



Canadian Media Guild

La Guilde canadienne
des médias

TNG Canada / CWA

CP/BN

New Members Handbook





Canadian Media Guild
La Guilde canadienne
des médias

TNG Canada / CWA

1-800-465-4149

416-591-5333

www.cmg.ca

www.laguilde.ca

CP/BN New Members Handbook

Text: Brendan Elliott
Design: Lucinda Wallace
Illustrations: John Fraser

Welcome

Congratulations on your new job with Canadian Press/
Broadcast News! You're now part of a team that rightfully
owns a stellar reputation both in Canada and abroad.

You've also joined another dynamic team. The Canadian
Media Guild is one of the fastest growing and strongest media
unions in the country. You stand tall beside union members
from Reuters, CBC, TVO, aptn, Alliance Atlantis, SunTV, and
S-Vox (formerly Vision-TV).

If CP/BN is your first unionized workplace, you're probably
asking yourself a question: what does being part of a union
mean to me? Do I have to call everyone my brother or sister?
Do we hold hands in the morning and sing *Solidarity Forever*?
When do we go on strike?

Starting a new job can be overwhelming. The last thing you
need is a bunch of unanswered questions about your union.

This new-member handbook is meant to simplify everything
and encourage you to embrace the CMG as an incredibly
valuable organization. Think of the guild as a good friend
who's always there for you.

This is *your* guide: *your* input helped create it and *your*
comments will ensure it evolves to meet the needs of new
members. It's the same with the guild. New members bring
new ideas. And that can only help the guild better respond
to the needs and aspirations of one of the most flexible
workforces in Canada.

Colin Perkel,
President of the CP/BN branch
of the Canadian Media Guild

What is a union?

If you've never been part of a union, you may not know how a union works. A union is an organized group of workers who come together to pool their resources (time, money, brain power, creativity, etc.) to help themselves and their colleagues win respect on the job, earn better wages, achieve enviable health benefits and preserve decent working conditions.

When employees come together as a union, their collective voice provides a counterbalance to the unchecked power of employers.

A union is a legal entity. That means employers have to negotiate with the union. The company is also obligated to follow the rules set out in the collective agreement. To breach any section of the contract would be akin to breaking the "law" of our workplace.

Why do I need a union?

Unions are as important today as they were at the turn of the 20th century when employees were battling the use of underage workers, low wages, and long working hours.

You've likely heard the phrase "strength in numbers." Well, that speaks directly to the usefulness of a union – even in today's workplace.

Suppose you have a specific problem with management. Would you rather deal with it alone – as you would in a non-union workplace – or with the support of all your colleagues at CP/BN?





One person can be strong. But imagine the strength of 300 supportive colleagues beside you.

Being a member of the guild also helps provide job security.

One of the most fundamental beliefs of any union is that everyone has to be treated equally. And intertwined with that fight for fairness comes a second philosophy of seniority rights.

The longer you remain in your job, the more secure you should feel. That's what it boils down to. Unions believe if you're doing a good job, your reward should be a sense of security in that job. And the employer wins, too, because a happy employee is a productive employee.

Recent findings from Statistics Canada show union workers earn roughly eight per cent more than non-union workers. And they stay at their unionized workplaces longer than employees in non-union shops.

I haven't signed a union card. Should I?

As soon as you walk through the doors at CP/BN for the very first time, you're automatically covered by the guild collective agreement. All the work done over the years by your union colleagues is immediately passed on to you.

You are required by law to pay dues. But you are not a member until you've signed a card. Signing a union card

allows you to vote in guild elections and run for an elected position in the union. It expresses your interest in your colleagues, your working conditions and allows you to have a say in *your* union.

And, by the way, it also allows you to show your friends and relatives that you're proud to be a union member. A union card application is included in this kit for you to sign.

Why do I pay union dues?

Union dues are an investment, not a tax. It's just like making a regular contribution into an RRSP, or into an education fund for your child. The objective is to put an affordable amount of your earnings away now, so that when you need to dip into the account later, there will be enough money to cover your needs.

Union dues provide the same kind of insurance. Whether the money is used for bargaining contracts or solving workplace problems, it's used to make your life better down the road. And the best part is the money will be there when you need it the most.

