

GOVERNMENT LICENSED PROFESSIONALS

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APPENDIX H | PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION LEAVE FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE IN RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES

MAY 2020

With flooding, fires and now the COVID pandemic, PEA members are called upon to put in extraordinary hours that exceed their normal course of duties. In some cases, this work is performed without knowing what, if any, compensation will follow.

The public is largely unaware that our members work in these conditions without a guarantee of any compensation. Your union's leadership sees you and we are very honoured and grateful to represent so many committed public servants. Thank you for all that you do to keep our province safe and thriving.

Compensation in the form of leave for meritorious service for regular full-time professional employees working in response to emergencies is outlined in Appendix H of the collective agreement. Note that improvements to the collective agreement were achieved in the last round of bargaining and members may now be eligible for additional compensation two weeks before the recognition process is activated.

Emergency COVID related work and Appendix H

The PEA recently asked the Public Service Agency (the Employer) to pay our members for meritorious service work in response to the COVID pandemic. We had members who worked over the Easter long weekend at the Canada-USA border side-by-side with their BCGEU colleagues. At this time, the employer has not committed to any additional compensation for this work.

It is possible that emergency work related to COVID could be compensated by Appendix H if written approval from the deputy minister responsible, in consultation with the deputies of the ministries directly impacted, is giving to activate the recognition process. This process is outside of the control of the PEA.

Some members have expressed their frustrations with the existing compensatory structure and would like to see compensation at time-and-a-half or double time, depending on hours worked. This is the compensation that BCGEU members receive for meritorious work and an example of how the seven per cent OSS framework just doesn't feel sufficient for members.

The PEA has discussed this issue with the Employer on multiple occasions in the last few weeks and

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multiple times in past collective bargaining sessions. At this time, the employer is not willing to compensate beyond the language in the collective agreement.

What rights do PEA members currently have under the collective agreement?

The following guideline establishes a government-wide approach to granting regular full-time professional employees leave for meritorious service in response to emergencies:

1. If the deputy minister responsible for the Provincial Emergency Program, in consultation with the deputies of the ministries directly impacted by an emergency situation, gives written approval to activate the recognition process, regular full-time professional employees who perform duties outside their normal responsibilities will earn leave entitlement calculated on the following basis:

- One (1) hour for every hour worked above and beyond normal work hours during the regular work week; and

- One (1) hour for every hour worked on a day of rest.

2. Once the recognition process has been activated, the period of compensation will include the two weeks prior to the effective date of the activation. Compensation for that two-week period will be the same as set out in 1, above. (This was a recently agreed to change from the last round of bargaining.)

3. Time off shall be taken by mutual agreement subject to operational requirements. Any time remaining as of March 31 of the following calendar year shall be paid out.

4. Leave entitlement as calculated above shall not be grievable, but will be reviewed by the ministry involved upon employee request

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Frequently asked questions from Appendix H:

Can we change our compensation for meritorious service so that we get time-and-a-half or double-time like BCGEU members get?

The collective agreement between the PEA and the Province of BC expires March 31, 2022. The bargaining team, after consulting with the members, may table language that seeks improvement to meritorious service compensation beyond the scheme outlined above.

In past rounds of bargaining, the Employer has been unwilling to change Appendix H compensation without the PEA's agreement to open up and change the special compensation (OSS) of 7% of the basic salary that regular full-time employees receive.

Who does Appendix H apply to?

Appendix H applies to all regular full-time employees who perform duties outside their normal responsibilities in response to an emergency that has received written approval from the deputy minister.

If employees are not on TEAMS deployment and are performing duties outside their normal responsibilities, employees should discuss their particular circumstances with their supervisors/managers to determine whether Appendix H applies. If employees are told Appendix H doesn't apply but believe it should, they should contact the PEA.

In some cases, blanket approval is given (e.g., wildfire) whereas in others (e.g., floods, COVID pandemic) months pass before decisions are made to apply Appendix H.

Does the special compensation of seven per cent of the basic salary that regular full-time employees receive apply to Appendix H?

Yes. The special compensation of seven per cent of basic salary that regular full time employees receive applies on Appendix H.

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What method and rate of compensation do auxiliary PEA employees receive while working overtime on a wildfire TEAMS deployment?

The application of overtime in Article 16 applies to part-time and auxiliary employees. This functions in a more traditional time-and-a-half model.

For an office status PEA member, when on a wildfire TEAMS deployment, is there meal compensation for days in the field and/or on travel status? If so, how are these meals to be claimed?

Meal allowances as provided for in the collective agreement continue to apply when on travel status. When employees are in the field meals are generally provided therefore there would be no need to claim for anything.

We continue to advocate on behalf of our members on this subject and encourage you to reach out to your Local Rep, GLP Executive or Labour Relations Officer should you need support or have questions about Appendix H.