

OPS FACT SHEET

Alternative Work Arrangements (AWAs) and Flexible Work

AMAPCEO's Collective Agreement and the OPS *Flexible Work Strategy* provide employees with the opportunity to request an Alternative Work Arrangement (AWA) or what some call a "flexible work arrangement." While managers in some areas may be reluctant to approve AWAs AMAPCEO has a good track record of securing AWAs for its members.

The Employer's *Flexible Work Strategy* defines a flexible work arrangement as "any work arrangement that differs from the organization's standard work schedule and/or location".

The most common types of flexible work include:

- Compressed work week (CWW);
- Telework (also referred to as Telecommute);
- Flex-time/staggered work hours;
- Job sharing;
- Regular part-time; and
- Pre-retirement part-time.

A copy of the strategy can be found on the OPS's HR Openweb, along with supporting material such as a *Flexible Work Guide* and an employee FAQ.

If you are interested in flexible work arrangements related to a disability accommodation or a graduated return to work, please see the "Workplace Accommodation Factsheet" available at amapceo.on.ca/OPS-workplace-accomodation. Your entitlements to disability accommodation are separate from the provisions outlined in this alternative work arrangement fact sheet.

AWA Definitions

Compressed Work Week (CWW)

A Compressed Work Week (CWW) allows you to work additional hours each day that accumulate to earn you a day off work. For example, on a three-week cycle CWW you would work an additional 31 minutes each day to earn a day off after 14 work days. CWWs usually occur on a three week schedule. Your earned day off will generally be taken the same day of the week each time (e.g. every third Friday).

Telework

Telework allows you to work from an alternate work site, usually your home or another OPS office location. Telework can significantly reduce your commute time.

Flexible Work Hours

Flexible work hours allow you to establish an alternative daily time to start and finish work. These alternative times can be consistent across the week or vary with different days of the week. Your total hours worked in each week would still equal the hours of a regular work week (or the hours of a compressed work week, if you also have a CWW agreement). A flexible work hours arrangement can help avoid commuting during peak rush hours, help with dependent-care needs, or simply provide a more leisurely morning.

Know Your Rights

- In addition to your Employer's own *Flexible Work Strategy*, Article 47 of your Collective Agreement recognizes the importance of AWAs. Article 47 says, "In considering any AWA, the manager will consider, in good faith, both the employee's request and the operational viability of the AWA for the work site."
- To deny your AWA request, your manager must demonstrate that your request is not operationally viable for the type of work that you perform. They must also consider the individual merits of your request and all relevant factors. Their decision must be made in good faith, without arbitrariness, and without discrimination on a prohibited ground (i.e. disability). Lastly, they must genuinely exercise their managerial discretion, as opposed to rigidly adhering to a blanket policy or practice.
- You are not limited to requesting one type of AWA. For example, you can request both a CWW and flexible work hours, or both a CWW and Telework.
- CWWs and Telework arrangements are agreed to for up to 12 months at a time, using a simple, standard template contained within your Collective Agreement - see the [Letter of Understanding re Alternate Work Arrangements](#) on page 158 of the [Collective Agreement](#).

- For consistency and to ensure fair treatment of all members, the Employer must use the CWW and Telework template agreements contained in the Collective Agreement. In addition, all CWW and a Telework agreements must be signed off formally by the AMAPCEO office. AMAPCEO sign-off is not needed for any other type of AWA.
- An AWA is usually negotiated between one employee and one manager. In some circumstances, it may be helpful to request your flexible work arrangement as a group of employees.

How to Request a Flexible Work Arrangement

- Start with an informal conversation with your manager about your desire to enter an alternative work arrangement. Consider providing your manager copies of the OPS *Flexible Work Strategy* and the guide documents or refer to these in your conversation. You can also refer to Article 47 of your Collective Agreement as well
- After you speak with your manager, make a formal request in writing using the request form on the AMAPCEO website (amapceo.ca/flexwork), or via an email to your manager.
- Make sure your manager provides you with a clear answer to your request within a reasonable time frame. Document your in-person and email conversations with your manager.
- If your manager doesn't reply within a reasonable time frame, or tries to avoid providing a clear answer, be persistent! If you need assistance, contact an AMAPCEO Workplace Representative. You can find a list at amapceo.ca/workplace-reps. A Workplace Representative can help you resolve the issue informally with your manager, and/or help you request a formal dispute that AMAPCEO would file against your manager.
- If your manager says “no” to your initial request, try speaking with them about potential modifications to your request that would make it workable. For example, if they are uncomfortable with a two-week CWW, perhaps a three-week cycle would work? If your manager refuses to provide you with a satisfactory rationale for declining your request, or refuses to speak to you about what type of AWA would be acceptable, contact an AMAPCEO Workplace Representative for advice
- Once your manager has agreed to a CWW or Telework, the final agreement, will need to be formally signed off by AMAPCEO.
- Remember, there is no rule against requesting and securing more than one type of AWA!

More Information or Assistance

If you have any questions or you need assistance, please contact a Workplace Representative. A complete list of Workplace Representatives can be found on the AMAPCEO Website at amapceo.on.ca. Keep in mind that you are not restricted to a Workplace Representative in your ministry.