

# You Ought To Know

ISSUE: 28

*Greetings and best New Year wishes to readers of ECAO's You Ought to Know (YOTK)! As 2026 gets underway, we are pleased to share the year's first issue, as always featuring relevant, timely and accurate information presented in an easy-to-read Q&A format. We're also happy to advise that, throughout 2026, we'll be sharing YOTK content to readers via informative videos – brief, digestible clips that you can easily share with your teams, and toolbox talks. Watch for more on that in the next few months. Meanwhile, we welcome you to read on!*

## **What are some challenges faced by contractors when it comes to bidding new projects? And how are megaprojects affecting our members?**

To get to the answers to those important questions, the ECAO team is expanding on a survey conducted in 2023 where we asked contractors why they chose not to bid on recent jobs. From that 2023 survey, we found that the main reasons were related to non-Union competition and availability of the existing workforce. Now, we are digging further for greater understanding.

In this next stage of the survey, we are looking to understand:

1. additional factors or pressures that make it challenging to stay competitive in the sectors where our members compete, and
2. the impacts that ongoing megaprojects are having on our members.

Starting mid-January, Patryk Wrobel, our Labour Relations Analyst, will be engaging with contractors on a short phone survey to capture our members' responses. We invite those who determine whether to bid or **procure work** falling within the scope of the Principal Agreement to participate. All responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Our findings, which will be shared with all ECAO members in a future YOTK, will be presented in aggregate, and will not name contractors or identify jobs.

For those interested in learning more about the survey or to receive a copy of the questionnaire ahead of time, contact Patryk directly at [pwrobel@ecao.org](mailto:pwrobel@ecao.org). We thank all of you in advance for your participation.

## **From the perspective of wages and hours of work, how do we compare with CLAC contractors?**

We often get questions from our members on how our wage rates and hours of work compare with contractors who are signatory to the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC).

As you know, we concluded collective bargaining in 2025. Several contractors that are signatory to CLAC have also finished collective bargaining. The chart below shows differences between our wage rates and those of CLAC contractors. Keep in mind that CLAC Electrician wages are generally \$10/hour higher than non-Union Electricians.

Journey person - ICI	ECAO average	CLAC contractor*
Hours of work - regular	37.5	44
Overtime	2x	1.5x
Total Package	\$81.61	\$60.88
Weekly rate based on 37.5 hours/week	\$3,060.38	\$2,283.00
Weekly rate based on 44 hours/week (OT for IBEW after 37.5 hours)	\$4,121.31	\$2,678.72

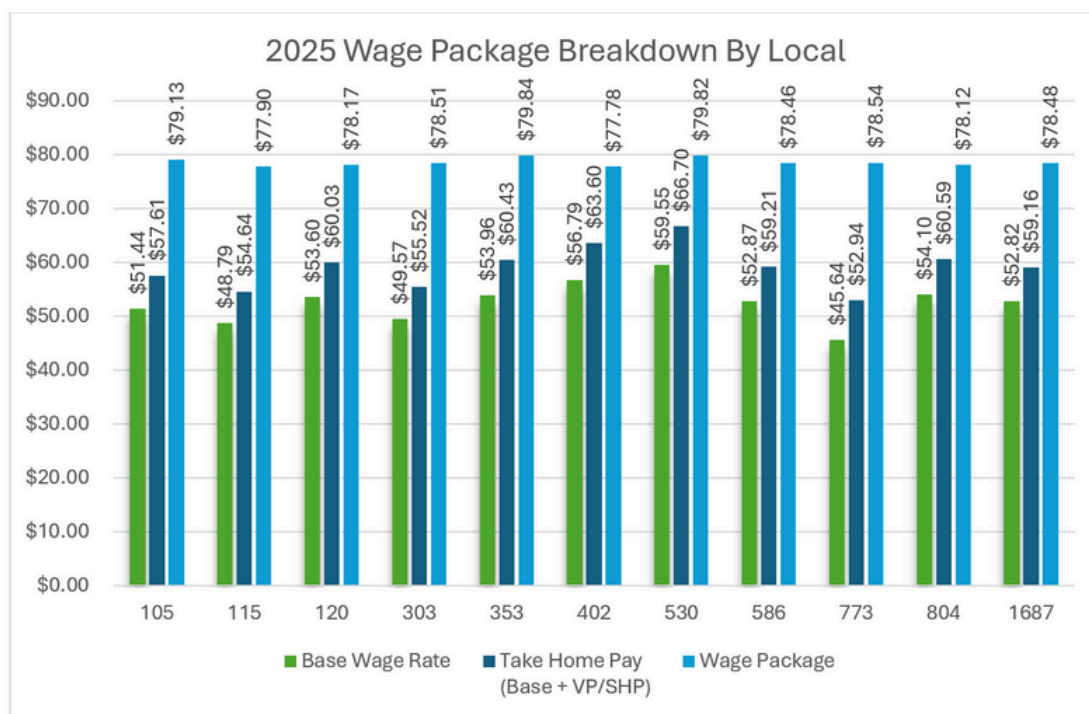
\*Average of 8 CLAC collective agreements

## Once the parties negotiate increases to the wage package, how is the base rate determined?

This is a question we hear often so it is worth revisiting here.

As we have explained in previous YOTK issues, the Union and its members determine the base rate which, after VP/SHP (12%) is added. Contractors are obligated to pay the wage package plus the ECA funds, and the distribution of the wage package is determined by the Local Union and its members. If members want to have a say on the amount of money they bring home each week (the base rate), they need to go to their Local Union meetings.

For reference, you can see the difference between 2025 Local area ICI wage packages, base rates and take-home pay in this chart.



Note: 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 to the wage package for the entire province every three years, not a percentage increase, so the discrepancies in wages between Local areas remain.

## 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 Ought to Know on the ECAO website under Publications. Please reach out to Jodi Travers at [jtravers@ecao.org](mailto:jtravers@ecao.org) if you have any questions or suggestions for future issues.