



Backgrounder

Tentative contract with ARAMARK improves wages and protects rights

*HEU members at ARAMARK will vote on deal;
HEU's bargaining committee recommends a yes vote*

After six months of negotiations, HEU's bargaining committee has signed a tentative agreement with ARAMARK that provides wage increases, expands union rights in the workplace and gives more workers access to benefits.

If members vote in favour of the tentative agreement (known as a ratification vote), it will become the collective agreement for 700 ARAMARK employees who are members of the Hospital Employees' Union at Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and Providence Health Care facilities.

What you need to know

- Bonus system rolled into hourly wage
- Hourly wage increases to \$12.47
- Wages rise to \$13.05 over two years
- More workers covered by benefits
- Employer-paid union representation for grievance and health and safety issues
- Agreement expires on September 30, 2008
- You get to vote to accept or reject the contract
- HEU's bargaining committee recommends a yes vote
- You can vote at any scheduled meeting

The union's bargaining committee has reviewed the tentative agreement and is recommending to members at ARAMARK that they vote yes.

"Our ARAMARK members should be very proud of their achievement with this contract," says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

"Not only have they won better wages for themselves and their families, but they've negotiated an agreement that means respect, more opportunities and safer workplaces."

The terms of the agreement are attached to this document in two parts.

Part I contains the most recently

agreed to items including wages.

Part II contains other items that have been agreed to over the last six months.

If members vote yes to this agreement, these documents will be merged together to form the collective agreement between HEU and ARAMARK. All members will receive a copy of that agreement.

Please review Part I and Part II carefully.

What follows is a summary of the most important gains negotiated in this first collective agreement.

Wages

Wages will increase immediately upon ratification and will subsequently increase by 2.3 per cent on October 1, 2006 and on October 1, 2007.

New hourly wage rates

Position	Date of ratification	October 1, 2006	October 1, 2007
Housekeeping	\$12.47	\$12.76	\$13.05
Lead Hand	\$13.47	\$13.78	\$14.10

The bonus system – which was provided at the sole discretion of ARAMARK and scheduled to end next year – is now permanently rolled into the hourly wages that are paid to all ARAMARK employees including casual and part-time workers.

Workers who are owed bonus payments prior to the ratification vote will still receive these payments within 45 days of the vote.

In addition to immediate wage increases, there will be a one time payment to workers – called a signing bonus – that will be paid within 30 days of the vote. Employees scheduled to work 20 hours or more per week will receive \$200. Other employees will receive \$100.

Probationary rates (\$1.25 less than the regular hourly rate) will apply only to employees hired after ratification.

Grievance procedures

When the union believes that the collective agreement rights of an individual member or a group of members has been violated, it can use the grievance procedure to try and solve the problem.

The grievance procedure negotiated by the bargaining committee is comparable to the grievance procedure negotiated for 40,000 other HEU members who work in hospitals and long-term care facilities.

Under this procedure, the union and the employer try to resolve the grievance in a series of steps that are time limited. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the union or the employer it can be referred to arbitration. That means that an outside party will hear the arguments of both sides and make a decision.

The tentative agreement recognizes the role of shop stewards at all steps of the grievance procedure. Shop stewards will be available to help members with grievances without loss of pay.

HEU provides comprehensive training for shop stewards so that they can provide good representation to members at the workplace.

Harassment Protection

The tentative agreement also includes protection for members against harassment, including sexual harassment.

The worker filing the complaint is not resolved through ARAMARK's harassment policy, HEU members can deal with their complaint through the grievance procedure.

The worker filing the complaint will be represented by a shop steward. If the alleged harasser is also a member of the HEU they can also receive union representation.

Union/management committee and other union rights

The tentative agreement provides for union/management committees to address problems, clear up misunderstandings and deal with other issues including workload.

Nine regional union/management committees will cover the sites within Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Healthcare.

Two HEU ARAMARK members and a union servicing representative will be on each committee. There will also be three representatives from ARAMARK.

The employer will pay HEU members' wages for time spent at these committee meetings.

Committees can meet on seven days notice and meet as frequently as once a month.

The tentative agreement includes several other provisions that help protect members' rights, including:

- the union's right to meet with new employees without loss of pay to inform them of their rights;
- the right of shop stewards to conduct union business without loss of pay; and
- the right to wear union pins at work.

Health and Safety

Health care workers are injured on the job more than workers in any other sector in BC. And HEU members working for ARAMARK have raised many concerns about workload and other factors that have led to injuries to workers.

The tentative agreement establishes a joint union/management Occupational Health and Safety Committee. This committee monitors health and safety issues in order to help reduce injury rates.

HEU members who serve on this committee and who conduct inspections and accident investigations, will do so without loss of pay.

HEU has decades of experience dealing with OH&S issues in health care workplaces. HEU ARAMARK members who play a role on the OH&S committee will get education and support from union health and safety experts.

Job security and more choices

The tentative agreement contains several provisions that protect jobs and seniority while providing opportunities for members to get more hours or post into new jobs.

- Job postings will contain more specific information including pay rate, shift and location of work.
- Definition of full-time, part-time and casual work will result in more employees qualifying for benefits.
- Postings will be filled on the basis of seniority if two or more applicants have equal qualifications, skills and abilities.
- Regular employees will have more opportunities to pick up additional hours related to temporary vacancies.
- More opportunities to transfer to other sites without loss of seniority.
- Layoffs and bumping will occur in reverse order of seniority.
- Training in specific areas will be offered on the basis of seniority.
- Casual employees will now be called in on the basis of seniority.
- There will be no contracting out except under very limited circumstances.

Improved benefits

In addition to wage increases, the tentative contract improves other benefits for HEU members working for ARAMARK.

- Meal breaks will be paid if on-call.
- Over-time rates will be paid to full-time employees working on a scheduled day off.
- Employees who work on a statutory holiday and qualify for statutory holiday pay, have the option of taking a paid day off or taking the extra day's pay.
- Employees who are members of non-Christian religions can take up to two unpaid days off a year to observe spiritual or holy days.
- Employees are entitled to three days paid bereavement leave if there is a death in the immediate family.
- No loss of pay if an employee is selected for jury duty.
- Casual employees who work 20 hours or more per week for more than three months now qualify for the health and welfare plan for as long as they continue to work 20 hours or more per week.

It's in your hands

For the first time, ARAMARK employees in BC's health care system have negotiated their own contract. From selecting their demands, to electing their bargaining committee, to sitting at the negotiating table—HEU ARAMARK members have been involved in the bargaining process every step of the way.

Now all ARAMARK members will have the opportunity to vote to accept or reject this tentative contract.

Your ARAMARK bargaining committee is:

Avelina Vasquez (St. Paul's)

Jacqueline Smith (Vancouver General Hospital)

Rick Shaw (Powell River General Hospital)

Noel Gulbransen (HEU representative)