



By email at : Mary.Chaput@vac-acc.gc.ca

July 9, 2013

Mary Chaput
Deputy Minister, Veterans Affairs Canada
161, Grafton Street, Room 405 , Box 7700
Charlottetown, Prince-Edward-Island, C1A 8M9

Dear Ms. Chaput,

We were just informed that Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) will be paying their federal public service lawyers their long-awaited performance pay obligations 'no later than August 6.'
This payment deadline by VAC clearly violates the Association of Justice Counsel's (AJC) June 12th, 2013 payout date negotiated with Treasury Board as well as the Collective Agreement.

The AJC, which represents over 2,700 federal public service lawyers, finds the August 6 date simply unacceptable. It extends well beyond the original 120-day compliance timeline (July 10th) that your labour relations and compensation officials had indicated VAC had mistakenly been relying on all along.

Respectfully, your department's announcement that they "have expedited the process" and are "pleased to report that things are moving quickly and, assuming everything goes according to plan, employees can expect payment no later than August 6th" is nothing to celebrate. As such, I strongly recommend that you bring in extra resources to get these overdue payouts done before the 120-day deadline expires and ensure that manual cheques are issued this week. All the departments across the country are meeting their obligations, why can't VAC?

The policy grievance the AJC recently filed against VAC still stands. It is worth remembering that AJC members have been waiting since 2011 for their retroactive pay adjustments and that VAC had also failed miserably during the 2006-2009 collective agreement implementation process when it didn't comply with timelines prescribed by the Public Service Labour Relations Board. With respect, we expect better from VAC.

It is unfortunate that VAC finds itself again as the only department within the federal public service unable or unequipped to ably meet its legal obligations to pay its professional lawyers on time.

I would be happy to have an exchange with you regarding the various proactive steps the AJC took to help ensure that VAC was well informed and where your department fell short despite the various communications that were exchanged with members of your management team. For obvious reasons, we have serious concerns regarding VAC's future ability to comply absent any concrete changes and approaches in the future. As I am sure you appreciate, AJC members deserve nothing less than compliance.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Blais, President, Association of Justice Counsel

