



Volume 51, Number 222
January-February, 2023

Official Publication of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, APWU, AFL-CIO



by
**Michael
Mize**

PRESIDENT

— Security —

Don't get yourself in a bind. Keep your password secure!

We are seeing an increase in sharing of window drawers and log in in-

formation. This is not proper and can lead to serious issues for you.

Sharing of your drawer on the window. I have recently heard the stories about only needing to step away for a minute or use the restroom. Another thing I have heard recently is we need to open the new clerk a drawer but don't have the funds available. We need to be very clear here. If this is my drawer and I let another person work out of my drawer I am violating policy. I have taken responsibility for any error that the other person could make. If my drawer is \$100 short at the end of the day it is my problem. There is always a possibility that discipline could be issued for not following the policy.

Is this a practice that any of you follow? Please stop! If you need our help to get the issue corrected in an office, please ask. I know it may be easy, but

we see how this gets our members in trouble all the time. Do not take the chance.

Disclaimer, if you work in an office with single drawer accountability (one drawer that all share), the above does not apply as it is not your drawer. The drawer in this case would be the Post Office drawer.

Do not make change for yourself or for the office out of your money. Commingling of your money and Post Office money is a dangerous road. You may be the most honest stand-up person, just trying to help the Service, the problem is it just looks bad. To an outside person or a manager that changes their opinion they will say you are stealing.

Do not share your passwords and log in information. We have seen LSSA share their information with others so the TACS can be done. Share

the information so a trainee can work from your drawer. Share so you don't have to stay later. This is also a violation of the policy. We all take the cyber security training every year. You are told not to share it. Most of us wish we could forget the training as it is so boring. Have you forgot? Did your manager or PM tell you its okay? If you are being coerced into giving out your information, request a steward. If you are giving it out on you own, STOP! If I have your information I can log in under your name and could do improper things on the computer. It won't be me, as its your log in, it will be you!

As window clerks you have been trained on all these issues. Other employees have been trained on parts depending on the access they have. We are seeing far too many members in a bind from these issues. Please PROTECT YOURSELVES!

**Happy
New
Year**

by **Marti Jablonski,
Maintenance Craft Director**

WOW, 2023 is here already, and you are already 3 months into the new Fiscal year. Remember, there is still time to start making sure you are writing down what you are doing, when, how long, and when you take a day off or leave early. Trust me, these things seem minor, but they will be a huge part of your Line H come September 30th, 2023. So please don't take anything for granted. Even tasks as minimal as changing a light bulb, re-mopping the lobby floor, helping a customer in the lobby that caught you out there mopping, or even something so small as a friend spilling his coffee, and you quickly getting the mop and

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What's Most Amazing To Some Americans

by **Leo F. Persails, Retired
Gen. Reg. Coordinator**

The results of the Mid- Term elections have brought some amazing facts that many in both Parties didn't expect or even think would happen. No, the MOST AMAZING wasn't because the Democratic Party did so well. It's true the billion-dollar News media had the pre-election results forecast totally different, and consistently reported it that way. In spite of that the American public still saw things different. While that was an amazing fact, it was ONLY broadcast as such AFTER the election.

No one in the media apologized for miss leading the public before the election. That wasn't too amazing, because that slanted news has been the norm for 7 years. No, the good Democrat showing wasn't the MOST AMAZING thing about the Mid-Terms Elections either.

Well, if the Democrats making a big showing wasn't the most amazing fact, was the News Media's consistent RED WAVE reference amazing? That reference by all of the news outlets was a News Media creation. The Republicans certainly repeated it, but didn't invent it. The RED WAVE prediction that flooded the News Media's air ways prior to the election could have swayed votes. But no, the invention of the RED WAVE wasn't the MOST AMAZING fact of the mid-term elections, nor was its result the MOST AMAZING.

If those two amazing outcomes weren't the MOST AMAZING, what was? Well, it would appear that the Republican Party FINALLY dumping on Trump could be. It would also appear the News Media joining the Dump Trump, could surely be

the most amazing. Sorry, but there is something more amazing about the Mid-Term Elections. The MOST AMAZING THING ABOUT THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS, IS THE REASON THE REPUBLICANS AND THE NEWS MEDIA ARE DUMPING TRUMP.

Trump wasn't dumped by the Republican Party Leaders when they saw him make requests on television to foreign leaders to interfere in our elections. In fact, those Republican leaders voted to stop impeachment of him for it. One hundred and ninety-nine Republican members of Congress also agreed and supported Trump's lie about being cheated in the last election. That lie was proven false numerous times and even in court. In spite of those facts of Trump's anti- American actions, the Republican Party didn't dump Trump, and any that tried were removed in the next primary. Finally, when Trump organized and ordered the open attack on our American Government, the Republicans refused to dump him. If all of those reasons to dump Trump before didn't

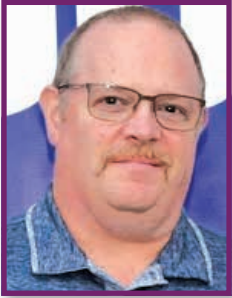
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Return to APWU/MPWU
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by
John
Greathouse

EDITOR

American Rescue Plan - 2023 Update

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) expired on January 27. The APWU has opposed the expiration of those provisions of the act that protected federal workers who contracted COVID-19 (COVID). We are providing the following as information to members on the new procedures for COVID-related workers' compensation (OWCP) claims through the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA).

The ARPA included presumptions for federal workers who were exposed to COVID in the course of their employment. Postal workers who tested positive for COVID and had been working in the Postal Service were presumed to have contracted their illness while at work. Workers' compensation claims were to be processed through the Department of Labor (DOL) by submission of form CA-1, Notice of Traumatic Injury. Traumatic Injury claims allow for the benefit of Continuation of Pay (COP).

