



Climate Action in the Postal Sector



Greening of the Postal Sector

Postal services - public and private - are very significant producers of GHGs.

- In many countries the national postal service operates the single largest fleet of vehicles
- Has the largest number of retail facilities.
- In many countries, the postal unions play a significant role in determining work practices and equipment, and influencing public policy with respect to services.



The Survey

We Explored 5 Approaches to change:

1. Independent union initiatives that address greenhouse gas emission from union operations
2. How does the Union recognize the reality of climate change and educate their members?
3. What worker health and safety considerations are emerging as climate change impacts affect the work environment?
4. What collaborative Union – Management initiatives are underway that address the realities of climate change?
5. How has the legal framework of the Collective Agreement help push for climate action?

Independent Union Initiatives

Modelling change in their own operations, policies and procedures!

- **Energy Conservation has been addressed at 14 different union headquarters.**
- **Reducing emissions from the private automobile.**
- **Ver-di in Germany has both solar-thermal and photovoltaic installations.**

How does the Union recognize the reality of climate change and educate their members?

- Norway's postal union has a climate certificate
- The CWU in the UK has retrofitted their education centre using a sustainability lens.
- CUPW in Canada has adopted into their National Constitution a thorough set of Environmental Principles.

What worker health and safety considerations are emerging as climate change impacts affect the work environment?



- The FSP-UGT in Spain has upgraded uniforms to include high end weather protection gear.
- A letter of agreement between Royal Mail and the CWU in 2011 was crafted to outline severe weather protocol.
- NUDGS in the Himalayan Region has modified work hours to avoid extreme heat and cold.

What collaborative Union – Management initiatives are underway that address the realities of climate change?

- In Mauritius the GSEA (Government Service Employee Association) has participated in a broader process with the government that works toward a more sustainable society.
- In Spain there is a State Occupational Health Commission that works with union participation from each sector, postal workers included.



How has the legal framework of the Collective Agreement helped push for climate action?

- Bargaining for H&S changes connected to climate impacts has been very successful
 - 9 out of 28 unions had proposed changes to protective equipment and uniforms
- Bargaining for emissions reduction targets has been less successful
 - In Spain postal unions tried to bargain GHG reduction but didn't get through at the bargaining table, but language to favour the use of public transit did succeed.

Moving Forward

- For Philip Jennings, General Secretary of UNI Global Union,

“The Paris Agreement needs to be done with people, not without them. Workers and unions have a critical role to play to put our economies on a just transition towards a low carbon economy and that needs to be reflected in the core text. Inclusive growth starts with including workers into the agreement that will shape the future of our planet.”

Moving Forward

- CUPW will continue to try and bargain for strong language around carbon emissions:
 - Environmental Footprint: Protection of the environment is a joint responsibility of the Union and management. Postal services and postal operations should be conducted in a manner which promotes the protection of the environment.
 - A. examine measures to reduce GHGs
 - B. recycle all products sold or delivers
 - C. best practices of other postal admins, etc.

Moving Forward

- The Work in a Warming World (W3) research project has compiled a collection of “greening” clauses from Canadian collective agreements. W3 is sharing this information on our website to help unions who want to fight climate change by bringing environmental issues into their collective bargaining priorities.
- A green collective agreement project is using a similar survey to expand the database. Contact us at gcap@yorku.ca if you know of any collective agreements which have achieved greening clauses.