

## Lesson 4: Leaving a Job

### Fort Saskatchewan losing 170 jobs (9:40 a.m.) edmontonjournal.com

Published: Thursday, August 31, 2006

EDMONTON — Dow Chemical Canada will shut down two of seven plants at its Fort Saskatchewan complex east of Edmonton by the end of October at a cost of about 170 jobs, including 100 company employees and 70 contractors.

The five surviving Alberta plants—and nearly 900 jobs including more than 500 employees and 350 contractors—will keep going for years to come, the company predicted Thursday in announcing the cuts.

But in Ontario all Dow production at Sarnia will shut down by the end of 2008, ending the jobs of 340 employees and 40 contract workers.

Age and international competition led to the Fort Saskatchewan plant closures. The two dying plants were 27 years old, exported all their output to Asia and needed overhauls that were too costly to make in the teeth of stiff competition from newer plants overseas,

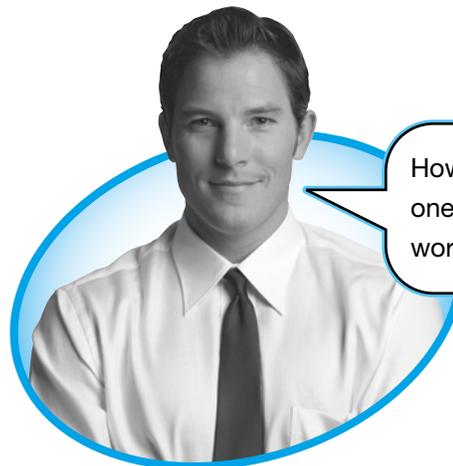
Dow said.

The Ontario site is shutting down because all its supplies of a critical raw material from Alberta, ethylene, will be cut off in mid-September, Dow Canada president Jeff Johnston said in an interview.

Ethylene deliveries will halt on the Cochin Pipeline from Edmonton to Sarnia, he said. The 30-year-old Cochin system's owner, BP Energy Canada, said a safety issue prompted the action, Johnston added.

Dow will try to find new roles and locations for employees affected by the closures, company public affairs officer Shannon Gregg said. Retirement and severance packages will also be available, she added.

Staff of the Fort Saskatchewan plants are highly skilled and may turn out to be in high demand in Alberta's surging energy industry, Gregg said.



How would you react if you were one of the Fort Saskatchewan workers losing his or her job?

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<<http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/story.html?id=f269fbdf-09dd-4096-98f0-dc44c812e18c&k=0>>

## Leaving a Job

Losing or leaving jobs and moving on to others is the norm in today's work world. It used to be common that a person began a job right out of school and remained with that company until retirement. While that still happens, most workers today change jobs at one time or another, and frequently, many even change occupations. As well, many jobs themselves change over time, requiring new skills and making new demands on their workers. When jobs change, workers may leave them or they may learn new skills to deal with the changes.

Employees leave jobs for the following reasons:

- to accept a promotion to another level within the same company
- to transfer from one job to another within the same company
- to go to a new job with another business
- to move to a new place
- to do other things such as parent children or return to school for more training or education

A person may become unemployed because a company is downsizing or changing its focus. Sometimes a job is just not the right fit. Perhaps the employee took the job because that was all that was available at the time; it might not have been a job that the person was really interested in, or it might have been one that did not make use of the skills or training of the employee. Sometimes, for whatever reason, the employee is stressed and unhappy in the job. Leaving the job may be the best, healthiest solution.

Every change requires adjustment. Changes can be

- anticipated
- threatening
- unexpected and uncontrollable
- a source of shock and dismay
- dreaded
- welcomed
- expected and planned
- easy to accept
- surprising

Giving notice means notifying an employer of your decision to leave a job. Usually, the length of time required for notice is two weeks. This gives your employer time to find someone to fill the position. Because regulations vary, it is important to check current federal or provincial labour regulations.

## Losing a Job



An employee may be laid off, which means leaving a job because the company's needs have changed and the job is no longer required. Usually, employees with the least amount of time with the company are laid off first.

When an employee is laid off, the company is required to issue a Record of Employment to that employee. This document indicates the last date of work and the reason for leaving. This

information is needed if the employee applies for Employment Insurance. (There is a requirement for a certain number of weeks of unemployment before Employment Insurance premiums will be paid).

Losing a job includes being fired. Firing an employee with just cause requires the employee to have been at fault in some way. Reasons for just cause include not following company regulations or being dishonest. A person can also be fired without just cause; in this case **severance pay** may be given. If no severance is paid, then it may be a case of wrongful dismissal. An employee may wish to seek legal advice in this situation.