The ARPA expired on Jan. 27, 2023. For workers who test positive for COVID after Jan. 27, 2023, the DOL has announced their procedures for processing workers' compensation claims in FECA Bulletin 23-02, available online.

In most instances, workers'

compensation claims for COVID should now be filed on form CA-2 Notice of Occupational Disease (unless the injured worker is capable of positively identifying their exposure to a single event or a single work shift). There is no entitlement to COP in an occupational disease claim. Any claim for wage loss benefits will need to be pursued through filing a CA-7 through the DOL. Any claims for COVID benefits based on testing after Jan. 27, 2023 and filed on a CA-1 will be administratively converted to a CA-2 by the DOL, and COP will be denied. The injured worker will receive written notice of any such change. There is

also a three-day waiting period and the employee will initially need to use their own leave until the claim is approved.

For claims based on positive testing after Jan. 27, 2023, the injured worker will have the burden of establishing all five (5) essential elements to workers' compensation entitlement to include a causal relationship (there will be no more presumptions). A causal relationship is established by providing a physician's reasoned medical opinion as to why he or she believes that a positively tested COVID diagnosis was attributable

to work place exposure. The claims examiner will issue a developmental letter explaining in more detail the evidence needed to establish the claim.

All COVID claims based on positive testing through Jan. 27, 2023 were assigned case number with a prefix of 19. COVID claims based on testing after Jan. 27, 2023 will be assigned a prefix 55, like most other claims received by the DOL.

(Reference: FECA Bulletin No. 23-02. Dec. 15, 2022)

COVID-19 Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) Federal Employment



by
Amy
Ridgway

AREA 5 DIRECTOR

We Are Working Til We Drop & Postmaster Making Up The Rules As They Go!

steward with your Postmaster. It is their duty to initiate contact, not yours. This is proper procedure. If they refuse, then inform me of this infraction.

Keep holding you Postmasters to their 15 hours. No excuse for them working over. This is work hours being taken away from YOU.

Brother and sisters,
I see each of us working until we drop every day and Postmasters just making up the rules as they go. Just because we work in a smaller office, doesn't mean they don't have to follow the contract. Be firm YOU are guaranteed 4 hours of work. If you break for over 2 hours, you are guaranteed another 4 hours.

If you need a steward, request a

Regional Resource Assistant

Colleen Maxwell Vice President of APWU FMAL and Keith Combs, President of APWU DDAL, have been appointed to the position of Regional Resource Assistant (RRA) by National President Mark Dimondstein and Director of Human Relations Daleo Freeman.

Keith and Colleen look forward to ensuring that the Central Region is well trained in OWCP issues.

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- Battle Creek
- Central MI
- Cheboygan
- Detroit District
- Farmington
- Flint
- 480-481
- 486-487
- 498-499
- Gaylord
- Great Lakes Area
- Mail Haulers
- Jackson
- Ludington
- Muskegon
- Roger City
- Sault Ste Marie
- Southwest MI
- Stevensville
- Traverse City
- Troy Local
- Western MI

The MICHIGAN MESSENGER is published six times yearly, and is the official publication of the Michigan Postal Workers Union, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, also affiliated with the APWU Postal Press Association.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Editor, the MPWU, the APWU or the Postal Press. Articles and correspondence to the Editor may be sent to MPWU - Michigan Messenger, John Greathouse - Editor, PO Box 27303, Lansing, MI 48909-7303. Articles must be signed to be printed (your name may be withheld upon request). Articles may be edited to fit the confines of this publication.

Affiliated with: American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO; APWU National Postal Press Association, Michigan State AFL-CIO & Michigan Labor Press



— Happy New Year —

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taking care of the spill.

In my eyes, I see the lobby as approximately a 10-minute job. Because you have to get the mop, fill the bucket, mop the floor, dry the floor and put out caution wet signs, plus the customer just added 5 minutes since you couldn't just ignore him and had to get someone to assist him or maybe you could do it yourself, either way, more time. Changing a carrier's case light can take 5-10 minutes, depending on whether you can reach it easily or if you have to obtain a step ladder, get the new bulb, and properly dispose of the old one. Also, remember your buddy with the coffee spill? An additional 5-7 minutes, and that's if you still have the lobby mop water.

Now, if you paid attention to what I just wrote, you will see that those 3 little tasks are all very realistic and could add up to 32 minutes. How often do minor items like these pop up in our day-to-day work schedules? I don't know about you, but in mine, 2-3 days a week additional tasks like these get thrown into my daily tasks.

The hours you work on tasks not included on Line H do not count toward management's commitment to work you the hours already included on Line H. Those hours should be added to your Line H for the following year.

Now let's multiply 32 x 3 x 45 (number of realistic weeks you worked in a year, minus vacations and holidays) = 4320. Divide that by 60 (minutes), and there you have 72 hours of work not in your Line H package.

Now I know this may seem petty, and your boss takes care of you, but those days are coming to an end. They are watching and learning; hence they want postmasters and supervisors to have you fill out BS 4776's (route sheets). In addition, they get daily and weekly emails from the higher-up echelon on how many Line H hours they are over or under for your office. And the local managers schedule you per those emails!

How many of you have requested to see your Line H package? Do you know what is in it, or should I say not in it? Unfortunately, there are many problems with almost every staffing package in every office. It takes a well-trained steward to keep an eye on every little item because they change them without you knowing. They don't even tell your postmaster that they've changed the staffing packages.

Suddenly a new staffing package deceptively reflects that your building got smaller, you lost components (windows, light fixtures, tile floors, p.o. boxes, etc.), and you aren't expected to clean as often or as well as you are, but did they inform you of that? Of course not. They don't tell you to stop cleaning areas or items that no longer exist on the staffing package. Because those items still exist, and the people that work in the building expect you to

keep cleaning them as often as necessary versus what your Line H reflects.

