

Union Demands End to Superstore and Liquor store Payroll Negligence!

At recent negotiations for a new Union contract, your union bargaining team called for an end to Superstore's indifference and negligence towards paying their employees properly and on time.

For years, Superstore has been criticized for "shorting" workers on their pay for hours worked, and then ignoring it, or failing to correct the problem properly or quickly. Many employees have likely been ripped off and haven't even noticed.

Your union contract guarantees you a 10% additional payment in the event of such errors, and more cash yet if the problem reoccurs. Current contract language reads as follows.

"The Employer is committed to the early resolution of payroll disputes. If an employee believes they were paid incorrectly they should immediately bring it to the attention of their Supervisor. If the matter is not resolved to their satisfaction then it should be brought to the attention of the Store Manager, or the Industrial Relations Department and the Union.

In the event that an employee is not paid the correct amount of pay as a result of an error made by the Employer, the Employee shall be compensated an additional 10% of any shorted amount, provided the employee brings the matter to attention of the Employer as determined above in the week following payday."

Many grievances have been filed and won. But the union negotiated clause and union aggression in pursuing grievances has not completely solved the problem. The company does not want employees to even know about this clause, and unless employees report employer "crimes", to the union office, union representatives will not even know they occurred. The company's negligence in dealing with payroll issues has become one of many strike issues among Superstore employees. Union negotiators are insisting on a real, complete, and absolute, solution to the issue.

What's the big deal?

Well, the company has dragged its feet in negotiations and has refused to put a wage/benefit increase offer on the table, even after over 20 months of bargaining. And employees are feeling the acute economic strain of stagnant wages and a rising cost of living. Bills are tough to pay, and can pile up. Rent, mortgages, utilities, credit cards – they must be paid on time. Accurate paychecks providing all monies owed to employees must be provided by Superstore on time!

Superstore management drown in their own hypocrisy on the issue. Policies for employees regarding the handling of cash and merchandise are often strictly enforced. If you "mishandle" Superstores property or cash, you could face penalties "up to and including termination" they say. They demand explanations, all in security, and accuse employees of "dishonesty", when staff are "caught" in virtually any circumstance that involves even a small imperfection in behavior. The police are sometimes called. The presumption of innocence seems lost.

Superstore argues that they need to "trust" their staff.

But Superstore falls flat on its face when held to the very standard that they hold out to be so important. Employees provide a service to the corporation for wages and benefits. Their work has value, and a contract and the law itself guarantees timely payment. But Superstore, a large, sophisticated multi billion dollar employer, treats employee wages as their own with a total disregard for someones elses money and financial well being. Yet another example of disrespect for their employees. Imagine if an employee claimed pay for hours they hadn't worked... "time theft" Superstore would scream!

"White collar crime! and corporate theft!" your union screams! How can Superstore staff trust the company? Superstore blames their "payroll department" in response. So much for taking responsibility for your actions. Next time you are late and the company wants to reprimand you – blame it on somebody else – see how far it gets you.

Perhaps a few find consolation in the new 10% staff discount. But we are hearing "too little too late" from Superstore employees. "Pretty tough to pay for your merchandise and get 10% off if you've got no paycheck" assert many.

"Cheating" is nothing new for the company in Alberta. The Alberta Labour Relations Board has said that the company at an Extra Foods operation in Southern Alberta – manipulated its workforce and misrepresented important Labour Relations facts to its employees. The company was found guilty of unfair labour practices.

How are employees feeling about Superstore? Many are saying "its worth striking their supermarkets for! "