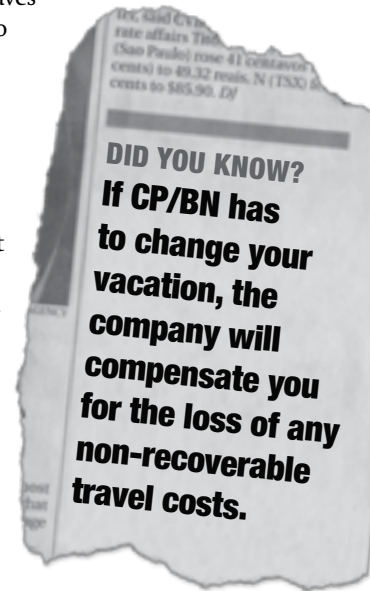
You pay 1.55 per cent of what you earn at CP/BN in union dues – up to a maximum of \$1,500 a year (one of the lowest dues rates anywhere). Your dues automatically come off your pay.

The amount is tax deductible, so it even shaves off a bit of what you have to send every year to Ottawa!

Does joining a union mean I'll go on strike?

No. More than 98 per cent of collective agreements in Canada are negotiated without a work stoppage. You usually hear about the ones that end up with strikes or lockouts. You don't hear about the hundreds of contracts successfully negotiated every year where no-one has to hit the bricks.

That's not to say the guild wouldn't go on strike if it had to. It's a big weapon unions have against management, and it's never used recklessly. The guild has gone on strike only once at CP/BN and that was 30 years ago.



What are my rights?

Whew! That's a big one. For starters, you have the right to be treated fairly in the workplace. You have the right to be respected by your employer. And you have the right to be paid appropriately for the work you do.

Those rights are laid out in the collective bargaining agreement or contract. Notice the biggest word on the cover of the contract is "collective". That's intentional because it's a deal worked out *collectively* between the union and management.

A half dozen or so of your unionized CP/BN colleagues sit down with representatives from management to work out a new contract. This usually happens every couple of years.

It's impossible to stress enough that this is an agreement between both parties. It's a rule book both sides have agreed to follow – just as important as the CP Caps and Spelling and CP Style Guide books.

Admittedly, just like most legal documents, the collective agreement can be a little intimidating to flip through. This new-member handbook is meant to give you the need-to-know stuff you might not notice at first glance as you read the contract.

How much will I be paid?

Undoubtedly, one of the first sections you'll go to in the collective agreement is the section dealing with salaries (Article 15). These are negotiated salaries that outline the *minimum* CP/BN is required to pay you on a weekly basis.

When you begin a new job at CP/BN, you normally start at the bottom of the scale for that position unless your supervisor has agreed your past experience means you should start at a higher level within that pay band. On the anniversary date of your hire, you will automatically be bumped up to the next level within that pay band until you hit the maximum.

Your pay will also increase every year by the amount agreed to for general raises in the collective agreement. So, if you're just joining CP/BN, you could be in line for two pay raises a year until you hit the maximum in your pay band.

These are *minimum* weekly salaries. The contract states you can be paid more based on individual merit and performance. You have an opportunity during your annual performance review to make the case for such a raise, based perhaps on exceptional performance in the previous year.

What kind of employee am I?

There are three kinds of unionized employees at CP/BN. You are either full-time, part-time, or temporary (sometimes referred to as "on contract.") When you are hired, your supervisor should explain where you fit in.

Temporary employees and part-timers have different rights from full-time staff. There are several sections in the collective agreement (the most specific rights are found in Articles 31 and 32) that address the different rights.

For example, a part-time employee has to be paid 2.5 times their hourly rate to work a holiday while a full-time employee is paid one-and-a-half times their hourly rate for the same shift.

There are other differences, so if you're not sure about your rights, consult the collective agreement.

How long is my probation period?

At CP/BN you're considered a probationary employee for the first three months. That period can be extended by a month as long as your supervisor notifies the guild (in writing) of the extension. You can be let go at any time during this period if management believes you are not performing adequately.

On the flip side, management can take you off probation at any time before the three months end.

If you worked part-time or as a temporary employee at CP/BN prior to earning a permanent job, up to two months of that time will be deducted from the period you are required to be on probation.

So, if you accumulated a total of two months as a temp, that would mean your probation period as a permanent employee would be just one month.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Information in this booklet is intended to assist members in understanding their collective agreement. It is not intended to serve as an interpretive document. Please refer to the collective agreement for the actual language.