These deceptive practices make it necessary to pay attention and keep good notes. Otherwise, management will claim you met Line H at the end of the year; and then guess what? You have nothing to go back on, but they do because you went along with their game and filled out those BS 4776s for them. So you lose, and they win.

Now that you can see the practical side of this let's get down to business.

ASK FOR YOUR Line H Package, the whole shebang! 4839 (minutes and square footage), 4869 (building inventory), 4776 (route sheets), and the 4852s (where they add everything up to get to Line H).

They will try to say they don't know what you are asking for, and they probably really don't. And if that is the case, ask your shop steward or craft director to help you. Also, the union should have a copy of every office's staffing package and get a copy if changes are made.

You should be provided a different or new route sheet every day. Since their staffing package no longer requires areas and components to be cleaned daily, your route sheets need to reflect what their staffing package requires.

Some areas and items require less

cleaning (on their staffing package) than your office and coworkers expect. Encourage coworkers who become disgusted with the filth to write statements, fill out Hazardous Work forms (1767's), and have them fill out a work order to get areas or items cleaned that are no longer on your staffing package.

KEEP NOTES DAILY – mind you, you can do this on their form and on their time. Be very detailed and take the time to fill it out daily. Take your time because you are given time (via Line H) to do this every day. Next, please make a copy and store it until September 30th, 2023.

When you have training, do all of it and record the actual time it takes. Do not bypass it because you have to get to the lobby floor, bathrooms, or whatever they are pressing you to do. Training is as much a part of the staffing package and just as important, if not more. One wrong move without properly securing safety could cost you or a coworker their life or your job. Do you know what else is part of a custodial staffing package? Break time, holidays, and vacation days. If you're working through breaks, on holidays, or skipping vacation opportunities – it also cheats your wallet.

Now the really important part is the OPERATION code! What operation are you clocked on? Every office

is starting to change what operation they want you on and when. We need your clock rings to reflect the work you are performing.

For example: cleaning the lobby - 747

Lock changes or higher level work - 753

Travel - 724

Training - 783

But, if you're instructed to strictly use the operation code management wants, please do as you are ordered and write down what they tell you. I want you to refrain from arguing with management over their desired operations or instructions. It's the old analogy of teaching a pig to sing. It wastes your time and annoys the pig.

To grieve the Line H hours accurately, the union must know what was or was not performed, and we only get that information from your notes. Please keep good notes. When they pull clock rings for the past fiscal year, October 1st, 2023, we will know what operation codes to pull to get the correct numbers.

So please make sure you know what (operation code) you are actually doing, when, and for how long. Keep daily notes. Make copies of safety hazard reports and work orders. All of these things are crucial for a successful Line H grievance.

What's Most Amazing To Some Americans

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cause any of the one hundred and ninety-nine Republicans in Congress to act then, WHY DUMP HIM NOW? After all, his 3rd grade mentality still prevails in his speeches. He still loves Kim Jun Un and Putin, and he still should be arrested and tried for stealing secret government documents. With all of those issues of no importance to the Republican Leadership before, WHY DUMP HIM NOW???

The true soul of the Republican Party defines that the reason some

Republicans Are dumping Trump now is because, TRUMP COULD NOT PRODUCE ENOUGH VOTES TO CARRY THE RED WAVE. It didn't matter that Trump's prior actions should have caused his dumping by the party. It didn't matter he tried to destroy our Democracy. No, the only thing that caused lost sanity to appear found, was, TRUMP COULD NOT PRODUCE ENOUGH VOTES TO CARRY THE RED WAVE. That is the MOST AMAZING fact of the mid-term elections, and that ALONE turned Re-

publicans against Trump.

The Republican Party can now turn to a new leader that might carry them. Will they be any different this time? Does it even matter if this new, recent found leader, could possibly be an exact Trump clone? Worse yet, what if he is a clone, but a lot more polished and even more dangerous to our Democracy? The last few years and the mid-term elections have already proven, if he can get the votes nothing else matters, because that's MOST AMAZING to them.



The hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) sits anchored in the harbor of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on Nov. 27, 2022. Comfort is deployed to U.S. 4th Fleet in support of Continuing Promise 2022, a humanitarian assistance and goodwill mission conducting direct medical care, expeditionary veterinary care, and subject matter expert exchanges with five partner nations in the Caribbean, Central and South America.

(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Deven Fernandez)

AREA 9 DIRECTOR



by
Dana
Mclean

Saving Our Jobs In Smaller Offices

How many times have you felt like you don't have enough time to get your work done and then management wants to add more tasks to your "to do" list, but tells you don't go over your scheduled time to leave. So, if the postmaster "helps" you longer than they are allowed, its ok because the work needs to get done, right? WRONG. This is a never-ending cycle and until PTF's and PSEs in smaller offices realize this, hours will continue to get cut and jobs will continue

to get eliminated. Sure, it helps you in the moment because you want to leave but we all need to start thinking about the long-term plan. We need to secure our hours. We need to make sure carriers aren't helping sort mail, postmasters aren't working longer than their allotted time, clerks aren't working off the clock, custodians aren't sorting mail . . . I could go on and on. All you are doing is showing management that you don't need more hours to get it done. Stop giving your

hours away. Scan your packages at the window, make sure you are hitting your non-revenue button on the RSS. Get credit for EVERYTHING you do!

I can't believe how many times I see or hear that someone couldn't take time off work for a vacation because there was no one to cover. That's not your problem. There is a guaranteed period during the summer for vacations. Check your LMOU to see the correct dates for your office. The schedule goes by seniority and

like I said, it's a guaranteed time. Its your leave and you are allowed to use it. If your office doesn't have a calendar to sign up for vacations ask your postmaster where its at. As always if you have any issues or questions you can call/text my cell at 231-638-7290 or email danamcleanapwu@gmail.com

I hope everyone is having a nice winter and staying healthy. Springtime is just around the corner.

