



Labor Relations Best Practices

FROM THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

April 16, 2024

Suggested Timeline to Prepare for Contract Negotiations

The following guide is provided to assist Chapters in negotiations and meeting contractual deadlines as well as best practices when working within your management negotiations committee and NECA Chapter membership. This guide was developed in partnership with the NECA Field Services team.

All dates are measured back from the date of contract expiration.

150 Days

Schedule and conduct preliminary strategy and planning meeting with all management representatives.

- a) Review the current contract and identify contract language provisions to be addressed in negotiations, including any items that gave rise to grievances.
- b) Prioritize items and develop specific contract language proposals to solve the identified issues.
- c) Formulate preliminary strategy for economic issues and objectives.
- d) Connect with other trade associations to determine craft settlements and conditions.
- e) Review NLMCC market share, labor hour reports, determine trends and build applicable data resources.
- f) Consider holding the NECA Collaborative Bargaining seminar for management negotiation team with your Region's field representative(s). This can be held earlier than 150 days from expiration.
- g) Meet with your NECA Field Representative to discuss negotiation strategy, macro industry topics, and begin regularly communicating with them through the process.

120 Days

Prepare and circulate draft management contract proposals for review and revision within management negotiating committee representatives.

- a) Establish a deadline for revisions to be submitted.
- b) Review all proposed revisions and finalize contract proposals.
- c) Establish roles for members of the management negotiating team utilizing areas of expertise and influence.

- d) Begin to draft your CIR brief to prevent doing so in haste at the last minute. This is not with intention to go to CIR but be better prepared should a local settlement not be reached. This should be updated as negotiations continue.

90 Days

Deadline for either party to provide written notification of desire to change the agreement.

- a) An initial date for the initial negotiations' session should be set with the Union. Additional dates, times, and an agreed upon location should also be finalized. Consider a neutral location for meeting.
- b) Initial proposals should be finalized and ready for distribution to the Union no later than at the first negotiations meeting.
- c) Management should establish specific limits of authority for the negotiating team on key economic parameters and contract language provisions prior to the first session but remain flexible to modifying positions as negotiations proceed.
- d) Prepare proposed ground rules for negotiations. Refer to the NECA Best Practices on Ground Rules document for examples.

60 Days

Hold a dedicated progress meeting with the management negotiating committee to refocus, formulate strategy based on information available, and reaffirm negotiation objectives.

45 Days

Ensure you have scheduled and/or held enough negotiation meetings to potentially conclude the process without the need for a last minute "marathon" negotiation if avoidable.

- a) Plan to utilize CIR if necessary. The request for submission forms must be filed for by the 20th of the month preceding the CIR session.
- b) Work with your NECA Field Representative to schedule an Interim meeting after CIR as been filed for. This can be cancelled if the parties reach an agreement.
- c) Schedule ratification meetings (if required).

30 Days

Conduct a final briefing and strategy session to amend strategy as necessary to make final efforts to reach a settlement or prepare for impasse and next steps beyond that period.

Negotiation Conclusions

Schedule a follow-up meeting with the Union negotiating committee after negotiations, be it a local settlement or binding arbitration.

- a) Sign the final minutes if a local settlement was reached before leaving the final meeting.
- b) Establish who will type the agreement changes and how that will be shared.
- c) Notify all signatory contractors of the settlement, agreement modifications, and financial matters after ratification occurs.
- d) Notify your NECA Field Representative of the settlement terms, term, dollar amounts, percentages, and notable agreement modifications.
- e) Establish who will post the prevailing wage information with the state and national wage and hour departments and follow-up that it is done properly.
- f) Send copies of the signed agreement to your NECA Field Representative, NECA Labor Relations department in alignment with the current agreement review procedures, and all signatory employers.
- g) Update the wage information on the NECA Wage and Agreement database.

Not every timeline will align perfectly for each contract cycle, and each negotiation will have its own nuances that dictate actions by the committee. However, as stated before there are contractual obligations that must be adhered to. This Negotiations Timeline best practice document is a living document and suggestions for additional considerations from NECA Chapter staff or NECA Region offices can be submitted via email to LR@necanet.org

This material is for informational purposes only. The material is general and is not intended to be legal advice. It should not be relied upon or used without consulting a lawyer to consider your specific circumstances, possible changes to applicable laws, applicable CBAs, prime contracts, subcontracts, rules and regulations and other legal issues. Receipt of this material does not establish an attorney-client relationship.