DID YOU KNOW?

Former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau provided a tremendous boost to CP workers struggling through rotating strikes in 1976. Trudeau refused to cross a picket line to attend a news conference in Ottawa. A CP manager was sitting inside waiting for him.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you have to travel for work purposes you'll be paid for it.

Should I be worried seniority will rule the day when it comes to layoffs?

Being the most junior employee in a "last in, first out" work environment might worry you.

The guild and CP/BN have agreed on a formal process for laying off – and recalling – workers. That process is based on seniority and skill.

It's the best way to treat everyone fairly.

The union is there to protect everyone's rights – equally. It's the guild's job to protect you from being let go unfairly. And if you are let go legitimately, you will receive no less than the severance package negotiated by the guild.

Without these rules, it would be too easy for managers to play favourites or make arbitrary decisions about who's no longer the flavour of the month. If managers could target specific employees during a layoff, no-one would have job security at CP/BN.

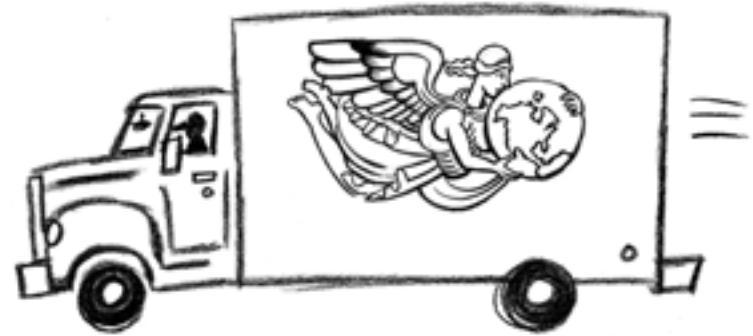
The collective agreement also states that before layoffs occur, management will normally offer retirement packages to the more senior union members. That could reduce the number of junior employees hit with layoff notices. As a result, there have been very few forced layoffs in CP/BN history.

How do I move around within the company?

I know you're just settling into your new job, but the sky's the limit at CP/BN. Whether it's a posting in another part of the country, or another part of the world, the collective agreement lays out how transfers take place – and who pays for them.

First of all, you can't be forced to move to another bureau. If you're interested in a change of scenery, let your boss know in writing. If a vacancy comes up in another bureau, you'll not only be given consideration for the job, you're guaranteed an interview.

And if you win the job, all reasonable expenses related to the transfer are picked up by the company. That could include



everything from commission fees for selling your home, to a trip to your new city to look for a house. It's all negotiable with your employer based on a moving policy.

What's the deal with overtime?

First of all, claim it! Any work you do beyond seven hours in a day is considered overtime. You are entitled to one and a half times your basic hourly rate if you work past the end of your scheduled shift.

If you don't claim overtime, you could be hurting more than yourself. There might be a staffing shortage or workload issue in your department, forcing everyone to put in extra time. But it would be next to impossible to convince management of that fact if there's no record of overtime in that department.

Remember, this is a collective agreement both parties signed. Management is obliged to follow the contract as much as you are.

You can take your overtime in either money or time off, which you can take at any time in consultation with your supervisor. You indicate your choice of cash or time when you fill out an overtime slip. However, if you've banked 105 hours (three weeks) of overtime in time-off credit, anything beyond that can be paid to you in cash.

Also, the moment you've logged 10 hours in a day, you're entitled to a meal allowance of \$9 – no receipt required!

DID YOU KNOW?
CP/BN has to send overtime reports to the guild twice a year. That's critical so the guild can see if there are any areas where there might be staffing issues or workload problems.

And technicians or installers get the \$9 meal allowance if they have to work through their lunch break. The only requirement is the work needs to take place more than 10 kilometres away from your office.

How do I claim overtime if I've been told overtime is a 'problem' or there's no money for overtime?

Contact your guild rep. Your supervisor is violating the collective agreement if he/she wants you to work for free.

What happens if I'm called in to work on my day off?

If you're called in to work on your first day off, you'll be compensated at one and a half times your hourly rate for a minimum of four hours. So, if your supervisor needs you to come in to check something and it takes only 15 minutes, you're still entitled to the full four hours of overtime.

If you're also called in on your second consecutive day off, CP/BN will pay you twice your basic hourly rate for a minimum of four hours.