In solidarity.

AREA 11 DIRECTOR



by
Debora
Goodacre

Coming To A Post Office Near You!

on my agenda is to visit more offices this year.

Upon my visit to a few offices, I have noticed that there are no union boards. I will see if I can fix that. PS Form 3971s requesting leave are not being done properly. Another issue I see is that the PTFs and PSEs do not

have their weekly schedules posted the Wednesday prior to the week. I also have had complaints about not getting breaks. Also, carriers are NOT to be doing YOUR work. WE need to keep this work.

Someday it may be your hours or jobs getting cut. I cannot stress

enough that we cannot let this happen. If these are some of the issues you are having or you have other issues or just have questions, please let me know and I will do my best to answer them for you.

We are in this together.

In Solidarity.

MPWU HUMAN RELATIONS DIRECTOR



by
Keith
Combs

OWCP – Workman's Compensation

I want to go over some key points that we should be aware of regarding our responsibilities and managements when we sustain an accident or injury at work.

Treatment

- All medical providers must enroll with OWCP's medical authorization and bill processing contractor, Affiliated Computer Services (ACS).
- Enrollment is required for payment of medical services.

Emergency

- When an employee sustains a work-related traumatic injury that requires medical examination, medical treatment or both, the employer shall authorize such examination and/or treatment by issuing a Form CA-16.

Choice of Physician

- The employee has the right to choose their own physician.
- The employee has the right to choose the medical facility.
- There is no such thing as a waiver of treatment.

Selection of Physician

- Emergencies: employee is sent

to nearest available Physician or hospital, or the Physician of hospital chosen by the employee. A supervisor may accompany the employee to ensure prompt Medical Treatment.

- Animal bites and eye injuries are always considered emergencies. If there is doubt as to the emergent nature of an injury, it is treated as an emergency.

- Physician providing emergency care is not considered the employee's treating Physician.

- Non-emergency: the employee may select a Physician or hospital within approximately 25 miles. Supervisor is **Not** authorized to accompany the employee.

Postal Physician or Contracted Physician

- May provide Medical Treatment not to exceed **TWO** visits.
- If the employee accepts Treatment, Treatment complies with EL-806 and with OWCP regulations and Directives.
- If Treatment exceeds Two visits: that provider becomes Employee's Treating Physician.
- Choosing a contracted Doctor as your treating Physician is probably not in your best interest.
- This Doctor is more obliged to their

Employer (THE USPS) than to the Employee.

- Employee sacrifices Doctor-Patient confidentiality.
- Doctor legally can share any infor-



mation with the USPS.

- USPS may require employee to be examined by their Contracted Doctor.
- Employee does not have to accept their recommended course of treatment.
- Such examination may not delay employee's initial Medical Treatment with their own Doctor.
- If exam goes beyond employee's regular work hours, employee may request through their supervisor to leave. If denied, employee should request overtime pay.
- Employee should not be required to sign any guarantor or medical release forms.

Physician Changes And Referrals

- To ensure payment of a medical bill, an employee changing Physicians should write to OWCP providing the reason for the change and the name and address of both the new Physician and the previous Physician. OWCP must approve the change to ensure payment. All medical reports, however, must be accepted whether change was approved or not.
- Referral by a Physician to a Specialist is not a change of Physician. Get the referral in writing and send a copy to OWCP.

CA-16

- Authorizes medical for 60 days unless OWCP stops authorization.
- Employee chooses Physician.
- Shall be issued within 4 hours of the claimed injury.
- If verbal authorization is given, must be issued within 48 hours.
- Not required to issue more than one week after the date of the injury.
- Issued for traumatic injuries requiring medical care.
- Should not be issued for Occupational Disease claims (CA-2).
- The Form CA-16 guarantees payment of medical expenses, therefore it's

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RETIREE PRESIDENT



by
Paul
Browning

— What's Next —

USPS retirees in Michigan my soon receive a break on taxes they pay to the State of Michigan on their Postal pensions. As for current postal workers, the question seems to be what's going to happen with TSP investments with the shenanigans surrounding the Federal budget raising the debt limit?

Regarding state taxes, under the administration of former Governor Rick Snyder and a Republican controlled state legislature, a bill was passed in 2012 that taxed government pensions for retirees. Teachers, Policemen, Federal retirees, etc. born after 1946 all had to begin to pay a 4.25% tax on previously untaxed pensions. It cost this writer almost \$300 a year. A lot of current government retirees paid into a benefit plan for retirement in lieu of paying in Social Security. Many of them receive either no Social Security or a greatly reduced amount. This writer's Social Security payment is reduced by 60% due to the Federal Windfall Eliminations Provision (another Republican tax)

The disparity in taxes is that Social Security recipients pay no state taxes. However, government retirees with a pension and none or reduced Social Security benefits are taxed on their pension. The Democratic Michigan controlled legislature is presently working on a bill which will eliminate the government pension tax. While details between the State Senate and House are being negotiated, there is no doubt that tax relief is on the way for public pensioners.

And TSP? In 2022 the 5 TSP investment funds returned anything from modest to substantial gains. The big factor now which will affect them is the fight over raising the Federal Government debt limit. (**Note** – raising the debt limit is to pay for money already owed by the U.S. Government. Without raising the limit, the Government would default on money owed!) I have no money in TSP and have studiously avoided them so I can't say what will happen with them. There are all kinds of stock market predictions all over my head. It is public knowledge that in order to pay the current debts with the lack of authorization to raise the debt limit, the Government has suspended investments in the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund and the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund, and G fund for FERS.

It's all way over my head but I do know many postal workers with TSP, so it is up to them to inform themselves about what's happening, with the usual caveat of so much depends on how much longer before they retire. Oh, and those suspended investments? Well, once a balanced budget bill is passed, its claimed that

affected funds will be made whole. Of course, all this confusion could have been avoided if the current Speaker of t. House of Representatives, Kevin McCarthy, hadn't sold his soul to a handful of ultra-right-wing colleagues to get his job. Hence, the Republican demands to cut some spending.

