

Is the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation a statutory holiday?

As mentioned in a previous issue of YOTK, the ETBA and the IBEW agreed to add the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation as a statutory holiday in Clause 805. The day is marked on September 30 each year and honours the children who never returned home and survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities.

September 30 falls on a Saturday this year. Clause 805 states that, if a statutory holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the closest following workday(s) shall be observed. Therefore, the holiday will be observed on Monday October 2, 2023.

IBEW members are already compensated for all statutory holidays included in the Principal Agreement from the 12% allocated on the wage spreadsheet. If, however, IBEW members work on a statutory holiday, they shall be paid overtime in accordance with the applicable section of the Principal Agreement.

So, what does this mean for you? If one of your employees works on October 2, 2023, treat it as a statutory holiday (double time). If someone works on the weekend (September 30, October 1), treat it as a regular weekend. In a lot of cases, weekend work must be paid at double time, but the Yellow Pages has overtime paid at 1.5x from 8:00AM to noon on Saturdays (refer to Clause 804 in Yellow pages for specific language). The Communications Agreement also has overtime paid at 1.5x for the first eight (8) hours on Saturdays. Some local agreements may also have agreements with 1.5x overtime on Saturdays. Local 1687 has specific language dealing with statutory holidays and Compressed Work Weeks, which would override Clause 805.

How have the higher inflation rates over the past year impacted real wage gains?

Real wage gains are wages that are adjusted for inflation. We reviewed real wage gains in YOTK's Issue 3 when we were not yet in provincial collective bargaining. Inflation was rising as we entered bargaining – it had increased by 5.1% in February 2022 - and, as we know, inflation at one point increased by 7.9% (June 2022).

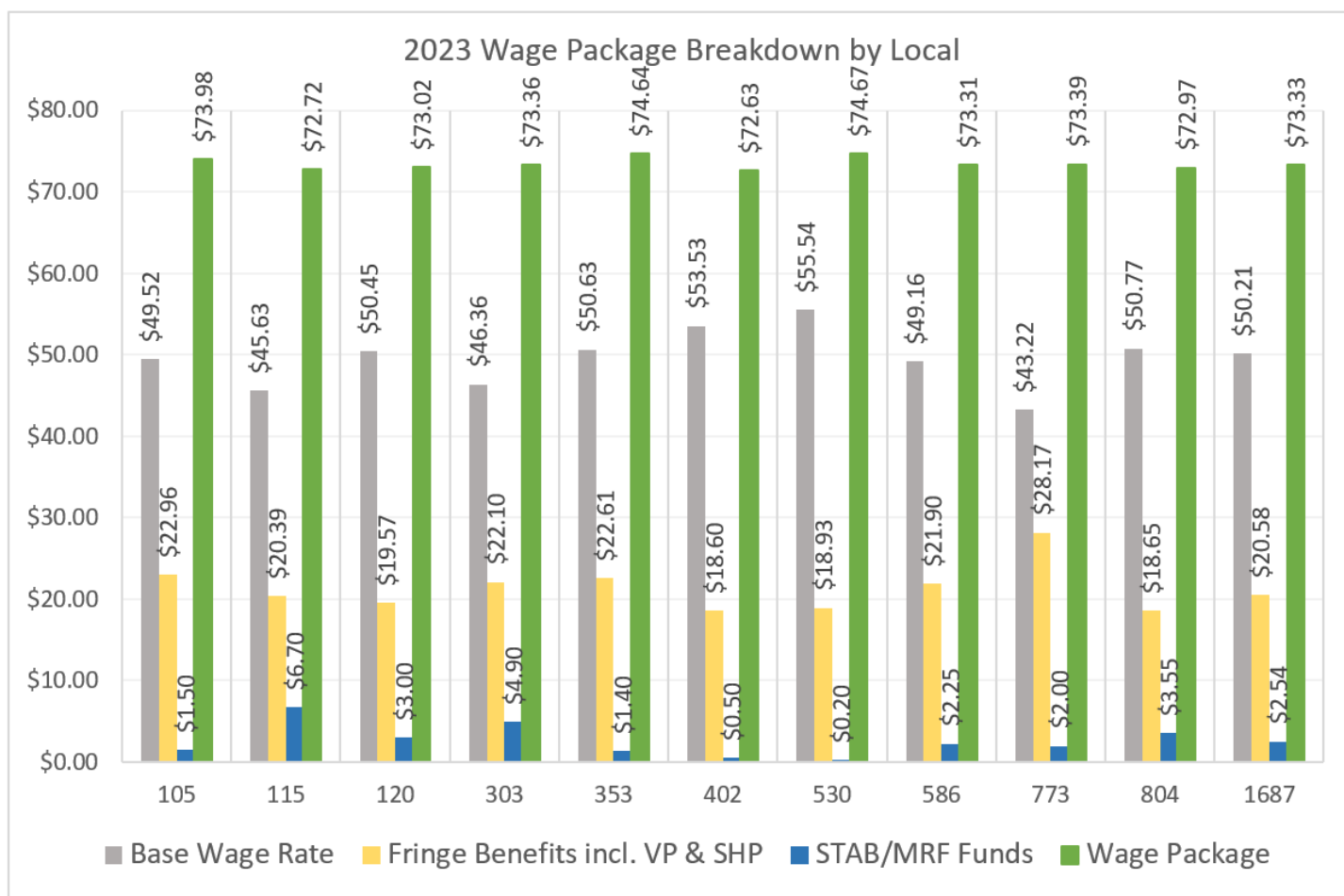
For our purposes in calculating real wage gains, we use CPI, all items, for April of each year. In 2016, real wage gains from 1991 to 2015 were 23.23%. This means that wage increases for IBEW members since 1991 were 23.23% higher than inflation. We use 1991 as a starting point because that is when IBEW and ETBA started to negotiate the Joint Proposal - a no strike, no lockout agreement. Language in the Joint Proposal guaranteed – and still guarantees – union members a 'reasonable' monetary wage settlement.

Going into the last round of bargaining, real wage increases for IBEW members from 1991 to 2021 were 25.25%. As of April 2023, real wage increases for IBEW members were 19.87%. Note the following table*:

Nominal pay increase:	\$41.23
Nominal percentage increase:	131.10%
CPI percentage change:	92.80%
Real wage change:	\$6.25
Real wage percentage change:	19.87%
Change in nominal annual income	\$85,758.40
Change in real annual income:	\$12,995.55

What does the current wage package look like across Ontario?

We updated the chart that was shared in Issue 3 with the wage package rates from May 1, 2023. There are differences in the wage package amount for each local area because they all had different wages before provincial bargaining was legislated in 1978. The parties negotiate one monetary wage increase for the entire province to the wage package every three years, not a percentage increase, so the discrepancies in wages between local areas remain. Also, since the parties negotiate an increase to the wage package, each local and its members determine the base rate, benefits, stab fund contributions, and any other union funds.



Do you know what You Ought to Know?

We hope that you're benefitting from the facts and insights we share through this publication, and we welcome your questions and content ideas for future issues at any time. Contact Jodi Travers, ECAO's Labour Relations Manager, at jtravers@ecao.org. You can access all previous issues anytime on the ECAO member website under Labour Relations.