



# **Bargaining Trends in the Municipal and Provincial Highways Sector**

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## **Introduction**

CUPE represents approximately 2,200 municipal workers in Nova Scotia who perform a wide variety of jobs including labourer, secretary, clerk, parks worker, mechanic, welder, carpenter, lifeguard, water plant operator, engineering technologist, gardener, crosswalk guard, recreational coordinator and other positions. CUPE municipal workers are organized into 28 locals and 36 bargaining units. Nova Scotia highway workers are organized in one provincial local representing equipment operators, mechanics, centreline painters, asphalt and chip seal crews, bridge workers, ferry operators among other positions.

This report summarizes nine (9) contract settlements in the Nova Scotia municipal sector and one (1) settlement in the provincial highways sector reached during 2012.

The information presented in this report is based on the contract settlement reports that are completed by the staff representative for each municipal local. CUPE's Research Representative compiled the information on settlements from these reports.

The first section of this report provides a provincial overview of bargaining and major contract settlements reached in Nova Scotia in 2012.

The second section focuses on CUPE settlements in the municipal and provincial highways sectors, summarizing the major trends and bargaining achievements.

The third section highlights specific gains in the areas of benefits and pensions, premium pay, clothing, boot and other allowances, sick leave, family illness and bereavement leave, vacations and paid holidays, job security and other improvements.

The fourth section examines the economic and political climate for bargaining in 2013.

The appendices at the end of this report list the locals whose settlements are reviewed in this report, a list of locals currently in bargaining, locals whose contracts expire at the end of 2013, and a table showing annual average increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Nova Scotia.

## I - Provincial Overview: Wage Settlements in 2012

The average negotiated wage adjustment in Nova Scotia increased from 1.4% in 2011 to 2.3% in 2012 as Table 1 shows. Nova Scotia's public sector wage settlements averaged 2.1% in 2012, outpacing the public sector nationally at 1.7%. Preliminary data suggests this pattern will continue in 2013.

**Table 1 – Average Wage Increases in Major Settlements\*  
1998 – 2013**

Year	Average annual percentage adjustment Nova Scotia			Average annual percentage adjustment All Provinces		
	All Sectors	Public Sector	Private Sector	All Sectors	Public Sector	Private Sector
1998	2.8	3.1	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.8
1999	2.7	2.3	3	2.2	1.9	2.7
2000	2.1	2.2	1.7	2.5	2.5	2.4
2001	3.7	3.8	3.4	3.3	3.4	3
2002	2.5	2.4	4	2.8	2.9	2.6
2003	3.3	3.4	2.6	2.5	2.9	1.2
2004	4.7	4.9	2.3	1.8	1.4	2.3
2005	3.3	3.4	2.6	2.3	2.3	2.5
2006	3.2	3.1	3.4	2.5	2.6	2.3
2007	3	3	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.3
2008	4	3.8	4.7	3.2	3.5	2.5
2009	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.4	2.5	1.8
2010	1.5	1.5	-	1.8	1.6	2.1
2011	1.4	1.2	3.3	1.8	1.7	2
2012	2.3	2.1	3	1.7	1.7	1.6
2013P	2.5	2.5	-	0.3	0.3	2.3

\* Major Wage Settlements – 500 or more employees

P = preliminary data

Source: Labour Canada Collective Bargaining Information

Information on annual wage increases was generated from data collected and published by the Labour Program of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). The HRSDC data has the advantage of covering all industries and jurisdictions across Canada. The limitation of the data from HRSDC is that it includes only wage settlements covering 500 or more employees.

The Nova Scotia Department of Labour does not publish data on wage settlements for the province although the Department maintains a very useful database of collective agreements.

### **Major Public Sector Settlements 2012**

CUPE acute care workers who work in 33 rural hospitals across Nova Scotia led the way in establishing the new public sector wage pattern in May, 2012. The agreement included a 7.5 per cent wage increase over the three-year term and significant improvements to job security language. CUPE represents over 3,500 acute care workers in eight District Health Authorities (DHAs) outside of the capital district. In late May, the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW-Canada) reached a common settlement on the same terms with three more Health Authorities. In June, Capital District Health care employees in NSGEU Local 42 were awarded the 7.5 per cent increase over three years in arbitration (wage increases of 2%, 2.5% and 3%). The Nova Scotia Teachers Union ratified 7.5% over three years earlier this month.

Two major settlements in the municipal sector during 2012 diverged from this provincial pattern. In Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), 750 members of the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 508 went out on strike on February 2<sup>nd</sup> for 40 days over scheduling changes demanded by the employer. An agreement was reached in March at the conciliation stage after the work stoppage. Wage adjustments were 8% over 5 years (0.0%, 2.0%, 2.0%, 2.0%, 2.0%). Notably, the agreement included a two-tier wage scale for new hires. All new hires will start 25% below applicable job rate and full-job rates are reached after 48 months.