Unfortunately, the only concrete idea to cut spending that the R's have come up with so far is a proposal from some ultra-right wingers (surprise!) is to raise the age eligibility for Social Security and Medicare. No mention of a tax increase on the large corporations and individuals who saw their wealth increase dramatically under Trump.

Historically, raising the debt limit and balancing the budget have been two different issues. It's called a debt because it's what the Government owes and must be paid-sort of like you have to pay your bills or go bankrupt. No one wants that to happen and it never has. There have been a few previous instances when the R's pulled this type of public relations stunt for a short period, all of which resulted in a lot of economic chaos for everybody from a plunging stock market to delayed services and even missed paychecks. On the other hand, the budget debate is about future spending, an issue which always involves a lot of horse trading and ultimately leaves quite a few people on both sides of the political spectrum dissatisfied.

Four Unions?

APWU, NALC, MHU, NRLCA-4

different separately organized groups of employees representing 4 different Unions. Try to tell that to an ordinary person on the street and they will have one puzzled look on their face. While the last three Unions mentioned above represent just one category of employees, the APWU represents three different categories of employees. Naturally, all four Unions bargain separately for their members. (For some years, the APWU and NALC negotiated together for a contract with USPS but this cooperation between the two Unions was discontinued in 1994)

Apparently, all parties involved see reasons to ignore the time proven adage of "There's strength in numbers". Jurisdictional fights between APWU and MHU have involved millions of hours and who knows how much money. Presently, with the DeJoy destruction of removing letter carriers from their home area/Post Office and transferring them to a hub operation at a Super Sorting and Distribution Center (SDC), the NALC has negotiated into an agreement with USPS guaranteeing transfer and seniority rights of its members. APWU is still in negotiations with USPS on how the SDCs will affect clerks and presumably so are the remaining two Unions. If ever a corporate situation was ripe for Management to play the "trade off" game pitting one Union against another, here it is.

It's long past time for the leaders of the 4 Unions to put aside their differences and put up a united front against Postal Management. Sure,

we hear the Leaders mouthing platitudes to each other but even now the APWU and NALC are reportedly in disagreement about appointments to the all-important USPS Board of Governors. Craft assignments of work are daily issues on the workroom floor. Enough is enough! It's time for all 4 Postal Unions to come together and fight against Postal Management and not each other.

Retiree Education

On May 18 and 19, 2023, the MPWU Retiree Chapter will hold in conjunction with the Michigan Postal Workers Union an Educational Assembly in Kalamazoo, Michigan at Delta Hotel and Conference Center. This will be our first Education Assembly since 2019 as the 2021 Assembly was cancelled due to the pandemic. The tentative classes will involve Medicare and Medicare Advantage Plans including the American Postal Workers Union Medicare "Enhanced" plan, Elder Law in a class conducted by an attorney, and Thrift Savings Plan information. The classes will be a half day or shorter but provide MPWU Retiree members an opportunity to learn about the subjects and ask questions of professionals involved in the subject fields.

Further detailed information will be published in the next *Michigan Messenger*. So, save the dates if you want to know more about Medicare, Elder Law, and TSP and meet up with some other retirees, co-workers, and just plain real Union people.

OWCP – Workman's Compensation

continued from page 4

not available on the forms page of the DFEC website and should not be on any other website.

- Authorized medical treatment from the date of injury, not the date of signature.

- Electronic CA-16 may be obtained through the Agency Query System (AQS)

- Form CA-16 may also be ordered from the Government Printing Office.

- Authorization includes subsequent Physicians when original Physician refers.

- Issuance required even if USPS doubts injury.

- Not required for first aid when employee voluntarily accepts Postal/Contract Physician (maximum 2 visits)

- Not required for simple hazard exposure without medical condition.

Medical – Chiropractors

- The services that may be reimbursed are limited to manual manipulation to correct a spinal subluxation demonstrated by x-ray.

- Cost of testing performed by or required to diagnose such a subluxation are also payable.

- A chiropractor may also provide services as physical therapy under the direction of, or as prescribed by, a qualified Physician.

Medical – Surgery

- Emergency: No prior authorization is required. CA-16 will guarantee payment. If CA-16 was not issued, authorization may be obtained retroactively.

- Elective: Physician should submit report explaining need for surgery, for review by the Claims Examiner.

- Second opinion examination or review by a District Medical Advisor may be necessary.

- Surgery authorization requests must be submitted to ACS by the medical provider.

- Request must include claimant and provider ID information, as well as procedure code(s), date of service, diagnosis being treated.

- When authorization is requested

for certain types of elective surgery, the CE must obtain an opinion from the DMA or a second opinion specialist procedures involved are: spinal surgery, joint replacements, organ transplants, destructive procedures (e.g. chordotomy, rhizotomy, or amputation of a body part) and experimental surgical procedures.

Providing Supporting Evidence

- The greater the complexity of the medical condition being claimed, the greater is the need for thorough and detailed evidence.

- Claims for occupational disease/illness normally require more complete evidence.

- One of the most common reasons for claims being denied is the lack of a clear and persuasive medical opinion regarding causal relationship between specific work activity and the diagnosed condition.

I hope this information will help someone when and if they have an unfortunate accident or injury while in the performance of their duties.

National Business Agent



by
Linda
Turney

Request For Information

When you read, you empower yourself. When you write, you empower others.

Dear Friends, Our Union community means taking care of one another. This is central to who we are. Whether it means filing a grievance or just confronting management with an individual's problem, we look out for one another. Our Union family often exemplifies the unpredictability of life. Our struggles are varied: income, race, age, religion, gender, gender identity, taking care of family and themselves. We strive to assist members so they don't have to be afraid of losing their job. Be kind to each other. Our struggles and solutions are varied. Every worker is deserving of dignity and respect.

