

Call centre workers dial up lawsuit after mass layoff

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*Workers in Oshawa, Ont., have launched a class-action suit against American call centre company IQT.
Photograph by: Greg Pender, The StarPhoenix*

OSHAWA, Ont. — A \$30-million class-action lawsuit has been filed by 600 Ontario call centre employees who claim they were laid off without notice or severance.

Some of the employees who have worked for more than 10 years for IQT Solutions in Oshawa, located outside Toronto, said they walked into work on July 15 and were dismissed without notice or their last paycheque.

Their allegations have not been proven in court.

The American company ran the customer support line for Bell Canada.

The lawsuit, spearheaded by former employees Bob Brigaitis and Cindy Rupert, is seeking to recover \$20 million in unpaid wages and severance, including \$10 million in punitive damages.

"All of the employees of IQT were shocked to be treated like this after so many years of loyal service to the company," Brigaitis said in a statement Wednesday. He was a former operations manager who supervised 100 employees at the call centre.

Their lawyer, Ted Charney, said the claims against IQT are "disturbing."

"The lawsuit includes allegations that the officers, directors and shareholders intentionally violated our Employment Standards legislation. The American shareholders who controlled the company should have made sure the company notified the employees well in advance and had a compensation plan in place, instead of abandoning them," Charney said in a statement.