reach agreement on wages and travel increases, each party's final offer goes to Final Offer Selection.

## What is Final Offer Selection?

Final Offer Selection has been an important component of the Joint Proposal since its inception back in 1991. During provincial bargaining, if the parties are unable to reach agreement on wage and travel changes, a Final Offer Selector – a neutral third party agreed upon by the bargaining parties – decides which proposal is the most reasonable. There is no opportunity for the Final Offer Selector to consider alternative amounts.

This is the reason we, at times, end up with an increase to wages even if we are unable to negotiate meaningful changes to the Principal Agreement during provincial negotiations. Since 1991, the parties have gone to Final Offer Selection four times, which means that the parties were able to reach their own agreement during the other seven rounds of bargaining.

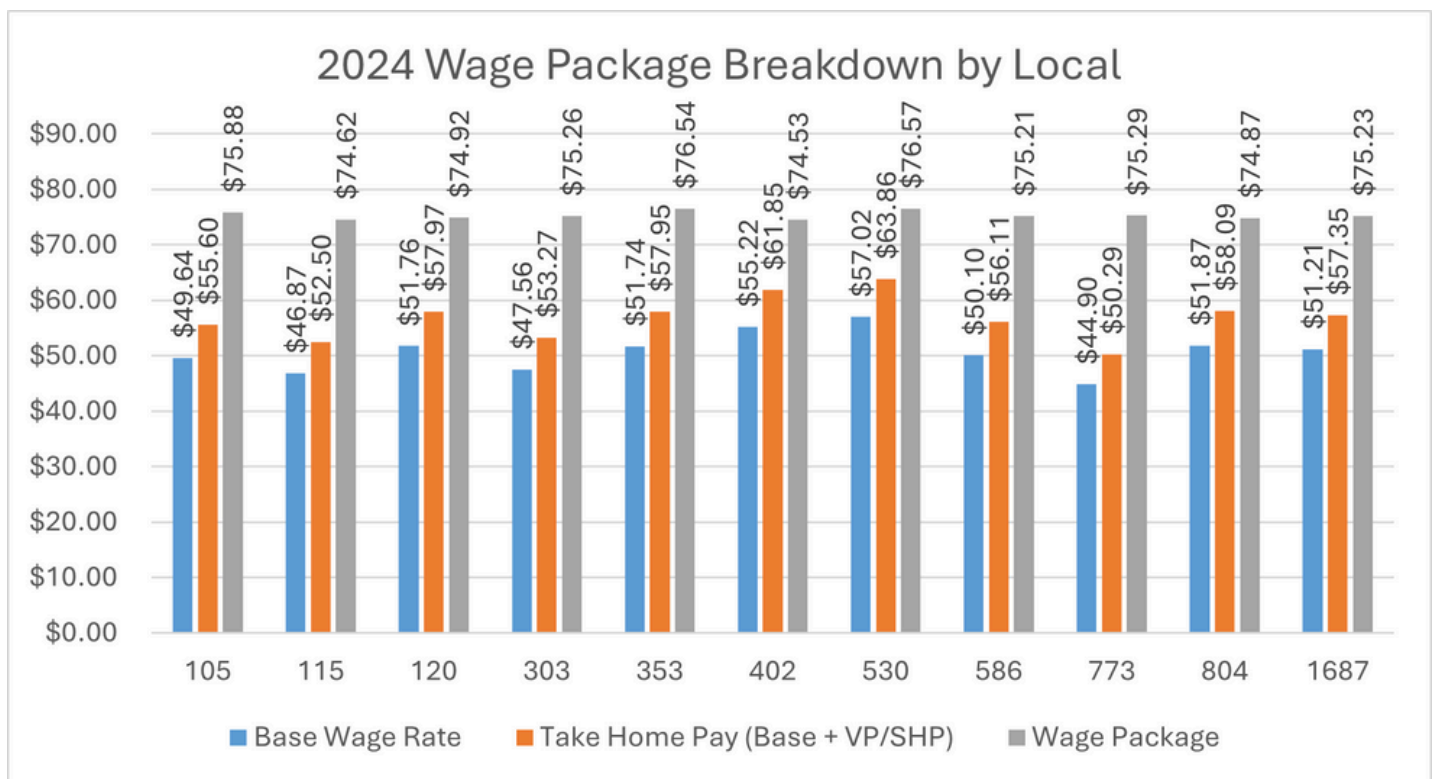
## When will we get updates on collective bargaining?

The parties usually agree on a set of ground rules before bargaining which include a requirement to keep information confidential until the parties agree to release it. Therefore, it is unlikely we will share any information about bargaining until after February 27, 2025. All collective bargaining updates will be emailed to contractors and will be posted on the ECAO website, member page under Labour Relations. If you need a member login, please email Kamakshi at [kahluwalia@ecao.org](mailto:kahluwalia@ecao.org)

## If the parties are negotiating increases to the wage package, how is the base rate determined?

As explained in previous YOTK issues, the union and its members determine the base rate which, after VP/SHP (12%) is added, is their take home pay. Members need to go to their local union meetings if they want to have a say on the amount of money they bring home each week. Contractors are obligated to pay the wage package plus the ECA funds, and the distribution of the wage package is determined by the local union and its members.

For reference, you can see the difference between 2024 local area wage packages, base rates, and take home pay in the chart below.



## Do you know what You Ought to Know?

We hope that you're benefitting from the facts and insights we share through this publication. You can find all previous issues of You Ought to Know on the ECAO website under Publications.