Request For Information (RFI) In Every Grievance

Every case file should include a Request for Information or RFI. You should write on it your request for information: **"I am requesting any and all information pertaining to this case including but not limited to . . ."**

Be specific and fill in what you need.

On the RFI Form there is a place that states relevancy. If management sends you a letter requesting RELEVENCY do not ignore it. You may answer it in general terms. For example: I am inves-

tigating a grievance on denial of leave. I am investigating a grievance on regarding Article 38.3.A.2. I am investigating an article 16.1. Send a letter back, do not ignore it.

If management does not give you the information or gives you only part of the information or does not give you the information in a timely manner, you need to timely move the case forward and **add** Article 17.3. and Article 31.3. to your Article 37.3.a.2. reversion argument. You should state in the grievance chain that the Union did not receive the information because "management is HIDING the information". Argue that management has the records and we cannot prove our case without the records. If the supervisor states the information does not exist, argue the information does exist, management just won't give it to you, they are **hiding** it from you and me and the arbitrator.

In TACS cases for example, we should ask for the User Access Report, the User Log Report, the Template Report, the user Not Logged Report.

*(The **User Access Report** provides a list of users who have access to the TACS application, The **User Log Report** provides a list of users who have logged into and out*

*of TACS, **Template Report** provides a listing, by template, of all employees under that template, **User Not Logged Report** provides a listing of users that have not logged into the TACS applica-*

*tion within a selected Date/Time range, **User Last Login Report** provides a list of the last date and time users logged into the TACS application. These are listed in the TACS training, **Participants Workbook**, page 104)*

For TACS offices, ask for the **entire office** Clock Rings. All TACS work belongs to clerks. If they charge you, ask to review the clock rings on their computers. Go through and count all supervisory input. This includes maintenance, letter carrier, Mail Handler and clerk clock rings. Count the input changes to show how many inputs the manager is making.

In level 18s, ask to interview the PM/supervisor to find out if the TACS work is being done within the 15 hours allotted. In level 18s, ask for the 1260 report. Get the report from the APWU web page. Ask for 3189's and 1723's, higher level assignment sheets, copy of PS 1260s, and the statement from the Lead clerk to show who is performing work.

If they don't give you the information, argue failing to provide the information requested by the Union in accordance with Article 31.3 and Article 17.3. If they want to charge you for the information, Handbook AS-353 governs the costs which management may charge for providing information. Further, if management fails to comply with section 4-6.6 of the Handbook by not giving the Union advance notice of the estimated

processing costs in excess of \$25 and by not offering the Union an opportunity to revise its information requests to reduce the costs, that is management's errors. Argue it.

Your requests for information should be legible, on point and **specific**. Think through what you need to prove your case and ask for it specifically. Management's failure to comply with a proper and clear RFI will give the Union additional arguments in the grievance procedure.

Often the most serious controversy of your case may involve the failure of management to provide a response to the RFIs. If the manager returns the RFI to you and states, "I don't have this information." Tell them it is their responsibility to extract it from their reports or find the manager who can get the report. If the manager asks you why you need the reports, give them your reasons. If the manager says they don't understand your RFI, explain it to them clearly and resubmit it with your explanations. All RFIs must be clearly written and stated. As stewards, you must meet your time limits so proceed to file at the next step without the information, while resubmitting the RFI at the next step.

If we have failed to document, then we have failed to ask. If we clearly and specifically ask and management does not respond, they have failed in their obligation under Article 31.3 and 17.3.

Your NBA.

MANAGING ASTHMA

Asthma can be diagnosed at any time in one's life. While there is no cure for asthma, it can be managed by working with a healthcare provider to develop a plan to keep your asthma under control.

Asthma is well-controlled if you:

- Need your quick-relief inhaler less than 3 times per week.
- Do not wake up with asthma during the night.
- Do daily activities including exercise with few to no symptoms.

Key Points

- Asthma is chronic. In other words, you live with it every day.
- It can be serious, even life-threatening.
- There is no cure for asthma, but it can be managed so you live a normal, healthy life.

FIVE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO KEEP YOUR ASTHMA UNDER CONTROL

Step 1: Make Your Medical Visits More Productive

There are a number of resources available to help you ask the right questions about asthma management and treatment the next time you see your healthcare provider.

Step 2: Create an Asthma Management Plan

Learn how to develop a plan with your healthcare provider that includes key information on managing your asthma.

Step 3: Assess and Monitor Your Control

Common asthma symptoms can include a cough, tight feeling in your chest, wheezing, activity limitation and feeling tired. Keeping track of your symptoms will help you stay in control.

Step 4: Understand Your Medication

There are a variety of medicines available to treat asthma. Each person's asthma is different and your doctor and healthcare team will work with you to set up a personalized plan.

Step 5: Reduce Asthma Triggers

Identify your asthma triggers and learn simple ways to limit your

exposure or avoid them altogether.

HOW CAN THE APWU HEALTH PLAN HELP?

Both the **High Option** and the **Consumer Driven Option** offer coverage for respiratory and inhalation therapies. For our **High Option** members there are **Specialist Pharmacists** through **Express Scripts** that are available for asthma support.

Contact an Asthma Specialty Pharmacist 24/7 to ask about:

- Drug Interaction
- Side Effects
- Risks and Benefits of Medications
- Help taking medication as prescribed - which is one of the best ways to maintain or improve health

Call Express Scripts at 800-841-2734 for more information!

For the full article and links to the resources please visit: <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/managing-asthma>



TOGETHER.
BETTER HEALTH.

www.apwuhp.com
(800) 222-2798



BUSINESS AGENT



by
Devendra
"D"
Rathore

Restricted Sick Leave And Deems Desirable

Happy New Year, 2023! I hope everyone remains in good health and follows the appropriate safety precautions necessary for staying safe.