*severance pay: additional money given as a form of compensation to employees who are laid off from a job*

An employee who is being fired should be told the reasons. Sometimes, the reasons are very clear. If the reasons are not explained, the employee should ask for an explanation.

Being fired is unpleasant, to say the least. Probably the only good thing that can come out of it is that the fired worker can learn from it and not repeat the same mistakes. If the firing has been made without just cause, then the worker should seek recourse.



A person often goes through many different career or occupational experiences in a lifetime. Do you know someone in your community who has switched jobs or changed careers?

1. Identify someone from your family or community who has experienced changes such as the following:

- changing a job, but remaining in the same occupation
- changing from one occupation to another

Ask this person to share his or her experiences and any decision-making strategies used in deciding to make the change.

**Compare your answer with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.**



View Segment 24: Workplace Changes on your Student Support CD for more information about changes in the workplace that can happen because of economic conditions, family situations, health problems, or seasonal work.

## Dealing with Unemployment

Many people end up unemployed at some point in their lives. When someone wants a job and does not have one, that person has to cope with unemployment which is, of course, an incredibly stressful situation.

The first step in dealing with being unemployed is to cope with all the emotions and behaviours of grieving about having lost a job. Not only is there a loss of income, there is also the loss of contacts with co-workers who are friends and who remain on the job. There is also the loss of a daily routine and sense of pride and accomplishment when succeeding on the job. While dealing with feelings of loss, it is important to set out to find new employment. Sometimes it is necessary to take some of the following steps toward that goal.

- Establish a routine. It may be tempting to lie around and do nothing but feel sorry for oneself, but it is important to fill the day and re-establish a routine that has most likely been lost with the loss of the regular job. It is important to continue to think of oneself as a person with a purpose. This means setting an alarm, getting up, getting dressed, and having things planned so that there are things to do. Something related to searching for a new job must be done every day.
- Make contacts. If losing the daily contacts with co-workers means losing the opportunity to spend time with people, then the unemployed person needs to create a wider circle of contacts. This is important for two reasons. First, a network of contacts is an important part of the process of searching for a job. Secondly, friends are an important source of emotional support when needed. There are also other sources of support—a group of other unemployed individuals who are job searching, or other groups and resources in the community.

- Start the job search immediately. Putting off a job search does not make it any easier and, in fact, can lead to some loss of personal confidence, which makes the search even more difficult. The job search process is basically the same as the process that took a person to the job that was just lost. The advantage is that the person has more experience and more on the résumé.

- Volunteer. For many reasons, volunteering is good for someone who is unemployed. There are likely to be new people met and new contacts made. Skills can be learned or kept up-to-date.

- Learn new skills. It may well be necessary to learn new skills, perhaps by volunteering or taking a course. Complete retraining in a new field may be necessary. A recently unemployed person must look carefully and as objectively as possible at the reasons for the unemployment.

- Build some personal, low-cost activities into each day. Being unemployed can be a depressing time. It is important to have balance in life, even when unemployed. Enjoyable leisure time, including physical activities, can help even out emotionally difficult times.

- If necessary, claim employment insurance benefits while searching for a job.



You can learn about Employment Insurance at the Government of Canada website:

**<http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/ei/menu/eihome.shtml>**

The following website also answers many questions about unemployment and Employment Insurance

**<http://worksearch.gc.ca>**

2. Dealing with the loss of a job or a change in jobs requires the same skills and attitudes that you have learned to apply to the process of getting a job and keeping a job. What are some of the skills that you have that would be most useful in dealing with a situation in which you might lose or change a job?

**Compare your answer with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.**

<sup>1</sup> Judith Campbell, *Lifechoices: Careers Teacher Resource* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Ginn Canada, 1999), 151–152. Reprinted with permission by Pearson Canada.

Go to page 20 of Assignment Booklet 3B and respond to question 5 of Section 4.

## Looking Back; Looking Ahead

This lesson dealt with the issues of job loss and unemployment. Hopefully the strategies you were given for coping with such issues will prove useful should you find yourself in these situations.

## Glossary

**severance pay:** additional money given as a form of compensation to employees who are laid off from a job

**stereotyping:** placing an inaccurate label on someone because of his or her membership in a particular group

## Suggested Answers

1. Responses will depend upon the individual identified and his or her reasons for changing jobs or occupations. Was the person's experience positive or negative?
2. Your list of skills and attitudes that can be applied in situations in which jobs are lost or changed will vary. Following are possibilities:
  - applying time-management skills to establish productive routines
  - applying goal-setting and problem-solving strategies
  - maintaining contacts through using your personal network
  - asking for support
  - staying motivated and being persistent
  - staying positive
  - maintaining a belief in your abilities

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