

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

Floor Edition

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"I Have Two Hours"
When an employee requests a Union Steward management often says *"I have two hours to get you a Steward."* They misinterpret the *Charter's Memo* which is the controlling document on this issue, and states *"The subject of the release of stewards under Article 17.3 reads "Such requests (the right of a steward to interview the aggrieved employee, supervisors, and witnesses during working hours) shall not be unreasonably denied."*
"Reasonable" in our opinion, dictates that in most cases, the grievant and steward should be able to discuss the grievance without delay but 95% of the time with no more than a two-hour delay. While circumstances will sometimes necessitate a delay of more than two hours, normally the delay should not extend beyond the tour of duty in which the request is made. This determination will be based on the availability of the parties involved and service conditions." They like to make the employee wait to get a Steward.

There should be no delay in allowing a Steward to at least come to the unit and talk to the employee, if there is a Steward on duty. The parties can agree on a time when the employee can be released to go to the union office if they need to write a witness statement. For the most part a supervisor should be able to allow the employee to speak to a Steward upon request. Some supervisors prefer to make the employee wait instead of allowing them to see a Steward to try to resolve the issue. Some supervisors will say you don't need to go to the union as they don't like the union and don't like being asked for a Steward, but it is your right to see a Steward...

Mask Wearing
I recently received two complaints about management not enforcing the wearing of masks. The first was from an employee regarding a specific employee who will not wear a mask. The second complaint was anonymous and general in nature stating that employees in general are not wearing masks but I don't know what facility.

The Union has consistently complained to management when the mask mandate is not being enforced. Please let your Steward know if this is happening

Reporting an Injury
If you sustain an injury at work, report it to your supervisor when it happens, so there is no question as to where and when the injury occurred. Once you report an accident to your supervisor they should ask if you want to go for medical attention to a clinic or a hospital depending on the injury and what is open. They should also give you information on your right to file a claim (CA-1) and your right after the first 3 days to be paid Continuation of Pay (COP) for the first 45 calendar days. After that it becomes COP and you don't get paid until the claim is approved but if the claim is approved you get paid back to the date of the injury. We have had problems at all 3 plants with delays in processing OWCP claims resulting in employees not being paid. Palatine states all medical and OWCP inquiries should be sent to HRMDistrictJ0020@usps.gov. The fax is 312-983-8563.

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Special points of interest:

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Power to be out at Palatine on Saturday, 10-9-2021 on tour 2

Management has informed us there will be no electric power on Saturday, 10-9-2021 on tour 2, and they are offering affected employees the option to revise their schedule to be non-scheduled on that Saturday or to work tour 3 that day and be paid out of schedule pay which is an extra 50%.

Employees are asking about Administrative Leave for this day. In this situation management can change your schedule and pay you the out of schedule pay based on the circumstances. I do not think they have to pay Administrative leave and checked with a National Business Agent who agreed and said she did not think we would win this issue in Arbitration. We can file a grievance but I don't want to promise that we will win it and create expectations of that. Management also states there will be limited visibility on Sunday from 7am to noon, but will have utilization of all machines except APPS, USS, LCTS, and DBCS 6. They state maintenance has offered to place temporary lights above the DBCS for them to be able to process mail. This is per Plant Manager Allen Mitchell and In-Plant Support Manager Moore.

Keeping the Facilities Clean

We attended a National Presidents Conference in Chicago yesterday with APWU President Dimondstein. I submitted an agenda item on our postal facilities being filthy since management cut Custodian staffing per the TL-5 Team Cleaning 7 years ago. Custodians are no longer actually cleaning and mopping except for the bathrooms. The floors are not being mopped. I do not know why the APWU agreed to the TL-5 unless USPS threatened to privatize Custodians but Team Cleaning is a disaster. Postal employees should not have to work in filthy postal facilities.

Carol Stream Statement

Management solicited us to sign a flyer they want to put out which states "*We can all agree that the safety of our employees is the most important part of safety.*

Please help us cooperatively maintain a safe, orderly and productive Mail Processing Environment! We can all help by

1. *No food or spill-able drinks on the workroom floor*
2. *Deposit trash in appropriate receptacles*
3. *Pick up stray debris (labels, rubber bands, paper, straps)"*

We declined to sign it as we are not management and do not want to appear to be by signing this.

We can agree in general that people should pick up after themselves, but that does not change the fact that USPS needs to return to actual cleaning of facilities that have deteriorated for the last 7 years since the number of custodians was reduced and cleaning supplies downgraded from industrial to something used to clean offices. Pick up all the labels off the floor, etc., and the place is still dirty.

The current cleaning methods are not getting the job done and we all know it, including our Custodians.

EFEL ended on 9-30-2021

Per legislation the Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL) Ended on 9-30-2021. The MOUs with the Union were extended to 12-31-2021 including the Temporary Paid Leave for PSEs MOU and the Liberal Leave Policy.

Drivers at Union Meeting...

Several of our MVS members came to the October meeting to complain about their rate of pay, older trucks in poor condition, having to sometimes load their own trailers, and other problems. We did make our national officers aware of the pay issue when we saw them at the Chicago meeting. They are aware of that being an issue and plan to address it.

More Jobs Needed in Function 4

USPS and APWU have signed a series of MOUs to convert PSEs in the plants, which is Function 1. APWU is trying to get USPS to agree to PSE conversions in Function 4, the Associate Offices but so far without success. USPS continues to use mostly Carriers but sometimes management to sort parcels and other distribution because they are short of Clerks. They intentionally understaff the Clerk Craft with the intention of using Carriers to do Clerk work. Clerks are their own worst enemy when they ignore this and do not have the union file a grievance.

APWU Shirts for Members

We are giving out shirts to all members who place their order on the NWIAL website. We'll place the order on or around 11-1-2021 so if you are a member and want a shirt please order on the website prior to 11-1-2021 so you get one.

Thank you Kyle Popek!

Kyle started out as a Maintenance Steward at Palatine where he was trained by Joe Golden, tour 2 Chief Steward Rick Szczesny and senior Steward Al Czerwinski. He learned well and was filing grievances similar to Joe Golden. He transferred to Carol Stream where he served on tour 3 until recently reassigning out of state. Kyle was a good Union person and worked hard for the members. Thank you Kyle for your service. Kyle was also our Webmaster in charge of maintaining the NWIAL website. He did a lot of work to update the website and continues to maintain it as the Webmaster. He will continue in the position until we are able to find another member who is capable of and willing to perform the duties. If you have the knowledge and an interest please send us a letter.

*More than half of all Americans would like to have a union but only 10.8 % actually have one.