Have you ever heard of “**Restricted Sick Leave**”? If so, it’s probably been a very long time. Have you ever heard of anyone actually on Restricted Sick Leave? Probably not! Why? Primarily because it requires supervisors to have to create Restricted Sick Leave files and monitor whether the employee’s sick leave absences have improved. And if they show improvement, it would be difficult to discipline the employee. What a hassle! No, Postal management would rather transfer the hassle to the employees.

In the application of the RMD/eRMS, local management is improperly requiring employees to submit medical documentation or other acceptable evidence for future absences of 3 days or less. It is my understanding that based on a supervisor’s review of an employee’s attendance record, supervisors are making a determination that medical documentation is “**deemed desirable**” (requesting an employee to submit medical documentation of other acceptable evidence) for absences of 3 days or less, for the protection of the interest of the Postal Service.

As you know, it is improper for management to deem documentation desirable for 3 days or less based on a review of an employee attendance record.

Moreover, in the absence of an employee being on **restricted sick leave**, supervisors may not require medical documentation or other acceptable evidence because of abuse or excessive use of sick leave for 3 days or less.

There are only two (2) circumstances under which supervisors may require medical documentation or other acceptable evidence for absences of three (3) days or less, Medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work or need to care for a family member may only be required:

1. When the employee is on restricted sick leave (pursuant to part 513.39) of the ELM, or

2. When the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service (Part 513.361 of ELM)

Accordingly, supervisors may only require an employee to submit medical documentation or other acceptable medical evidence for absences of 3 days or less for future requests for sick leave by placing the employ-

ee on restricted sick leave, pursuant to part 513.39 of the ELM.

In regards to individual requests for sick leave, a supervisor may deem documentation desirable for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service pursuant to part 513.361 of the ELM. However, on a case-by-case basis, the supervisor has the burden of justifying any demand for medical documentation or other acceptable evidence for 3 days or less. In other words, the supervisor must have a legitimate reason for suspecting the validity of a sick leave request. In the absence of evidence of legitimate reason to suspect that an employee’s request for sick leave is not for purposes for which sick leave may be used, a demand for medical documentation is improper.

If the supervisor can deem anyone desirable to provide documentation at their discretion, then what’s the point of having a Restricted Sick Leave process? Actually, management does not have as much discretion.

ELM 865.1 addresses requirements to clear an employee to return to duty after a medical absence. In the pertinent part, it states: “ In making the decision whether to require documentation in order to clear the employee’s return to work, management must consider the essential functions of the employee’s job, the nature of the medical condition or procedure involved, and any other reliable and objective information (emphasis added) in order to make an individualized assessment whether there is a reason to require the return-to-work documentation.”

In other words, supervisors cannot ask an employee, not on Restricted Sick Leave, to produce documentation to substantiate their sick leave absence of three days or less. Suppose the supervisor does not have some type of reliable

and objective information to support a request for documentation under the pretext of “**deems desirable.**” In that case, the employee should file a grievance. Make the supervisor produce objective evidence. This is the only way the unions will be able to put a stop to this abuse by supervisors toward employees who use their sick leave.

As you are aware, in the national-level pre-arbitration settlement in case Q98C-4Q-C01005505, As part of that settlement, the parties agreed: The purpose of the RMD/eRMS is to provide a uniform automated process for recording data relative to existing leave rules and regulations. RMD/eRMS (or similar system of records) may not alter or change existing rules, regulations, the National Agreement, law, local

memorandums of understanding and agreements, or grievance-arbitration settlements and awards.

In regard to those facilities using RMD/eRMS, it is the APWU position that in the absence of an employee being on restricted sick leave pursuant to part 513.39 of the ELM, it is improper to flag or enter the employee to submit medical documentation or other acceptable evidence for absences of 3 days or less.

There currently is no Restricted Sick Leave policy being implemented. There is only management’s freedom to make “deems desirable” demands of employees without fully following their own regulations by producing reliable and objective evidence supporting the reason for requiring an employee to produce documentation.

Stay safe! In Solidarity.

USPS HEALTH & WELLNESS CONNECTEDNESS

Stay Connected:

BY DISCONNECTING FROM TECHNOLOGY

It is easy to lose track of time scrolling through posts and watching videos. Though social media and other apps on our cell phones can be useful, keep us connected to loved ones near and far and sometimes even help with stress relief, it can become a problem when we start neglecting responsibilities or noticing changes in our sleep. Cell phones are not fundamentally good or bad but spending too much time on your device can have a negative impact on your relationships, sleep and attention span.

Studies show that cell phone screens have an impact on our brain’s ability to produce the melatonin needed for sleep. This can negatively influence our sleep cycle. And a quick check of an email before bed can easily lead to unintended minutes lost going through social media or apps which can keep you up later than you intended. Cell phone use can get in the way of our relationships with those around us as well. You might find it hard to make it through a family function, even just a dinner, without checking your phone. Sometimes we begin to neglect the relationships around us because of our inability to disconnect from our phones. Do you find your concentration and attention span becoming shorter? We might be quickly entertained by multiple short videos on social media, but this can impact our ability to handle mentally taxing tasks in real life. We may become more easily irritated and frustrated with projects taking too long or requiring more mental effort.

Here are some practical tips to help you cut down on cell phone use:

- **Make your phone less accessible by keeping it in another room** - especially when sleeping
- **Put a password on your phone** - making it less convenient to just open and scroll
- **Keep social media apps off your home screen** - making them less accessible
- **Take social media apps off your phone completely** - only access them when using your computer.
- **Disable notifications** - so you’re not being constantly notified of messages, email, new videos, etc.
- **Set a timer** - allow only a certain amount of time to spend on your phone
- **Take a break** - disconnect from social media for an extended amount of time (a week or even a month)
- **Encourage family and friends to join you** - do something together in person
- **Engage in activities that don’t pair well with phone use** - going for a bike ride, seeing a movie, etc.
- **Make your screen color black-and-white** - it is less visually stimulating

If you find it difficult to disconnect from your phone or notice increasing issues with sleep, attention, or focus, it may be time to seek help. Reach out to your EAP.

