

# Bell Workforce Reduction Continues Pattern of Manitoba Job Losses

*Latest Bell workforce reductions add to the years-long decline in local telecommunications jobs.*

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Bell Canada's latest workforce

reduction initiative has resulted in the

loss of 19 unionized telecommunications jobs represented by TEAM-IFPTE Local 161 in Manitoba. Seven employees chose to leave voluntarily through a departure program under the collective agreement, while 12 TEAM members were laid off.



The reductions also affected employees represented by two other Manitoba unions at Bell, reflecting a broader pattern of workforce reductions that has steadily reduced the province's skilled telecommunications workforce.

"This is another disappointing loss of skilled telecommunications jobs in Manitoba," said Dave Eyjolfson, President of TEAM-IFPTE Local 161. "While the voluntary departure program reduced the number of involuntary layoffs, we're continuing to see the erosion of good Canadian telecommunications jobs that are essential to our province's economy and digital infrastructure."

Since Bell's acquisition of Manitoba Telecom Services (MTS) in 2017, TEAM's bargaining unit has declined from approximately 900 members to about 350 today, reflecting years of workforce reductions and attrition.

TEAM is currently reviewing the implementation of the current workforce reduction initiative to determine whether there are grounds to challenge the layoffs.

"We owe it to our members to carefully review how this process was carried out and ensure the employer has met its obligations under the collective agreement," said Eyjolfson.

Beyond responding to the immediate workforce reduction, TEAM continues to advocate for stronger protections for Canadian telecommunications jobs. Earlier this year, TEAM submitted a

resolution to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) calling for stronger federal action to protect domestic telecommunications employment. The resolution was incorporated into the CLC's adopted Industrial Policy composite resolution.

More recently, TEAM worked through its parent union, the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), to raise concerns with the federal government regarding the continued loss of Canadian telecommunications jobs.

Recent telecommunications outages in Manitoba, including disruptions affecting 911 service and other critical public services, have highlighted the essential role that telecommunications networks play in keeping communities connected. While those incidents were attributed to other causes, TEAM says they reinforce the importance of maintaining a skilled local workforce to support and restore those networks when problems occur.

"These layoffs are part of a much larger trend," added Eyjolfson. "Telecommunications is critical infrastructure. Every time Manitoba loses experienced telecommunications workers, we lose knowledge, expertise, and capacity that cannot be easily replaced. Protecting the skilled workforce that builds, maintains, and restores these networks should be a national priority."

#### About TEAM

TEAM is Local 161 of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE). TEAM represents Manitobans employed by Bell Canada in professional occupations across a variety of fields, including information technology, network engineering, sales, marketing, business administration, and finance.

SOURCE: TEAM-IFPTE Local 161

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