If you're called in at the last minute to work on a holiday, that emergency call-in translates into a full day of pay at time and a half – even if you're only in for a couple of hours.

Also, if you're called back in to work after your shift is done, you will get paid a minimum of four hours of overtime pay. That's the case even if you're asked to come back for only an hour.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you're diagnosed with a repetitive strain injury, CP/BN will pay up to a maximum of \$1,000 a year for approved treatment not covered under your provincial or private health-insurance plan.

How much vacation time do I get?

Less than a year of service:

1.25 days for every month you work

1-4 years service: three weeks

5-11 years service: four weeks

12-23 years service: five weeks

24+ years service: six weeks

Do temps or part-time employees get vacation time?

You don't get the time, but you get the money.

You'll earn vacation pay at a rate of four per cent of your earnings on each paycheque. That equals two weeks if you work every day all year. That four per cent payment is tacked on to each paycheque.

If you're a part-time employee who worked more than 50 consecutive weeks (that works out to more than 1,750 hours) the previous year, you'll get six per cent on your paycheque. That works out to three weeks vacation.

And any temp who gains permanent employment will have all time worked to that point in the year credited toward their permanent vacation-time entitlement.

What is a shift premium?

We are not a 9-to-5 operation. News happens 24 hours a day and your subscribers expect updates as they happen. That means you'll likely be working some unpleasant shifts. It's not always an ideal situation, but you care about your job and you're willing to do it – for a price. That price comes in the way of extra money in your pocket whenever you have to put in some rough shifts.

A "shift differential" is paid when you have to work one of these shifts. Currently, you're paid an extra seven per cent of your basic daily rate of pay if you're required to be at work at least once during the week for a scheduled shift that has you on the clock anytime between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you're sick for at least five days while on vacation, those days revert to sick days if you can provide medical evidence to back up the fact you were sick.

You'll continue to receive the bonus even if you're off sick (up to three consecutive weeks) if you would otherwise have been entitled to the premium had you made it in to work. And if you received the bonus in at least 26 weeks in the year leading up to your vacation, you'll also get it while you're on holiday!

There's also something called an overnight premium. That's when you're at work between 4 a.m. and 6 a.m. in any given week. If that occurs, you're entitled to an overnight premium equal to eight per cent of your weekly salary for that week.

The two premiums mentioned above cannot be combined. You are entitled to one or the other but not both.

Do I get paid any extra if I work weekends?

Absolutely! If you work a weekend shift, you'll receive a premium of 6.5 per cent of your normal basic salary for that shift. Check the collective agreement to determine what is considered a weekend shift.

I've heard people talk about turnaround. What's that?

To ensure a proper balance between home life and work life, the collective agreement states you cannot normally be required to work within 12 hours of the end of a shift.

Here's an example of how turnaround works:

If you're scheduled to leave work on a Monday at 6 p.m., you cannot be scheduled to come back in before 6 a.m. on Tuesday.

And on a similar point, you cannot be scheduled to work a day shift, a night shift and an overnight shift all in the same week (Article 16.03). Further, your supervisor has agreed to try to schedule all the same types of shifts within a week.

How much extra do I get paid to work a holiday?

The news doesn't stop just because we might want it to. No one likes to work a holiday, but the fact remains that someone has to do it.

Recognizing that fact, if you have to work a holiday you'll be paid at 1.5 times your basic hourly rate for the shift.

If you're a part-time employee, you'll earn 2.5 times your hourly rate for a holiday shift.

Are Christmas and New Year's treated differently than other holidays?

Yes. The guild and CP/BN recognize these are two holidays where being at home with family is particularly important. But someone has to be at work.

So, if you're scheduled to work on Christmas Day you'll get double time and a half for the shift *plus* a day to be taken off at some other time agreed to by you and your supervisor.

Work a night shift on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve and you'll be paid double time and a half even though they aren't recognized holidays.

The collective agreement even allows you to take your birthday off. That's right! Once you pass your probation you're allowed *two* bonus days off you can take at any time. Just work it out with your supervisor first.

How can I get feedback and assistance to improve?

The guild and CP/BN management have agreed on a process for performance reviews. You get together once a year with your supervisor and talk about what happened in the past year, what you want to accomplish in the year ahead and long-term career goals.

