



chapter 9

Writing a collective agreement

1. Use plain language so that employees and managers can understand the provisions in the agreement.
2. Avoid ambiguous language that may create difficulties of interpretation later.
3. Use terms consistently throughout the agreement.
4. Use gender-neutral language.
5. Pay attention to the relationship between different articles, especially when renegotiating part of an agreement that may have implications for other provisions.
6. Remember that the agreement must respect legislation regarding employment standards and human rights. Collectively negotiated articles that do not conform to such legislation are unenforceable.
7. When an agreement is reached after the previous agreement has expired, be careful to specify which provisions of the new agreement are retroactive.
8. Structure the agreement in a logical way by putting all related articles together, and use headings, subheadings, a table of contents, and an index to allow workers and front-line managers to find their way around the document.
9. Put lengthy details in appendices, but remember to refer to them in the body of the agreement as being considered part of the agreement.

Source: Sack, J. and E. Poskanzer (1996) *Contract Clauses: Collective Agreement Language in Canada*, (3rd. Ed.) Toronto: Lancaster House.