

coordinate
communicate
collaborate
community

ICI unionized construction: the way we work

Coordinate – bring the different elements into a relationship that will ensure efficiency and harmony

Communicate – the imparting of information or news

Collaborate – the action of working with someone to produce or create something

Community – a feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals

Reflections on 2022 ICI construction negotiations

The 2022-2025 ICI construction contract negotiations have reached the final stages of a somewhat protracted round when compared to past negotiations. While it is not uncommon to have a few trade stragglers, in the past most trades have negotiations wrapped up by the April 30th contract expiration date – or certainly shortly after.

Congratulation to all labour and management representatives who participated in the bargaining process. It can be a challenging job with little recognition, and often the pressures are not understood by those who have not been there.

Labour contract negotiations are often stressful and, with the number of tentative agreements reached by negotiation committees but not ratified by union membership, this round of bargaining seemed particularly challenging. It's tough on those bargaining on either side of the table, and led to some individuals vowing not to participate in future sessions.

When we look at traditional contract negotiations, we have labour representatives addressing the concerns of their members and management reps addressing the issues that will enable them to remain competitive. Ideally, both parties keep an eye on the big picture – the health of the unionized ICI industry at large.

If we pause to consider a basic definition of 'negotiations', they are described as *a discussion aimed at reaching an agreement*. It is important to ensure the agreement reached is in the long-term interests of both parties. Discussions were certainly had during this round, but what may have, at times, gotten lost is an understanding among unionized tradespeople that, for them to have sustainable employment in the unionized construction sector, unionized contractors must have the ability to secure work.

It's the very nature of negotiations to give and take, to understand the others' priorities and come to agreement in the interests of ensuring a secure future for contractors and their unionized employees. One labour representative jokingly said, "you give and we take" – a pointed reflection of outdated thinking that doesn't benefit the long term health of the ICI unionized industry, its contractors and unionized employees in any way.

2022 ICI contract negotiations: facts and figures

- Twenty-five (25) ICI trade collective agreements expire April 30, 2022
- Nine (9) tentative agreements reached by the individual trade's bargaining agencies reached but not ratified by union membership
- Five (5) trades with work stoppages
- Eleven (11) total weeks lost to work stoppages
- One (1) trade negotiating protocol with a no strike no lock-out provision
- One (1) trade negotiation that has gone to binding arbitration



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