

August 19, 2024

To: Ontario Delegates of the Bell Craft and BTS Bargaining Units

Re: Violation of the Tripartite Agreement between Bell Canada, Bell Technical Solutions, and Unifor

Sisters and Brothers,

Since December 2022, the Bell Craft and BTS bargaining committee members have been hearing from members and union representatives in various regions across Ontario that Bell Canada has been contracting out "advance fiber drop work," specifically aerial drop/line work from service terminals across roads to utility poles on customer property, or in some cases, directly from service terminals to customer homes. The bargaining committees believe this to be a violation of Articles 3a, 3b, 5a, 5b, and 5c of the "Tripartite Agreement between Bell Canada, Bell Technical Solutions, and Unifor."

The bargaining committees raised this issue with the employer, initially within BTS at the February "Labour Relations Committee" meeting in 2023. The employer's response at the April 2023 LRC meeting was that the practice was being stopped and that any "advance drop work" observed going forward should be reported to the employer to verify whether this work was "new work" or if it was the completion of existing contracts prior to the union raising a concern. The committee was assured that no new "advance drop work" would be performed by any workers who were not Bell Canada Craft or Bell Technical Solutions employees.

During this period, many members have come forward with examples of aerial fiber lines that had been "pre-dedicated" directly to either customers' premises or to utility poles on customers' property. In an example as recent as the week of July 15, 2024, our members photographed third-party contractors performing this work. Unfortunately, the members of either bargaining committee are not privy to the contracts that exist between BCE and any of the third-party contractors. Aside from one example of photographic evidence of third-party contractors physically performing this work, the examples, locations, and photographs of existing fiber lines are anecdotal. The proof of what we believe to be violations of this agreement would be in the contracts.

Article 5 of the "Tripartite Agreement" addresses the circumstances under which Bell Canada or BTS can resort to the use of contractors—mainly in situations where BTS is understaffed or

does not have the "capacity" to perform this work, when BTS members do not possess the skills required to perform the work, or when there is mutual agreement among all parties/signatories of the agreement. Throughout the period that these examples were raised to the bargaining committee and subsequently by the committee to the employer, junior part-time BTS employees have seen a reduction in hours in the same localities from which these reports originated. Regarding the question of skills required to perform this work, the installation and repair of aerial service lines is the most common job function performed by a BTS technician. Lastly, there is no agreement between the signatories of the agreement granting either Bell Canada or BTS permission to contract this work to third parties.

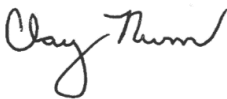
That being said, as per Article 14 of the Tripartite Agreement, "Any dispute pertaining to the interpretation or application of this Agreement shall be submitted to the Superior Court of Québec or the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario."

The committees feels that, due to the fact that Quebec and Ontario fall under separate jurisdictions and the issue stems from Ontario, we should obviously file a complaint with the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario.

The Committees and I would greatly appreciate your assistance in sharing this information with your members and further providing us with any evidence of the above violations.

If you have any information, dates, or evidence, please forward to Clayton.nunn@unifor.org.

In Solidarity,



Clayton Nunn
National Representative
Unifor

CN/kwcope343