EAP USPS Employee Assistance Program

CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
WWW.EAP4YOU.COM



by Eric
Chornoby

Steward
Customer
Care Center
APWU 480-481
Area Local

Not All Dogs Hate The Mailmen

Every once in a while, I get pleasantly surprised by my Postal Brothers and Sisters.

In December a story came to my attention that swelled me with pride. A story of a lost dog who went looking for its owners, and the wonderful Postal Workers at the Livonia Post Office on Merriam Road came to the rescue.

Tawny, the dog, had an interesting road to Livonia. Tawny's

family, the Campos, went on Vacation about seven months ago to Traverse City. Tawny was dropped off to be cared for. The theory is that the holiday fireworks scared Tawny. Tawny ran away. The Campos came home early in an effort to find their dog. According to the Campos', "We went door to door to people's houses, just looking for weeks and weeks and weeks and she was nowhere to be found."

When all hope was lost, the wonderful employees at the Livonia Post Office stepped up. Tawny made it 60 miles away to the woods behind the Livonia Post Office. Out of kindness, they fed

Tawny. Not knowing of the dog's harrowing journey.

This lasted until the Michigan weather began to turn, and fear of frigid winters forced a call to animal recovery. South Lyon Murphy Lost Animal Recovery trapped Tawny and discovered Tawny had a chip. This led to the Mosaic Animal Rescue in Hartland, and to a friend of the Campos family, LYNDA MALONE. Days before Christmas, the Campos were finally reunited with Tawny.

The Campos family call this a Christmas miracle. This reunion would not be at all possible without the help of the Livonia Post Office

and employees. Any dog who is accustomed to being taken care of and fed will have a hard time surviving, and it is undoubtable that this story would not have a happy ending without our Brothers and Sisters in Livonia.

This was a touching story and a real example of the good we do for our communities. Often unappreciated, nearly every community has a Post Office. Staffed by us, public servants who are on the front line helping our community. Kudos to our Brothers and Sisters in Livonia who helped make the Campos families Christmas one to remember.

Monsters Do Exist . . .

by Omar M. Gonzalez,
Wester Regional Coordinator

"... as evidenced by those that creep around postal work floors. This new year we re-focus on the harassment and bullying by postal monsters. It takes a postal village to take them on. Every part of our union must pursue these beasts!"

They have no right to make your work-life hell. Article 3 of the union contract requires compliance with the contract, laws, and postal regulations. EL 801 1-2; ELM 811.24 requires bosses to maintain good employee relations and ELM 665.24 allows no tolerance of bullying, harassment, or intimidation by anyone at any level. Supervisors must manage their workplace and foster an atmosphere conducive to work, and to avoid behavior that could be interpreted as harassment, per Publication 552.

Why then, do postal monsters exist? Because we tolerate them and fail to pursue them to the bitter end.

Shedding Light On The Fiend

Monsters hate light. We must fully document the bullying, intimidation and harassment via PS



1767. Use it because the Administrative Support Manual (273.132) states, "... To assure postal safety... employees must also report any disturbances or improper conduct on the part of individuals on postal premises." Bosses may balk at the use of 1767s, but Chap 824 backs its use.

When you fill out a 1767, take a picture or a copy, submit it to the next level manager; copy the safety

rep and union representative. The issue should be investigated within the tour of duty. If not, or if it is not abated, it should be grieved at Step 2.

Pursuing The Beast

Expect the monster to push-back against the use of a 1767. ELM 666.17 prohibits bosses from retaliation. Document harassment, bullying and mistreatment. Take notes and ask for help from co-workers. Ensure your officers pursue the matter at Step 2, per Article 14; then to the Safety Committee; then to arbitration. But a grievance is NOT enough!

File an EEO Complaint if harassed or discriminated against. Visit: efile.usps.com. Review the process at eeoc.gov. Although you may seek representation, it is not required, do not give up! But EEO is not enough!

Contact your congressional representatives and request their help addressing the harassment. Give them the facts. Keep copies for use in other forums! But Congress is not enough!

Contact the OIG/Postal Inspectors, ask for an investigation and let them know the facts. Keep copies.

If you use the "hotline" don't expect a response, especially if you call anonymously. Write to them with the facts reporting the misconduct. But the OIG/USPSIS is not enough!

See your doctor if the hostile environment is causing medical strife. Document medical attention received. Management acknowledges in Publication 552 (page 9) that some employees may suffer serious emotional and psychological harm from harassment. Document treatment, as it can be used in your EEOC complaint for compensatory damages. But seeing your doctor is not enough!

File an OWCP Stress Claim if you suffer emotional stress when carrying out your assignment under harassment or mistreatment. Abuse has to be proven to establish the relationship between the medical condition and work. This is done by documentation and a comprehensive medical report that establishes causal relation with what has occurred at work. Once all the required documentation is compiled, file a CA-2 Claim for Occupational Disease at: ecomps.dol.gov.

The Village Has To Commit

The union has to do its part to counter hostile environments. Employees begin the process, and representatives pursue the grievances and Safety Committee agendas. Business Agents elevate the appeals to arbitration and give them priority. Your Regional Coordinators Sharyn Stone, Tiffany Foster, AJ Jones, Yared Wonde and I are committed to assisting you. Your local union reps, the NBAs, and our national leaders document, pursue, and eliminate workplace harassment. It takes a village to get rid of monsters!

Michigan Messenger

Deadline for

Newsletter Submissions

April 1, 2023