

Postal Worker West

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PMG's 'Modernization' Plan Sets February As First Major Disruption Of The Year

WASHINGTON DC– Just one month after celebrating a “successful peak season” the Postmaster General's *Delivering For America* plan will be involuntarily reassigning hundreds of dedicated postal workers.

A majority of the targeted impacts to staffing identified in '2023' will become effective February 24th including the “excessing” of clerks and maintenance personnel throughout the nation. More excessing will follow in June and September 2024.

Delivering For America (DFA) Plan To Blame

So far the majority of planned forced involuntary reassignments are due to DeJoy's consolidation of delivery units into Sortation & Delivery Centers (SDCs) and consolidation of processing plants. *(continued on page 3)*

USPS TO TERMINATE NARCAN KITS

WASHINGTON DC– In it's infinite wisdom, management has unilaterally decided to get rid of naloxone nasal spray kits used to reverse life threatening effects of opiate narcotic overdoses.

In late December, the USPS Associate Medical Director directed occupational nurses to remove expired “Narcan Kits” as USPS has recently terminated the Narcan program. The directive also calls for installation heads in remote facilities to send in expired kits to be disposed of.

Narcan has been made available on the work room floors for at least four years. There is no indication why postal bosses decided to cancel the program.

“Amazing what value the bosses place on the lives of postal workers who can be exposed to narcotic opiates likely going through the mail stream,” said Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez. The Union has taken up this issue at the National Joint-Labor Management Committee.



Happy New Year



PWW returns after the COVID editions as there are so many postal life altering events that are occurring this year.



Washington DC– Alarm over 1st Amendmentors showing up at Post Offices throughout the country video taping in retail units has prompted re-issuance of policies on handling video taping .

Seeking Confrontation

While no one truly likes being filmed without permission many of these videographers want postal people to get upset, become rude and even have them call the police on these “intruders”.

“The best thing to do is to smile for the camera and be as polite as can be,” said Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez. *(continued on page 4)*



POSTAL REGULATIONS COVER CURRENT COVID ABSENCES BUT HOME TESTS WON'T DO TO COVER ABSENCES OVER THREE DAYS

COVID has not been eliminated. There is a spike in COVID and RSV cases. Yet, far too many postal bosses fail to take effects of the disease into consideration when related to attendance.

“The needs of the service is not the sole criteria for granting leave,” declares Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.” “Postal regulations contained in the ELM Handbook Sec. 511.1 also require the welfare of the individual welfare to be considered’ said Omar.

Home tests do not readily serve as substantiation of COVID absences

When it comes to COVID related absences, although the so called liberal leave policies in effect during the pandemic have expired, the long established regulations covering contagious diseases are still on the books and are enforceable under the Union contract Articles 10 and 19. **ELM 513.32 on the Conditions for Authorization of Sick Leave for Contagious disease states that “a contagious disease is a disease ruled as requiring isolation, quarantine, or restriction of movement of the patient for a particular period by the health authorities having jurisdiction. If an employee (1) must care for a family member afflicted with a contagious disease. (2) has been exposed to a contagious disease and would jeopardize the health of others, or (3) has evidence supplied by the local health authorities or a certification signed by a physician certifying the need for the period of isolation or restriction” sick leave can be authorized.**

Several factors come into play for employees to protect themselves and challenge AWOL or discipline for COVID absences. For one, a home test is not evidence of incapacitation for absences of **more than 3 days.** A medical document from the attending physician or practitioner in support of an application for sick leave is required. But for absences of **3 days or less** the supervisor may accept an employee’s statement explaining the absence. [if the boss declares a medical slip is “deemed desirable” for the protection of USPS for a 1-3 day absence such demand must be reasonable and not capricious. There must be a business reason for the demand. The F21 Handbook allows an employee to write in the PS 3971 Remarks Box the “absence was COVID [of RSV or Flu] related”.

Any leave denial related to COVID/RSV/FLU should be challenged and grieved. Any discipline issued must be grieved and meet the Tests for Just Cause in CBA/JCIM Article 16 and per JCIM Article 10, “all evidence and fact circumstances” must be considered by supervisors when determining if discipline is warranted and not just a set number of absences.

“Employees must not be intimidated by wayward supervisor’s misapplying leave and discipline rules,” declared the Regional Coordinator. “Likewise, employees should be aware when using the APP or *LiteBlue* to report absences , besides giving boss access to monitor and record the employee’s device, there is no Remarks Box on the virtual PS 3971”, cautioned Omar

The founder of Amazon has been using the Postal Service for about 30 years. And Amazon recognizes USPS’s universal service, as well as the Postal Service’s network, and at one time even praised “dedicated postal workers.”

According to reports, USPS has made over \$1 Billion of profits from doing business with Amazon. But such business is not restricted to the “last mile” delivery. Packages are often delivered to Post Office docks and then handled by clerks.

Some postal workers lament having to “work” amazon. So called Amazon work helps keep postal workers employed. “Yes, having cages full of parcels from amazon can be daunting but it is work performed by postal workers,” said Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez. “Working ‘amazon Sundays’ is compensated at the Sunday Premium rate. But speed ups or work standards imposed by postal management is improper and violates Articles 14 & 34 of our contract. Such speed ups must be challenged for employees’ health,” he added.

**I hate doing
amazon
work**



Modernization Plan Disruptions

(continued from page 1)

In addition to forced involuntary reassignments out of craft or installations there will be tour impacts and bid job changes with revised schedules.

While the *Postal Reorganization Act* allows management to determine the method, means and personnel by which postal operations are to be conducted the Union Contract restricts some of those rights. “DeJoy does not enjoy a blank check to do whatever he wants. He is one governor of the USPS Board of Governors and still subject to postal laws and regulations,” explains Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.

Contract Rights Are Applicable

When it comes to involuntary reassignments out of craft or installation the sole criteria for selecting who is to be excessed is seniority (by inverse seniority meaning the most junior employees are selected).

There are limits on the distance an employee can be reassigned which currently is 40-50 miles. Saved grade rules protect salary rates. Management must preserve (called withholding) residual vacancies in which to place impacted employees. There are special transfer rules with some priority to lessen the number of employees impacted, as well as, retreat rights for the reassigned employees. “The CBA contains 20 pages of Article 12 rules, the JCIM has 27 pages of rules with the bottom line being employee dislocation and inconvenience is to be kept to a minimum,” revealed Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.

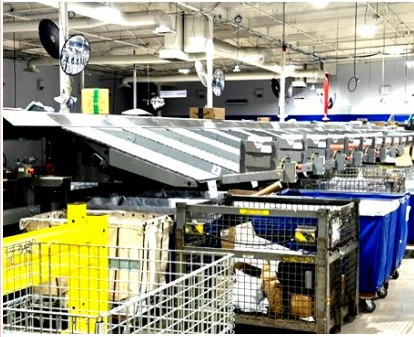
[See related info on page 5]



The current contract that protects against lay-off and from being involuntarily reassigned beyond 50 miles expires on September 20, 2024. Here are some highlights of the preliminary process involved:

- National Union HQ has been preparing for months including reviewing Convention resolutions from the Labor-Management Committee voted upon by convention delegates that are guidance for negotiators.
- In February 2024 the National Executive Board, comprising of 13 officers, selects one (1) member each to serve on the Rank & File Bargaining Advisory Committee. This committee has veto power over whether a tentative agreement reached by USPS and the Union is to be sent out for ratification by the entire membership.
- In June 2024 negotiations begin between USPS officials and the Union's Negotiations Committee, comprised of the President, Industrial Relations Director, Clerk, MVS, Maintenance and Support Services Directors. Other officers are utilized as well.

THE SORDID SIDE OF SORTATION CENTERS

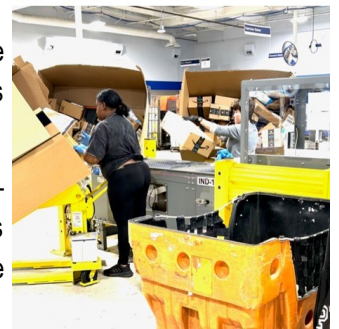


The PMG's *Delivering for America Plan* targets 10,000 delivery units for consolidation most of which will be relocated into SDCs (Sortation & Delivery Centers). The PMG has for the most part reallocated existing facilities, put fresh new paint on the walls, replaced lighting, refurbished breakrooms and bought brand new carrier cases and lockers. Most, if not all, have a SDUS sorting machine capable of processing thousands of parcels per hour.

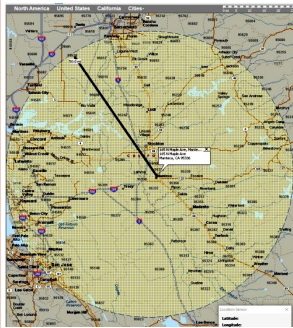
Dark Side of SD&Cs

While some media outlets appear to give these centers a nod of approval at times quoting clerks with positive comments, the fact is there are latent negative issues associated with SD&Cs.

Repetitive motion diseases resulting from clerks trying to keep up with each of the conveyor belt slots will likely surface. [Per CBA Article 34 there are no work standards requiring such speed ups] Postal regulations require *Job Safety Analysis* forms be issued to ensure no injuries occur. Employees and Stewards must insist on the analysis.



Schedule Changes and Involuntary Reassignments (excessing) will occur both at the SDCs and at "Spoke" offices as carrier costs will be offset by cuts to clerk hours. The PMG's plan calls for cutting up to 50 million work hours. Bid assignments will be affected along with excessing. SDCs are Function 4 offices subject to Function 4 reviews on so called "earned hours". Clerks taking short cuts to "get the work done faster" will not only hurt their health but their job security. **All that is required is a 'fair day's work'! Employee must make proper clock rings!**



Some Post Offices will close eventually. The bosses tell the media and public no post office will close due to these SDC consolidations. But lost leases and suspended offices have increased. The PMG told the PRC, rationalized (closed) stations & branches in the future might impact retail access. The PMG is promising to evaluate and consolidate 'low-traffic' stations and branches resulting in excessing of clerks and custodians. Offices within 50 miles of an SDC will see reduced staffing. Meanwhile, large TV screens at SDCs promote the PMG's propaganda.



Smile You're on Can & Did Camera (continued from page 1)

Official instructions on handling videotaping call for employees **only** to report the person to management immediately and not engage with the person and to remain professional and not call into question the employee's conduct.

Management has to take action

The boss has to ask if the person has business with USPS, tell them taking videos of employees or customers is prohibited by federal regulation. After being warned about disorderly conduct and such conduct occurs **the boss** should call the Inspectors or police out of camera site. "Let the bosses do their job, employees should not engage. If the boss fails to follow policy report them on a PS 1767," said Omar Gonzalez.

Prayers for 2024

May your health improve.
 May your family be loved.
 May your friends be blessed.
 May your pains lessen.
 May your worries disappear.
 May God bless you. And hold you in the palm of His hand today & always.
Amen.



WHEN IT COMES TO STAFFING

Under DeJoy's plan, new staffing and complement modeling will result in tour changes and reporting time changes. For clerks management can change reporting times only 1 hour without reposting the assignment. Maintenance and MVS only two hours can be changed without affecting the bid. Off day changes require reposting

Excessing (forced reassignment) out of sections at postal facilities is by juniority. Abolishment [reduction of the number of occupied duty assignment(s)] is usually based on a USPS Staffing Model program that counts "earned" hours. These earned hours are based on productivity as reported by MODS (Management Operating Data System). MODS relies on the data gleaned from employee clock rings. *"Employees need to know how important making the right clock rings, including MOVES, are to proper staffing," advised Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.* The Union has a staffing program (MDAT) that can be used to count work hours to be used to contest improper abolishments and reversion of assignments.

Long Window Lines? Don't take Shortcuts!

Most SSDAs (window clerks) hate to see the long lines in retail lobbies and rightly so because they care about customer service. But, management does not adequately staff the window section. Management allows box mail to not be boxed due to staffing shortage. Employees must not take shortcuts. Every transaction

over the window needs to be recorded. Reviews called Function 4s and CSV Variance reports are used to cut work hours/staff. These are based on clock rings and WOS Factors that count how long each transaction takes. "Each transaction must be recorded, even when someone asks for directions", pleaded Coordinator Gonzalez. No short cuts, no tossing parcels to a bin without recording them. **"The best way to handled long lines– smile, be polite and ask customers to take the survey and report the long wait in line"** advised Gonzalez.

Coming To Your Plant Soon– Maintenance Pods

DeJoy's plan even calls for the centralization of tools used by ETs and Mechanics. Besides facing reassignments as plants are consolidated, employees will have tools needed to do their jobs placed into PODs so that when employees get tools there will be a record of who got what when. **MVS Won't Be Spared Disruptions** as more stations and branches are consolidated into Sortition & Delivery Centers with routes being modified. There is no craft that will be spared since DeJoy's plan calls for 50 million work hours to be cut.

