

You Ought To Know

ISSUE: 18

Now that we have a tentative Joint Proposal, how does ratification work?

In the context of collective bargaining, ratification refers to the process by which union members vote to approve or reject a collective bargaining agreement negotiated by their union representatives. Ratification is not legally required for collective agreements in Ontario's ICI construction industry. However, many ICI trade unions hold ratification votes to ensure their members support the negotiated terms of the agreement.

For IBEW and ETBA, the two parties at our negotiating table, we have a distinct approach to ratification. Instead of ratifying the final negotiated settlement, we ratify a Joint Proposal. This Proposal is developed by provincial bargaining agents representing both employers and employees.

The Ratification Process:

1. Joint Proposal Approval: The provincial Employer and Employee Bargaining Agents first approve the Joint Proposal. This was done on November 27, 2024 after five months of negotiations.
2. Distribution: The Proposal is then shared with individual Electrical Contractors Associations (ECAs) and IBEW union members. IBEW members are expected to receive the tentative Joint Proposal by December 12 or 13.
3. ECA Ratification: ECAs ratify the Joint Proposal according to their established procedures.
4. IBEW Member Voting: IBEW members review the Joint Proposal and cast their votes online. We hope to have voting complete by the end of the year.

As you can see in the chart below, participation by IBEW members in tentative Joint Proposal voting has been low. It is important that all IBEW members, including your IBEW member employees, review the Joint Proposal and submit a vote using the online link they receive.

Please encourage your employees to do so. They should reach out to their local Business Manager if they have questions. Remember that you are not to tell them how to vote.

Year	Votes in favour	Votes against	Total votes
2022	1649	544	2193
2019	3326	457	3783
2016	4109	509	4618
2013	5405	626	6031
2010	4324	860	5184

What happens after the Joint Proposal is ratified to get us to a new deal?

Local bargaining is scheduled to conclude by January 20, 2025. The provincial parties meet to exchange issues in late January. Provincial bargaining, including Yellow Pages and Green Pages, will take place from February 18 to 27, 2025. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement on wages and travel rates, the final offers will go to the Selector with a decision expected in early April.



What can we expect from the next round of bargaining in terms of wage increases?

We cannot predict how things will go before any round of bargaining. The Joint Proposal was put into place to help with maintaining and growing market share, and to ensure reasonable wage increases while avoiding a labour disruption. If the provincial parties cannot agree on a wage settlement, both final offers will be presented to a Selector during final offer selection. The Selector is tasked with choosing the most reasonable of the two final offers.

Contractors have their own practices in determining how to bid jobs given the expected increases in May of each year. Historically, wage increases have been higher than inflation. Note that the Ontario Government released their forecasts for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) last month.

We do know that if the Joint Proposal is ratified, the wage package will increase by a minimum of \$1.50 as of midnight on April 30, 2025, which was designed to close the gap between our 2022 settlement and that of the other trades. The Parties agreed to provide IBEW members with an increase outside of wage negotiations given the high levels of inflation since we negotiated our last wage increase in February 2022.

We also know that there will be increases effective May 1, 2025, May 1, 2026 and May 1, 2027. The 2026 and 2027 increases could be impacted by a Post Negotiated Wage Adjustment.

What are the top 3 things you can do as we head into collective bargaining?

1) Encourage your employees to attend union meetings. Their presence is vital as important decisions are made at these meetings that directly impact their working conditions. If they don't attend, the decisions taken may not be representative of the majority and may be influenced by those who are most vocal, potentially leading to outcomes that don't align with their interests. Remember that, as mentioned in earlier issues of You Ought to Know, the union and its members determine the base rate (i.e. the money on their employees' pay cheques) after wage increases are negotiated. Contractors have no input into the base rate.

2) Remind supervisors about what is appropriate, and not appropriate, to discuss with employees. Encourage supervisors to stay informed, including reading these You Ought to Know messages and other ECAO communications regarding bargaining. They can share facts from these messages, not opinions.

3) Stay informed yourself. Get involved at a local level with your Electrical Contractors Association. Attend all member meetings. Reach out to your Electrical Contractors Association if you need more information.

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 Out To Know on the ECAO website under [Publications](#).