



MetroTransit

BULLETIN

Updated February 2, 2012



HRM's Contract Negotiations with ATU

HRM's contract with ATU Local 508, comprised of transit workers including Bus Operators, Ferry Crews, Fleet Mechanics, and others, expired on August 31, 2011. Negotiations have been ongoing since September 2011. A Conciliator was appointed in October 2011, however, an impasse was officially declared January 18, 2012, by the Minister of Labour after a report was filed by the Conciliator.

If a work stoppage happens, when will it begin?

ATU Local 508's membership voted on January 22 to reject HRM's contract offer, which constitutes a vote to strike. The HRM Bargaining Team, the Union and the Conciliator resumed negotiations January 29, 30, 31 and February 1, as HRM's objective remains to get a timely agreement on a contract deal that will mean an efficient, reliable transit system for its customers and HRM citizens. The earliest date that a work stoppage could legally occur is today, February 2, at 12:01 a.m.

At this time HRM can confirm that ATU Local 508 members have initiated a work stoppage effective 1:35 a.m. today.

If a work stoppage happens, how long will it last?

Unfortunately this is not a question we can answer at present.

What is the remaining issue(s) preventing an agreement from being reached?

Following the membership vote on January 22, ATU was clear that they did not want changes to their existing agreement with the city with respect to HRM having the ability to contract out and hire part-time transit operators. Therefore, HRM removed those items from their new proposal to the union on Monday, January 30.

The remaining issue for both sides relates to changes in how bus operators are scheduled, otherwise referred to as 'rostering.'

Rostering is a scheduling best practice in the transit industry which continues to respect operator seniority while creating better working conditions for more junior operators.

HRM proposes to limit shift picks to one-week blocks, rather than the current one day at a time, "cafeteria style" pick process in effect for three months at a time.

The proposed week-long blocks to be selected by Operators would also be in effect for three months until the next shift pick period.

ATU Local 508's position is that they wish to maintain a "cafeteria style" pick system, meaning Operators would continue to choose each shift they will work during each week of the three month cycle.

HRM has communicated to the Union that this issue is a deal breaker.

Will bus or ferry service continue during a work stoppage?

Without our unionized employees, we do not have the resources to provide adequate service to the public on the fixed route bus and ferry services, community transit, MetroX, MetroLink, and Access-A-Bus (AAB). All of these services have now ceased operation until further notice.

What about dialysis patients that use Access-A-Bus (AAB)?

A contingency plan has been prepared for both ambulatory and non-ambulatory dialysis patients to continue to have their transportation needs met during a strike.

Customers with dialysis appointments today, February 2, were contacted directly by AAB management staff to provide confirmation of their new travel arrangements to ensure that their dialysis treatments are not disrupted.

Further communication will be forthcoming to any remaining AAB clients with dialysis appointments pending the duration of the strike.

If I just purchased a bus pass, will I get my money back if a work stoppage begins?

Metro Transit will provide information on how any unused portions of a bus pass will be honoured after the work stoppage occurs. It is impossible to determine this in advance without knowing its duration. Further information on how to claim a refund or extend disrupted use of a monthly pass will be communicated to customers via:

- » halifax.ca/metrotransit
- » [@hfxtransit on Twitter](#)
- » **Transit Retail Outlets**
- » **490-4000**

What if I have a UPass?

There are provisions in each UPass agreement that outlines how universities will be reimbursed for any unused portions of UPasses during a work stoppage. It is impossible to determine this in advance without knowing how long it might last.

Further information on how to make up for loss of service on a UPass will be provided through the participating UPass universities to their students [following the conclusion of the work stoppage.](#)

What travel alternatives are available during the work stoppage?

We recognize that our customers rely on us for daily travel to and from work/school. Carpooling is one alternative for travellers. The following Transit Park & Ride lots will be FREE for customer carpool parking in the event of a work stoppage:

Dartmouth

- » Maybank Field - Mic Mac Blvd
- » Portland Hills Terminal
- » Woodside Ferry Terminal

Halifax

- » Mumford Terminal (Near Walmart/ Tim Horton's)
- » Centennial Arena – Lacewood Dr
- » Exhibition Park
- » South Centre Mall – Spryfield

Sackville/Tantallon

- » Downsview Terminal
- » Cobequid Terminal
- » Sackville Terminal
- » Hubley Centre



HRM's Smart Trip ride matching program is another option for customers to consider.

Visit www.hrsmarttrip.ca for details on how to sign up as a driver or passenger.

Alternative Travel Options

In addition to the HRM options described above, several websites, bulletin boards, and social media groups have been established online to connect riders and drivers travelling to and from the same locations. We encourage customers to also check with neighbours, family and friends for connections to carpools or other ride matching options for the duration of the work stoppage.

Where can I get more information?

Local media outlets (newspapers, TV, radio, online news) will provide a lot of coverage during the work stoppage. We caution customers that sometimes the full views of either or both sides in the dispute are not always conveyed through the media.

Official sources of information for customers related to the work stoppage include:

- » **halifax.ca/metrotransit**
- » **[@hfxtransit](https://twitter.com/hfxtransit) on Twitter**
- » **490-4000**