A second major agreement at HRM was reached in July with the Nova Scotia Union of Public and Private Employees (NUPSE) Local 13 representing approximately 730 inside workers employed in 169 professional, technical and administrative classifications throughout HRM. Wage adjustments were 6% over a 3-year agreement. The settlement eliminated the pre-retirement leave for new hires.

## **II – Nova Scotia Municipal and Provincial Highways Settlements in 2012**

This report summarizes nine (9) contract settlements in the Nova Scotia municipal sector and one (1) settlement in the provincial highways sector reached during 2012.

Four of the new municipal sector collective agreements have three-year terms: Local 2618 (Municipality of the County of Kings); Local 3552 (Town of Annapolis Royal); Local 4403 (Town of Kentville); and Local 4549 (Municipality of the County of Annapolis). Two new municipal collective agreements have four-year terms: Local 108-06 (Nova Scotia Lifeguard Service Society) and Local 281-05 (Town of Pictou). Three municipal collective agreements have five-year terms: Local 227 (Halifax Regional Water Commission); Local 1431 (Halifax Regional Water Commission) and Local 919 (Town of Springhill and Arena). Local 1233 (Town of Amherst) extended their three-year term collective agreement reached in 2009 for one additional year.

Local 1867 (Government of Nova Scotia, Department of Transportation and Public Works) settled a 24-month renewal agreement at the arbitration stage after 26 months of negotiations. Local 1867 is governed by the *Highway Workers Collective Bargaining Act* that prohibits strikes and lockouts. All matters that cannot be settled in collective bargaining are referred to interest arbitration.

Table 2 summarizes the wage settlements for CUPE municipal and provincial highways locals in 2012.

The complete list of the settlements can be found in Appendix I.

As Appendix II shows, there are currently seven municipal locals that are in bargaining or about to enter into negotiations. Highway workers in Local 1867 are also in bargaining. The 11 agreements expiring at the end of 2013 are listed in Appendix III.

The CUPE municipal locals that reached settlements in 2012 made important gains in a number of areas. None of these locals needed to take job action in order to achieve a settlement.

**Table 2**  
**CUPE Municipal and Provincial Highways**  
**Wage Settlements 2012**

<b>Local</b>	<b>Employer</b>	<b># of Employees</b>	<b>Term of Agreement</b>	<b>Wage Increases</b>	<b>Additional Adjustments/Comments</b>
108-06	Nova Scotia Lifeguard Service Society	80	April 1/12 to March 31/16	April 1/12 – 9.2% April 1/13 – 3% April 1/14 – 3% April 1/15 – 3%	April 1, 2012 – 9.2% for Life Guards and Assistant Beach Captains; 11% for Beach Captains.
227	Halifax Regional Water Commission (outside workers)	225	Nov. 1/08 to Oct. 31/13	Nov. 1/08- 2% Nov. 1/09- 2% Nov. 1/10- 2% Nov. 1/11- 2% Nov. 1/12- 1.5%	Reached at Conciliation. First CA after transfer of wastewater services from HRM to HRWC. Additional adjustments to Wastewater classifications (operations and labourer) ranging from \$2.81/hr to \$6.02/hr.
281-05	Town of Pictou	20	April 1/12 to March 31/16	April 1/12 – 2.5% April 1/13 – 2.5% April 1/14 – 2.8% April 1/15 – 2.8%	Additional adjustments -\$ 0.25/hr all levels Water/Wastewater certification; \$ 0.25/hr Pool Maintenance before economic increase
919	Town of Springhill and Arena	16	Nov. 1/10 to Oct. 31/15	Nov. 1/10- 3% Nov. 1/11- 2% Nov. 1/12- 1% Nov. 1/13- 2% Nov. 1/14- 2%	Community Centre Foreman & Canteen Worker red-circled at current rate as of May 2012
1233	Town of Amherst	30	April 1/09 to March 31/12; extended to March 31/13	April 1/09 – 3.2% April 1/10 – 3.2% April 1/11 – 3%	Additional adjustments \$.50/hr for mechanic & Water/Wastewater classifications \$1.21 adjustment for stadium plant operator  April 1/12- extended 1 yr
1431	Halifax Regional Water Commission (inside & outside workers)	95	Nov. 1/08 to Oct. 31/13	Nov. 1/08- 2% Nov. 1/09- 2% Nov. 1/10- 2% Nov. 1/11- 2% Nov. 1/12- 1.5%	Reached at Conciliation. First CA after transfer of wastewater services from HRM to HRWC. Additional \$3.08/hr on signing to Information Services Technician III rate of pay.
2618	Municipality of the County of Kings	50	Nov. 1/12 to Oct. 31/15	Nov. 1/12- 2% Nov. 1/13- 2.25% Nov. 1/14- 2.25%	
4403	Town of Kentville (outside workers)	20	April 1/12 to March 31/15	April 1/12 – 3.7% April 1/13 – 3.25% April 1/14 – 2.75%	COLA in third year of agreement Premium pay \$1.00/hr for welding
4549	Municipality of the County of Annapolis	8	April 1/12 to March 31/15	April 1/12 – 2% April 1/13 – 2% April 1/14 – 2.5%	
1867	NS Dept Transportation and Public Works	1300	Nov. 1/09 to Oct. 31/11	Nov. 1/09 – 1% Nov. 1/10 – 1%	Settled in arbitration.

### **III – Achievements in municipal sector bargaining:**

#### **Wage increases keep pace with inflation in 2012:**

The average wage increase per settlement in the municipal sector was 2% in 2012.<sup>1</sup> This virtually matches the overall public sector increase of 2.1% in Nova Scotia. With the CPI at 2% in Nova Scotia last year, the wages of municipal workers were not eroded by inflation.

#### **Enhanced benefit plans and pensions:**

Four locals achieved improvements in the areas of pension and benefit plans. Local 4403 negotiated increased pension premiums and participation in the Multi-Sector Pension Plan (MSPP), a union sponsored plan that is geared towards smaller employer groups. Local 2618 improved the cost share for health and dental benefits and Local 227 improved language on pensions and benefits. Local 1867 doubled the amount of pay to casual employees in lieu of benefits from 1% to 2%.

#### **Higher premium pay:**

Local 281 improved stand-by pay by an hour (from three hours to four hours pay). Local 1867 employees receiving the winter wage guarantee through the snow removal season increased their premium to 95 cents from 75 cents per hour. Local 4549 bargained a \$1.00 an hour premium pay for welding.

#### **Adjustments for Water/Wastewater classifications:**

In three of the settlements reviewed, water and wastewater classifications received adjustments above the general wage increases (Local 227, Local 281-05 and Local 1233).

#### **Expanded family illness and compassionate leave:**

Eight locals were successful in improving various leave provisions. Local 108-6 negotiated bereavement leave for the first time in its collective agreement. Four locals expanded compassionate leave or added additional bereavement leave days (Local 227, Local 2618, Local 1867, Local 4549). Three settlements (Local 227, Local 1867, Local 4403) included improvements for family illness or personal emergency leave. Two locals (Local 919, Local 281) negotiated provisions to use sick leave entitlement for emergency or personal appointment leave. Local 4549 increased leave time for specialist appointments.

#### **Union leave, representation and collective bargaining:**

Two locals (Local 1431 and Local 227) negotiated additional union leave. Four locals strengthened language around union representation (Local 919, Local 1431, Local 227 and Local 108-6). Two settlements (Local 4549 and Local 108-6) added pay for members in union/employer negotiations. Local 227 increased the membership of the bargaining committee by one.

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<sup>1</sup> Wage increases for Local 108-06 (Nova Scotia Lifeguard Service Society) have been excluded for this calculation as they are a seasonal summer work group.

**Increased clothing, boot and other allowances:**

Three locals (Local 227, Local 281, Local 2618) negotiated improvements to uniform and clothing allowances. Local 1867 increased the tool allowance to \$400 from \$300.

**Improvements to paid holidays and vacations:**

Three locals negotiated enhanced vacation entitlements: Local 1233 added 6 weeks of vacation after 24 years; Local 4549 added one additional day per year after 20 years up to 6 weeks vacation; and Local 1867, four weeks after 5(6) years; 5 after 15(17); and 6 after 24(25). Local 281 negotiated an end to pro-rating of vacation time when off on WCB and the payout of any remaining vacation at the end of the fiscal year as opposed to losing it. Local 1431 added a day off on either Christmas Day or New Year's Eve. Local 4403 negotiated time off in lieu (banked time).

**Occupational Health and Safety, Duty to Accommodate:**

Four locals (Local 227, Local 1431, Local 281 and Local 919) strengthened provisions around Occupational Health and Safety in their agreements. Local 227 and Local 1431 improved language around Duty to Accommodate (DTA).