It's a good opportunity for you to ask for the training you think you might need so you can do your job better. This process is meant to be a positive experience.

DID YOU KNOW?
CP/BN will pay half the cost of study courses that directly increase an employee's work qualifications. It just has to be worked out first with your supervisor.

DID YOU KNOW?
For French or English courses CP/BN will pay all the costs of tuition and text books as well as half your salary while on a full-time French or English immersion course.

What do I do if another worker is harassing or bullying me?

The guild and CP/BN won't tolerate sexual or discriminatory harassment in the workplace. If you feel you've been harassed, contact the guild.

The guild will guide you through the process. If you have been accused of harassment, the guild will also represent you.

When one guild member complains of being harassed (sexually or in other ways) by another member, the guild has obligations to protect the legitimate interests of both parties while the complaint is being investigated and beyond.

In a conflict between two members, the guild assigns two staff members, one to represent each side in the complaint as soon as it is filed with the office. All complaints

are referred to the guild's director of human rights and equity, who will ensure staff representatives provide the appropriate assistance to the members involved.

Full details of the guild's policies in dealing with member-to-member conflicts – including sexual and personal harassment – are available on the guild's website at www.cmg.ca under policies.

Does the union do any training?

Yes. The guild does a lot of training. For example, it is currently offering a course to equip you to defend not only your own workplace rights but the rights of your colleagues. The course is called Taking Care of Business. It's being offered in various locations across the country. It's open to all guild members. Details are on our website at www.cmg.ca/education.shtml.

Am I an intern at CP/BN?

As you know, CP/BN relies on student employees to supplement the main complement of full-time staff, especially during the summer and over the Christmas holiday period.

These students are sometimes informally referred to as interns. But they are really summer or Christmas temps, so don't be confused by the section in the collective agreement that deals with interns (Article 36).

That section doesn't apply to most students hired by CP/BN. Article 36 deals with students brought in as part of their university course. These students are not paid while at CP/BN.

Though you're only there to learn, interns do get a \$100 per week of internship at CP/BN.

In an emergency you might be asked to fill in on a particular shift due to a staff shortage. If that happens you must be paid the appropriate starting rate for that position.


The guild has clearly done a lot for me. What can I do to show my appreciation?

A union, like all successful organizations, is mostly the sum of its parts. The union isn't a third party; it is you and your colleagues joined in common voice and cause. Our union, the Canadian Media Guild, allows workers to address workplace issues – such as pay, hours of work, health and safety, pensions and benefits – together.

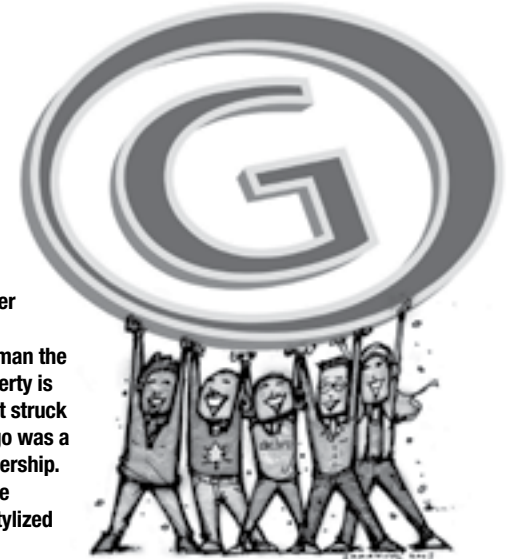
Get active! Think of the union as a health club. By only paying the dues to a gym, you won't improve your health or get into shape. You pay to get access to the equipment or tools needed to improve your health. But your health won't improve until you actually use the equipment.

To see results, you must play an active part in the process. In order to actually make a difference in your workplace *it must start with you*.

Talk to someone on your location executive about how you can help make the guild stronger.



DID YOU KNOW?
Since 2002 almost 600 guild members have enjoyed and benefited from guild labour-education courses such as Dispute Resolution and the Art of Negotiation.



The CMG logo was created by David Kaufman, a highly respected television producer and former member of the CMG executive from Toronto. It occurred to Kaufman the creation of intellectual property is what the guild is all about. It struck him that the “copyright” logo was a symbol of creation and ownership. With some artistic license he crafted the CMG ‘G’ into a stylized copyright symbol.

Getting to know the guild

Who is my union rep?

