



Compensation and Working Conditions Online

Profiles of Significant Collective Bargaining Disputes of 2010

by [Elizabeth A. Ashack](#)
Bureau of Labor Statistics

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The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) compiles data on work stoppages--strikes or lockouts--involving 1,000 or more workers and lasting at least one full shift. These data have been published uninterrupted since 1947, with monthly data available since 1993. This article presents the most recent labor statistics available on major work stoppages and discusses the collective bargaining issues surrounding three significant work stoppages that occurred in the United States in 2010.

Mid-America Regional Bargaining Association bargaining with Laborers International Union of North America District Council of Chicago, the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150, and the Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters; Location: Chicago Area, Illinois

A nearly 3-week work stoppage that began on July 1, 2010, and ended on July 19, 2010, brought hundreds of construction projects to a standstill in the Chicago area. Fifteen-thousand members of the Laborers International Union of North America District Council of Chicago (LIUNA), the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150 (IUOE), and the Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters walked off the job, accumulating 180,000 days of idleness over the course of the strike, making it the largest work stoppage in the United States in 2010 in terms of lost work days and the number of employees involved.¹

Members of the laborers union and operating engineers had been working without a contract since May 31, 2010,² and wanted a 15.9-percent wage increase³ over 3 years to offset the rising cost of health care. The Mid-America Regional Bargaining Association, which represents the construction companies, offered a 3.25-percent hike over 3 years.⁴ "Union representatives said their only option was to hit the picket lines. 'They forced our hand,' said Ed Maher, spokesman for the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150 to the Chicago Tribune. 'We're simply not going to get jerked around when we're worried about maintaining health care for more than 23,000 members'."⁵

The work stoppage came to an end the night of July 19, 2010, after 9 hours of bargaining.⁶ Negotiations resulted in an agreement that gave union workers a 9.75-percent increase in wages and benefits over the next 3 years. "We went into negotiations looking to cover the cost to maintain health care. What we came out of negotiations with was an agreement that will allow us to do that," said Maher.

The Allina Health System/United Hospital, Children's Hospitals and Clinics, Fairview Health Services, HealthEast Care System, Mercy Hospital, North Memorial Hospital, Park Nicollete Methodist Hospital, and other hospitals bargaining with the Minnesota Nurses Association; Location: Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota

The National Nurses United (NNU) union was formed in late 2009, when the California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee, United American Nurses, and Massachusetts Nurses Association merged.⁷ NNU now claims 155,000 members--which makes it the largest nurses' union in the country.⁸ NNU has tapped into concerns of registered nurses worried about losing jobs at a time when hospitals and health care organizations are under enormous pressure to cut costs. NNU helped organize strikes or threatened them at hospitals in California, Pennsylvania, Maine, Michigan, and Minnesota during 2010.⁹ NNU's biggest work stoppage took place on June 10, 2010, in Minneapolis-St. Paul, when 12,000 nurses in the Minnesota Nurses Association, from 14 area hospitals, staged a 1-day work stoppage, accumulating 12,000 days of idleness.¹⁰

Key issues in the collective bargaining contract impasse included the hospitals' desire to cut contributions to the nurses' pension fund by a third, and nurses' demand to improve patient-staffing ratios--a signature issue for the NNU.¹¹ Nurses have complained for two decades that there are not enough nurses in hospitals to provide high-quality care.¹² Studies show a correlation between higher levels of nurse staffing and better patient outcomes, but there are no national standards for specific ratios. Only the State of California mandated nurse-patient ratios back in 2004.

Talks broke off June 4, 2010, after Federal mediators failed to broker a deal.¹³ A longer strike in July was averted with a last-minute 3-year contract that preserved pension and health benefits but failed to meet the union's demands for strict nurse-patient ratios. Instead, the hospitals agreed to examine staffing in existing committee systems; the union is pushing for legislation to set ratios.¹⁴ Additionally, the nurses agreed not to go out on strike over the term of the new 3-year contract. The new contract went into effect upon ratification and remains in place until May 31, 2013, with the nurses receiving a 3-percent pay raise over 3 years.¹⁵

New York Shipping Association and the International Longshoremen's Association; Location: New York City Area, New Jersey and New York

Dockworkers shut down the Port of New York and New Jersey container facilities September 28 and 29, 2010, as thousands of longshore workers refused to cross informational picket lines set up by protesting Philadelphia-area dockworkers regarding the labor dispute at their home port of Camden, New Jersey.¹⁶ The two-day Port of New York and New Jersey wildcat work stoppage involved an estimated 4,500 members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), accruing a total of 9,000 days of idleness.¹⁷

The picket lines were set up by a Philadelphia-based ILA local 1291, 200 of whose members stand to lose their jobs when Florida-based Fresh Del Monte Produce Inc. moves its business from the Port of Camden to a port in Gloucester City, New Jersey--a port that employs non-ILA workers at lower wages.¹⁸ The ILA members protested the company's decision to take its business to the Gloucester City Marine Terminal, even though the union met Del Monte's demand for \$5 million in wage cuts and other labor-cost savings.¹⁹ Earlier in September, the ILA launched a boycott of Del Monte products, and later in that month the union asked AFL-CIO officials to initiate a nationwide boycott of the company's products by all AFL-CIO members.

The dockworkers agreed to return to work the evening of September 29, 2010, just as their employers were preparing to ask a Federal judge to order the ILA to pay \$1 million per day in penalties.²⁰ Port employers had argued that the longshore workers refusal to work was illegal because their collective bargaining agreement contained a no-strike clause. Indeed, a strike had not shut down the ports around New York City since 1977, said James Devine, the president and chief executive of Global Container Terminals USA, which operates container ports on Staten Island and in Bayonne, New Jersey. On the first day of the strike, it is estimated that ILA-represented dockworkers at the Port of New York and New Jersey idled 12 ships at a cost of \$50,000 each per day, said New York Shipping Association (NYSA) spokeswoman Beverly Fedorko, whose association manages the port.²¹ Labor and industry officials said it was difficult to calculate the total cost of the work stoppage, although it is bound to be significant in terms of lost revenues and wages.

Table 1. Major Work Stoppages of 2010

Organizations involved, location, and sector	Industry code ⁽¹⁾	Beginning date	Ending date	Number of lost work days ⁽²⁾	Number of workers ⁽³⁾	Days idle ⁽⁴⁾
Temple University Hospital, Philadelphia, PA, Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses & Allied Professionals (State Government)	622110	3-31-10	4-28-10	21	1,500	31,500
North Penn School District, Montgomery County, PA, North Penn Education Association (Local Government)	611110	4-19-10	4-26-10	6	1,100	6,600
Capistrano Unified School District, San Juan Capistrano area, CA, Capistrano Unified Educators Association (Local Government)	611110	4-22-10	4-26-10	3	1,800	5,400
Oakland Unified School District, Oakland, CA, Oakland Education Association (Local Government)	611110	4-29-10	4-29-10	1	2,500	2,500
The Boeing Company, Long Beach, CA, United Auto Workers Local 148 (Private Industry)	336411	5-11-10	6-4-10	18	1,700	30,600

Footnotes:

(1) Industry codes are from the 2007 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

(2) The duration of the strike, based on a 5-day work week (Monday through Friday) excluding Federal holidays.

(3) The BLS rounds figures to the nearest 100. Companies and unions may have rounded the figures before providing BLS the data.

(4) The days of idleness calculation shows the cumulative impact of lost workdays. It is computed by multiplying the number of workers idled during the period by the number of work days lost, based on a 5-day work week (Monday through Friday) excluding Federal holidays.

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Allina Health System/United Hospital, Children's Hospitals and Clinics, Fairview Health Services, HealthEast Care System, Mercy Hospital, North Memorial Hospital, Park Nicollete Methodist Hospital, Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN, Minnesota Nurses Association (Private Industry)	622110	6-10-10	6-10-10	1	12,000	12,000
Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors Association of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI, Sheet Metal Workers' International Association Local 18 (Private Industry)	238220	6-14-10	6-25-10	10	1,800	18,000
Mid-America Regional Bargaining Association, Chicago area, IL, Laborers International Union of North America District Council of Chicago, International Union of Operating Engineers, Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters (Private Industry)	237310	7-1-10	7-19-10	12	15,000	180,000
New York Shipping Association, New York City area, NJ, NY, International Longshoremens Association (Private Industry)	488310	9-28-10	9-29-10	2	4,500	9,000
Hilton Hotels Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa, Honolulu, HI, UNITE HERE Local 5 (Private Industry)	721110	10-14-10	10-18-10	3	1,500	4,500
HCA Corporation, Riverside Community Hospital and West Hills Hospital and Medical Center, Riverside and West Hills, CA, Service Employees International Union Local 121RN (Private Industry)	622110	12-23-10	12-28-10	2	1,100	2,200

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(1) Industry codes are from the 2007 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

(2) The duration of the strike, based on a 5-day work week (Monday through Friday) excluding Federal holidays.

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Sources of Information

Data from the BLS [Work Stoppages Program](#) are obtained from public sources--for example, reports from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), State Labor offices, BLS [Current Employment Statistics \(CES\)](#) Strike Reports,²² the Internet, and media sources. One or both parties involved in the work stoppage (employer or the union) are contacted to verify the duration and number of workers idled in the stoppage. For current data tables and additional information, see the [Work Stoppages Program](#) page on the BLS Web site, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/wsp>.

Elizabeth A. Ashack

Economist, Division of Compensation Data Analysis and Planning, Office of Compensation and Working Conditions, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Telephone: (202) 691-5178; E-mail: Ashack.Elizabeth@bls.gov.

Notes

¹ The *days of idleness* calculation shows the cumulative impact of lost workdays. It is computed by multiplying the number of workers idled during the period by the number of workdays lost, based on a 5-day work week (Monday through Friday), excluding Federal holidays. For more information, see the BLS [Work Stoppages Program](#) monthly [report](#), July 2010, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/wsp/ws072010.htm>.

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- [3](#) Duaa Eldeib and Jon Hilkevitch, "[2nd union's OK expected in construction strike tentative deal](#)," *Chicago Breaking News Center* (online), July 20, 2010, on the Internet at [http://chicagobreakingnews.com/2010/07/2nd-unions-ok-expected-in-construction-strike-tentative-deal.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%](http://chicagobreakingnews.com/2010/07/2nd-unions-ok-expected-in-construction-strike-tentative-deal.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%20) (accessed February 15, 2011).
- [4](#) Jenel Nels, "[Striking Unions, Contractors Still at Odds](#)," *NBC Chicago.Com*, July 7, 2010, on the Internet at <http://www.nbcchicago.com/news/business/Construction-Strike-Talks-Resume-97927854.html> (accessed February 15, 2011).
- [5](#) Nels, "[Striking Unions, Contractors Still at Odds](#)."
- [6](#) See Eldeib and Hilkevitch, "[2nd union's OK expected in construction strike tentative deal](#)."
- [7](#) See [National Nurses United](#) website, on the Internet at <http://www.nationalnursesunited.org/pages/about> (accessed February 15, 2011).
- [8](#) Lena H.Sun, "[Growing National Nurses United union steps up strikes in aggressive new strategy](#)," *The Washington Post*, November 20, 2010, available on the Internet at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/20/AR2010112003592.html> (accessed February 15, 2011).
- [9](#) Sun, "[Growing National Nurses United union steps up strikes in aggressive new strategy](#)."
- [10](#) For more information, see the BLS [Work Stoppages Program](#) monthly [report](#), June 2010, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/wsp/ws062010.htm>.
- [11](#) "[Minneapolis-area nurses strike for a day](#)," *United Press International.com*, on the Internet at http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2010/06/10/Minneapolis-area-nurses-strike-for-a-day/UPI-48941276192064/.
- [12](#) Sun, "[Growing National Nurses United union steps up strikes in aggressive new strategy](#)."
- [13](#) See "[Minneapolis-area nurses strike for a day](#)."
- [14](#) Sun, "[Growing National Nurses United union steps up strikes in aggressive new strategy](#)."
- [15](#) Joe Carlson, "[Minnesota Nurses Accept Contract, Avert Strike](#)" *Modern Healthcare.Com*, July 7, 2010, available on the Internet at <http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20100707/NEWS/307079985> (accessed February 15, 2011).
- [16](#) Lorraine McCarthy, "[Picketing: Dock Workers Honor Informational Picket, Shut Down New York, New Jersey Port](#)," *Daily Labor Report: News Archive*, September 29, 2010, 187 DLR A-15, The Bureau of National Affairs, on the Internet at <http://www.BNA.com> (accessed February 15, 2011).
- [17](#) For more information, see the BLS [Work Stoppages Program](#) monthly [report](#), September 2010, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/wsp/ws092010.htm>.
- [18](#) Steve Strunsky, "[Daylong shutdown at N.J. ports due to protesting dockworkers could prove costly](#)," *The Star-Ledger*, September 29, 2010, on the Internet at http://blog.nj.com/ledgerupdates_impact/print.html?entry=/2010/09/union_dockworkers_shut_down_nj (accessed February 15, 2011).
- [19](#) See McCarthy, "[Picketing: Dock Workers Honor Informational Picket](#)."
- [20](#) Patrick McGeehan, "[After 2 Days, Dockworkers Agree to End Strike](#)," *New York Times* (online), September 29, 2010, on the Internet at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/30/nyregion/30strike.html> (accessed February 15, 2011).
- [21](#) See McCarthy, "[Picketing: Dock Workers Honor Informational Picket](#)."
- [22](#) See [CES Strike Report](#), on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/ces/cesstrk.htm>.