**Job security:**

Construction and maintenance employees in Local 1867 secured a guaranteed 21 week summer work period. Local 1867 also secured improvements to the winter wage guarantee; employment is guaranteed for at least 17 (formerly 16) weeks during the snow removal season. Local 281 negotiated improved job posting language and protections for workers displaced by the transfer of a heritage site to a volunteer group. Local 227 negotiated improved language around technological change.

**Other improvements:**

Other negotiated improvements include a job evaluation that increased wages for more than 70% of members of Local 2618. Settlements included various other provisions such as the employer to pay for required medical assessments and Motor Vehicle license renewals, a paid lunch break and increases to mileage rates and paid travel time. Local 2618 negotiated paid time for volunteer firefighters.

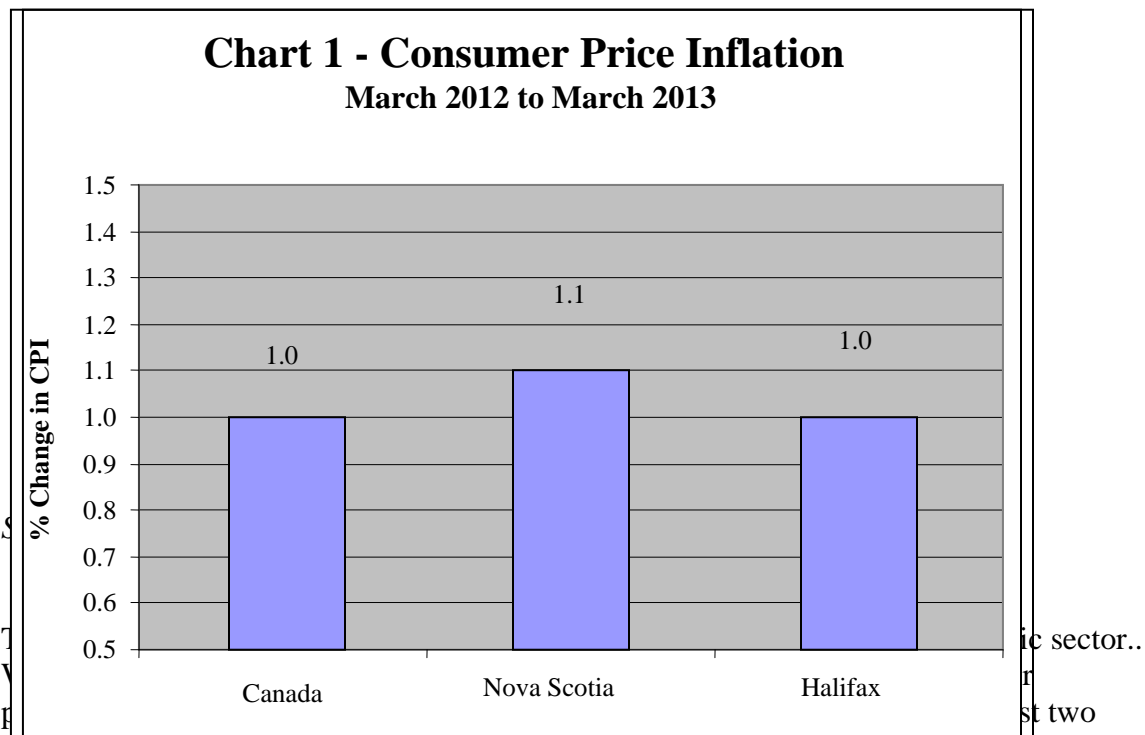
## IV – The Bargaining Climate in 2013

The economic climate for bargaining is cautiously optimistic for 2013. The Nova Scotia Department of Finance has revised its projections for growth in GDP upwards since the 2013-2014 Budget.

The March consensus outlook for Nova Scotia's Real GDP growth in 2013 is +1.6 percent followed by +2.1 percent in 2014. Major projects such as the Maritime Link and vessel construction at the Halifax Shipyard have potential impact over the medium term.

While employment in Nova Scotia grew by +0.6 percent in 2012 after several years of minimal change, the province's unemployment rate remains elevated; 9.0 percent in 2012 compared to 8.8 percent in 2011. This varies significantly from one economic region in the province to another; 6.4% in Halifax to 17.5 % in Cape Breton as of March 2013.

At 1.1 per cent year over year, Nova Scotia's consumer price index was just above the national average of 1.0 per cent from March 2012 to March 2013 as Chart 1 below shows. Within Atlantic Canada, Nova Scotia posted the second lowest year over year CPI increase (New Brunswick increased 0.8 per cent), followed by PEI and Newfoundland and Labrador at 1.2 and 1.6 per cent, respectively. West of the Maritimes, the highest inflation year over year was once again in Manitoba (2.3 per cent).



examples - Nova Scotia workers have not faced those threats.