Your union rep could be sitting next to you right now. There are numerous people who work for CP/BN across the country who are committed to helping you get through the complexities of life here.

If you have a question or concern about something in your workplace, the first person you’ll want to contact is someone on your local executive.

Every bureau has a president, vice-president and one or two other elected members. They are there to help you, confidentially if need be. Remember... no question is a stupid question.

If you’re not sure who sits on your local executive, just ask someone. Or click over to this web site (<http://www.cmg.ca/CPBNbranchcontacts.asp>). It lists all the names and contact information for people who sit on local executives across the country.

CP/BN branch council

All the presidents from each location also sit on a national committee called the branch council. This committee looks at issues affecting CP/BN members across the country and makes key policy decisions that affect them. It establishes a budget for our various activities, such as meetings. The council also appoints members to various committees you may be interested in joining such as health and safety or staff benefits and pensions. The council also ensures a committee is in place to negotiate the collective agreement.

Aside from the local presidents who sit on the branch council, a president, vice-president and treasurer are elected every three years to guide the committee and handle the urgent day-to-day issues.

CMG National Executive Committee (NEC)

Finally, the CP/BN branch president and vice-president automatically sit on the Canadian Media Guild national executive. This committee addresses issues of importance to the union as a whole, taking into account concerns from all the workplaces in which the guild has a presence.

It consists of representatives from each guild branch. It also has several positions elected by all guild members (including director of new members, director of education, director of small branches, and director of human rights and equity).

Among other things, it is up to the NEC to:

- Develop national administrative policies and make sure they are followed.
- Maintain a national communications strategy to inform all union members of union activities.
- Approve a strike request from a branch before it is passed on for further approval and to approve all future arbitrations and legal action.
- Develop relationships with other unions and national and international labour organizations.

The NEC is chaired by a president who is the chief executive officer of the guild. The president is paid by the guild on a fulltime basis while holding office. For the latest contact information for the NEC, go to: <http://www.cmg.ca/nec.shtml>

CMG Staff

A strong paid support staff is also in place to help with any questions you might have. The guild maintains offices in Halifax, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Vancouver, as well as the national headquarters, which is centrally located in Toronto. Staff representatives across the country support the work of elected guild officials and volunteers.

Kathy Viner is the paid staff representative dedicated to CP/BN issues (Kathy@cmg.ca).

Kathy and her colleagues provide support on joint committees and assist with bargaining and contract compliance, as well as with issues such as pension and benefits.

Staff in the national office includes a membership co-ordinator, a travel co-ordinator who also arranges releases from work for union activities, a webmaster and a communications co-ordinator.

To get in touch with CMG staff, call the national office at 416-591-5333 or 1-800-465-4149. You can also check out the staff on the Internet at: <http://www.cmg.ca/staff.shtml>

How can I find out about union events?

There are bulletin boards in each location across the country exclusively for guild information. Check them periodically, and ask your local reps about activities when you have a chance to chat at the office.

The guild's website at www.cmg.ca is also updated regularly. Plus, once every two years the CMG holds a convention and members like you can become delegates and help set priorities for the guild.

How did the Canadian Media Guild end up being my union?

Being in the media biz, you're undoubtedly curious about how this whole relationship between the guild and CP/BN employees began. It's quite the story...

The guild has a long and proud history at CP/BN, where employees formed the first local of the Canadian Wire Service Guild in Canada back in 1949.

CBC news staff formed a second unit the next year and soon had a contract. But the newspaper publishers who still controlled CP were vehemently anti-union and refused to negotiate.

Through dismissals, normal turnover and the careful hiring of anti-union replacements, they managed to get the CP/BN arm of the union decertified in 1951.

It was a knockout punch that would take almost 25 years to shake off. It wasn't until 1975 that the guild finally convinced 65 per cent of CP/BN employees to sign cards. That was enough to bring the guild back into our workplace.

Even then, the publishers and CP management weren't willing to really bargain until a series of rotating strikes a year later convinced them their employees were serious.

The signing of that first contract in November 1976 fully reunited CP/BN employees with their CBC colleagues as the two main branches of the Canadian Wire Service Guild, now known as the Canadian Media Guild.

Since then, the guild has grown to represent several other media outlets and more than 6,000 employees from St. John's, N.L., to Victoria, B.C. We even represent media workers in remote Canadian locales such as Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet.