

MEDIA RELEASE

Contractors Pushing Ontario Unionized Pipefitters Towards the Picket Line

Collective bargaining impasse shows no signs of letting up

WHITBY, Ont. (May 15, 2019) — Barring a last-minute change of track by the Mechanical Contractors Association of Ontario (MCAO), unionized plumbers and steamfitters in the province are headed for a strike.

Talks thus far have not been progressive. Contractors are seeking significant changes to the hours a plumber or steamfitter works and long-established practices at hiring halls. To date, the contractors have refused to negotiate on these points, and unless something changes when talks with the Ontario Pipe Trades Council (OPTC) resume May 22nd, 12,000 Ontario plumbers and steamfitters are prepared to strike May 24th — which would be the first work stoppage in the sector in more than three decades.

“We’ve met with the contractors several times over the past two months and have found them to be quite unreasonable,” says Ross Tius, chairman of the OPTC bargaining committee. “They are refusing to move at all on their proposals, which, I must add, are big changes that would drastically impact our members not just on the work site, but also in their personal and family lives.”

The current work week allows the contractor the flexibility in scheduling work which also allows our members to schedule personal appointments and training classes without a loss of employment hours — it’s a benefit to both sides. Contractors have also proposed changing the fundamental nature of union hiring halls with a desire to bypass entirely the list of plumbers and steamfitters seeking work, a move that would undermine the nature and role of the unionized skilled trades.

“We have come to the table looking for meaningful dialogue and negotiation and they have taken the opposite approach – a hard stand – on basic items that would not work out,” says Mr. Tius. “If our contractors hold their present line of dialogue when we resume negotiation, they will be forcing the first strike by our trades in more than 30 years!”

For more information, please visit optc.org.

About the Ontario Pipe Trades Council

The Ontario Pipe Trades Council is the representative body for the skilled plumbing and mechanical professionals in Ontario. It is driven to promote the technical, commercial and environmental benefits of the pipe trades and maximize their use in the construction industry, while building interest in career opportunities in the plumbing, steamfitting, welding, sprinkler fitting, refrigeration and HVAC trades in the province of Ontario.

—30—

For more information, please contact

Jim Hogarth
Business Manager, Ontario Pipe Trades Council
Phone: 905-665-3500
Email: office@optc.org