Municipal workers in Nova Scotia would not be immune to the “red tape” and invasion of privacy that will be created if the Harper government's Bill C-377 is enacted. Bill C-

377 puts new rules on unions for reporting financial information far in excess of what is required of any other organization or individual in Canadian society. Unions like CUPE are already accountable to their members by the measures outlined in our Constitution and we report to our members through democratic structures. Bill C-377 singles out unions and is an attempt to silence our political voice.

Another on-going threat to public sector municipal workers is the federal government's blind commitment to the P3 Canada Fund, which makes grants to municipalities conditional on privatizing through public-private partnerships (P3s). Working through PPP Canada, the federal government is using Canada's multi-billion dollar infrastructure deficit to force privatization on municipalities.

The federal P3 Canada Fund requires cities and towns to enter into long-term contracts with for-profit corporations to finance, operate or maintain infrastructure or public services. All other federal infrastructure program funding has expired or run out.

At the recent Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference, delegates expressed growing frustration that the only source of funding forces local governments into P3s.

Several municipalities have passed resolutions calling for federal infrastructure funding that isn't linked to privatization. CUPE has developed a resolution that locals can bring to their municipal council.

CUPE continues to call for a national long-term infrastructure funding strategy to ensure our community assets and services continue to be publicly owned, operated and delivered on a not for profit basis now, and for future generations.

## APPENDIX I

### CUPE Municipal and Provincial Highway Settlements Reviewed for 2012

	<b>Local</b>	<b>Employer</b>	<b>Date Ratified</b>	<b>Term of Agreement</b>
1	108-06	Nova Scotia Lifeguard Service Society	May 24, 2012	April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2016
2	227	Halifax Regional Water Commission	March 27, 2012	Nov. 1, 2008 to Oct. 31, 2013
3	281-05	Town of Pictou	May 30, 2012	April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2016
4	919	Town of Springhill and Arena	June 6, 2012	Nov. 1, 2010 to Oct. 31, 2015
5	1233	Town of Amherst	August 31, 2009	April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2012; extended to March 31, 2013
6	1431	Halifax Regional Water Commission (inside)	April 4, 2012	Nov. 1, 2008 to Oct. 31, 2013
7	2618	Municipality of the County of Kings	December 12, 2012	Nov. 1, 2012 to Oct. 31, 2015
8	4403	Town of Kentville	April 26, 2012	April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2015
9	4549	Municipality of the County of Annapolis	May 18, 2012	April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2015
10	1867	Government of Nova Scotia, Department of Transportation and Public Works	Settled in Arbitration March 2012	Nov. 1, 2009 to Oct. 31, 2011

## APPENDIX II

### Municipal and Provincial Highway Locals Currently in Bargaining

	<b>Local</b>	<b>Employer</b>	<b>Staff Rep</b>
1	108	Halifax Regional Municipality	Trevors
2	281-01	Town of Westville	Sutherland
3	1092	Town of Bridgewater	Trevors
4	1780	Town of Lunenburg	Trevors
5	2530	Town of Yarmouth	Crouse
6	4814	Halifax Regional Municipality Crossing Guards	Welsh
7	4840	Cape Breton Island Regional Housing	Power
8	1867	Government of Nova Scotia, Department of Transportation and Public Works	Baxter

## APPENDIX III

### Municipal Agreements Expiring by December 31, 2013

	<b>Local</b>	<b>Employer</b>	<b>Staff Rep</b>
1	227	Halifax Regional Water Commission	Trevors
2	281	Town of New Glasgow	Sutherland
3	281-04	Town of Trenton	Sutherland
4	281-06	Pictou County District Planning Commission	Sutherland
5	734	Town of Truro	Dart
6	761	Cape Breton Regional Municipality Crossing Guards	Power
7	933	Cape Breton Regional Municipality	Power
8	1116	Town of Mulgrave	Sutherland
9	1431	Halifax Regional Water Commission	Stewart
10	2858	Town of Middleton	Crouse
11	3945	Municipality of the County of Colchester	Dart

## APPENDIX IV – Consumer Price Inflation

Consumer Price Index, All Items  
Canada, Nova Scotia – 2008-2012

YEAR	CANADA		NOVA SCOTIA	
	INDEX	% CHANGE	INDEX	% CHANGE
2008	114.1	2.3	115.9	3
2009	114.4	0.3	115.7	-0.2
2010	116.5	1.8	118.2	2.2
2011	119.9	2.9	122.7	3.8
2012	121.7	1.5	125.1	2.0

Source: Statistics Canada (2002=100)

A basket of goods that cost \$100 in 2002 increased in price to \$125.10 in Nova Scotia in 2012.