

NEWSLETTER TO MEMBERS No 4- 4 FEBRUARY 2010

BLACK WATCH WORKERS

a) **Dispute – On-call Rosters – Minimum three hour payment for call-out**

A Dispute has recently arisen in the Southern Region relating to two unilateral decisions by management (at some level), to overturn longstanding and agreed arrangements.

1. **On-Call Rosters**
Management has unilaterally determined to introduce a new and oppressive on-call roster for Fire Safety Officers in Southern Region.
2. Management has unilaterally determined to stop making a 3 hour minimum payment for a call-out.

The Union has put into dispute both these determinations. Particularly as regards the 3 hour minimum payment, this payment was still being made at the time the Dispute arose – and in fact Fire Service is still making a minimum 3 hour payment in some Regions.

However, in other Regions, the Union was advised yesterday that the minimum 3 hour payment had just been stopped. One member had money deducted from wages in regard to a minimum 3 hour payment already made,

This action is a clear breach of the Peace Obligation as in the Collective Agreement.

Herewith is a letter sent to the Acting Chief Executive/National Commander regarding this matter.

b) **Part 4 – Working Party**

The Working Party arising out of the Collective Agreement settlement is presently being established.

As part of the Union's preparations for this exercise, a letter and questionnaire will shortly be forwarded to all Black Watch members seeking information that will assist Union Representatives on the Working Party.

N.Z.P.F.U.

4 February 2010

Bill Butzbach
Acting Chief Executive/National Commander
N.Z. Fire Service
P.O. Box 2133
WELLINGTON 6140

Dear Bill,

You will know the Union has invoked the Disputes Procedure in regard to:

- Fire Service management's attempts to impose an on-call roster on various Fire Safety Officers in the Southern Region;
- The stopping by the Fire Service of paying a minimum 3 hour payment for a call-out to Black Watch workers. Again this has arisen in the Southern Region.

Although the dispute has arisen in the Southern Region, as it relates to the Collective Agreement, it applies throughout the country.

Up until recently the Fire Service paid a minimum of 3 hours payment for a call-out to all workers covered by the Collective Agreement. However, Fire Service management (at some level) has determined that this minimum payment should not apply to Black Watch workers. However, in most Regions this 3 hour minimum payment still occurs.

The Union was notified yesterday that in Auckland Region, Fire Safety Officers have been advised this minimum payment is to be stopped and at least in one case, have had monies deducted from their pay so as to remove a 3 hour minimum payment already made.

The Disputes Procedure is quite specific on this matter – Clause 1.9(i) (Peace Obligation) requires inter alia, that the employer shall ensure the circumstances that prevailed in each Brigade prior to the matter being subject to the procedure shall be maintained until the dispute has been resolved.

It is absolutely clear that the circumstances that prevailed in Auckland were that a minimum 3 hour payment is the status quo.

The Union believes this is also the situation in most places throughout the country.

The Union therefore requires an assurance immediately that the Fire Service will honour the Peace Obligation in this matter until the Dispute is resolved - that is - where a 3 hour minimum payment was made prior to the Dispute arising, this will continue and workers who have had a deduction from wages, have this deduction reversed.

Yours sincerely,

DEREK BEST
SECRETARY