

# SYNOPSIS

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## INTRODUCTION

The Board concludes every process file with file synopsis. A synopsis is a comprehensive summary of all documentation and events on a process file. It records in an understandable way what happens during the processing of any matter that comes before the Board. It identifies each matter, describes how they were handled and their disposition.

Files are not concluded until a process file synopsis is signed off. Place a hard copy of the synopsis on the Board's permanent BR file. The synopsis is the last document placed on the process file before it is sent to Records Management for destruction. The signed synopsis is scanned and is available for viewing via Liberty software.

A person reading the synopsis will only read the basic application details and a summary of subsequent proceedings or events that led to the conclusion of the file. It is important the synopsis be clear and concise because the database purges most information from the process file screen.

This policy describes:

- when to do a synopsis;
- what information goes into a synopsis; and
- who is responsible for the synopsis.

## WHEN TO DO A SYNOPSIS

The officer assigned to the file enters the synopsis in the database right after the conclusion of the entire file. Some matters are concluded before the file is finished. Matters may be withdrawn by the applicant, but the file remains open. When all matters are concluded, the officer reviews the file to make sure all documentation is in order and then enters a synopsis.

Often parties may agree to adjourn a matter *sine die*. When a matter is adjourned *sine die*, it remains open on our file for a period of 6 months from the date of the adjournment. After that date, it is deemed to be withdrawn unless a party requests a hearing into the matter or the Board otherwise orders.

To keep caseload reports current, each matter that is being adjourned sine die has a sine die "start date" entered in the database. The file is still technically open and will remain so for 6 months. When the 6 months are up (or sooner if the parties notify the Board), a sine die end date is entered in the database. The matters are then concluded using the normal procedures or reactivated if that is what the parties have requested.

Because of the six-month delay on sine die files, the Board officer should prepare a draft synopsis in Word at the time of the adjournment. This can be later updated, transferred to the database and put on the process file when the file is finally closed.

## **WHAT INFORMATION GOES INTO A SYNOPSIS?**

The synopsis is a brief chronological review of the file. It gives a brief history from receipt of the application to the decision of the Board or withdrawal by the Applicant. A person reading the synopsis in the future will get an accurate summary of the file. It should be sufficiently complete so they do not have to review the microfiche to get an understanding of the file.

A file synopsis does not simply describe a result. It describes the process or events that led to the result. The synopsis should reflect not only the trail of important or selected documents and proceedings, but the strategy of resolution and LRO comments. See: [[Dispute Resolution Initiatives, Chapter 19\(c\)](#); [LRO Comments, Chapter 19\(i\)](#)].

It should deal with the substantive matters in dispute, and how those disputes were resolved not just the Board's administrative procedures. A person reading a synopsis will not receive insight into the file by reading about the number of phone calls an officer made during the course of processing the file. The reader is interested in the action that resulted from the phone calls.

The synopsis provides a summary of the important documents on file including officer's reports and reasons for decision. It outlines the theme of a document, not a transcript giving every detail. Insignificant documents such as letters from the Board advising parties of hearing changes and requests for available dates are of no concern to a reader. The same principle applies here as to the previous comments or telephone calls. Provide the date of the document. If a person reading the synopsis notes a comment of particular interest, it will be easy for them to review the file by looking for a dated document. A synopsis should not, however, be summary to the point that it is incomplete. It should read like the headnote of a decision. Outline all relevant information but not every aspect of the file. Highlight the events that led to the resolution of the application.

## **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SYNOPSIS**

The Board officer assigned to a process file is responsible for doing the synopsis in a timely and accurate manner. Do not confuse LRO comments with a synopsis. See: [[LRO Comments, Chapter 19\(i\)](#)]. Some of the LRO comments may be incorporated in the synopsis to elaborate on the strategy of resolution and provide some background to events on the file.

When all matters have been concluded, print a File Synopsis Report and place it on the file. The Director of Settlement reviews the file to ensure all pertinent information is on the file and signs off the file (e.g., verified by: \_\_\_\_ ). Scan the signed synopsis and place on the process file and BR file. See: [[Concluding & Stripping a File, Chapter 9\(b\)](#)].

## **SAMPLE SYNOPSIS**

On 17 May 2002, CUPE Local 838 filed a certification application affecting Heart River Housing for a unit described as: All employees employed at Villa Beausejour. The application was supported by petition evidence.

This application was the third affecting a seniors lodge operated by the employer. The other two applications resulted in Certificates No. 363-2001 and 192-2002 for the Pleasant View Lodge Senior Citizens Home and the Red Willow Lodge respectively.

The investigation found:

1. The employer's name is: Heart River Housing.
2. The applicant's name was: Canada Union of Public Employees, Local 838.
3. The bargaining unit as amended was: All employees at Villa Beausejour.
4. The application was timely.
5. The employer employed 22 employees in the proposed amended bargaining unit on the date of the application.
6. Of those 22 employees, at least 40% had indicated their support pursuant to Section 33(b) of the Code.

There was some disagreement about including maintenance worker Ubald Turcotte in the bargaining unit. He spent 80% of his time working on properties other than Villa Beausejour. He was included because: (1) his one day of work per week at the Villa created the same community of interest as possessed by other part-time employees; and (2) excluding him would have created a tag-end unit.

The report issued on 27 May 2002. The employer did not object to Turcotte's inclusion and both parties agreed to cancel the hearing.

The file went before Chair Asbell sitting alone on 31 May 2002 and he ordered the vote to proceed on 5 June 2002. The vote included a French-language option and was conducted both at the Villa and a nearby school in Donnelly in order for all employees to have the opportunity to vote.

There were no objections to voters or the conduct of the vote. The certification application failed at vote (7-14) and, consequently, the Board refused to certify the union.