Veterans' Medicine Processing Shortfalls were identified in a recent OIG audit of 14 facilities finding that Priority Mail shipments are not scanned accurately nor is the handling of damaged medication done properly. The report also indicated a need to develop and implement a control over duplicate "Delivered" scans.

Union Opens History Center



The APWU's January 8th Grand Opening of it's history center will provide visiting union members a look at the Union's 126 years of struggles and achievements.

The APWU itself is considered a relatively "young" labor organization established in 1971 as a result of the merger of four postal craft unions (clerks, maintenance, mvs, special delivery) and an independent industrial postal union (NPU). However, APWU can trace it's history as far back as 1898. The loose federation of postal employees soon was chartered by the American Federation of Labor as the first federal union in the nation. The exhibits in the Center reflect the fight for recognition by the US Post Office Department, the struggles over the fight for collective bargaining, women's and human rights. Efforts to create one postal union by merger and the Great Postal Strike are presented in a fact based manner. The founding fathers, early postal union pioneers, past and current officers are honored for their efforts to enhance the work life and living standards of postal workers throughout the decades. *"When in DC drop on by, the Center belongs to the members. Its something to be proud of," exclaimed Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.*

Request For Info Denied?

Postal bosses are notorious for refusing to provide Requests for Information to Union reps seeking evidence over contract violations. But DeJoy has taken this practice to a whole new level.

Its one thing for the PMG's cronies to refuse to take questions at public meetings over consolidations of operations and the Board of Governors to not allow public comments at its "open" sessions but the PMGs is even refusing to answer and provide information to the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC).

The clear as mud PMG is refusing to respond to inquiries related to his DFA consolidation plans claiming in part his plan does not affect nationwide mail service changes. This PMG is hell bent on implementing his plan apparently wanting no oversight. He claimed "obstacles" will not deter him from his plans. Time will tell if he gets away with refusing the PRC requests.

HATCHED NOT GAGGED

With the 2024 election cycle in full swing postal workers, like the rest of America, will be bombarded with TV Ads, political mail and campaigns. But unlike most Americans, postal workers will get stark warnings from management on political activity prohibitions imposed by the Hatch Act and will face stiff penalties by the Office of Special Counsel for violations.



However, the Hatch Act does not prohibit all political activity by postal workers. What is prohibited is partisan political activity while on the clock, in a post office and/or while in a postal uniform. Also, there can be no partisan political activity while driving a postal vehicle. Nor can official postal equipment be used. And when it comes to social media there can be no partisan political activity including on Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok etc. while on duty or in a post office.

The Law Was Originally Intended To Protect Us

Going as far back as President Thomas Jefferson's Executive Order prohibitions on "electioneering, followed by the Pendleton Act signed by President Chester Arthur in 1883 intended to eliminate the "spoils system", federal employees have been under restrictions. Alleged improprieties involved by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) led to the enactment of **An Act to Prevent Pernicious Political Activities** championed by Senator Cal Hatch (D-NM) in 1939 which is now commonly referred to as "the Hatch Act."

The Hatch Act Has Been Amended Several Times

In 1940 an amendment included restrictions on state and local governmental agencies receiving federal funding. Challenges before the US Supreme Court did not prevail. Most efforts to lift the Hatch Act restrictions have not been successful. However, in 1993 a law was passed that lifted some of the prohibitions regarding taking part in political campaigns. In 2012 President Obama signed an amendment which allowed other disciplinary actions for violations not just terminations.

What Is Permitted Under The Hatch Act

Postal workers are covered under the Hatch Act as less restricted employees. Under the Hatch Act political activity is prohibited. Political activity is defined as an activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan office, or partisan political group. A partisan election is one in which any candidate is to be nominated or elected as representing a party any of whose candidate for Presidential elector received votes in the last pending election at which Presidential electors were selected.

"Those restrictions are no excuse for union members to shy away from their right to be involved in the political process of this country," said Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.

He outlined the following rights of union members to engage in politics. Union members have the right:

To vote for and to express opinions on political subjects and candidates. To donate money to a partisan group or candidate. To attend fundraisers and take an active part in managing the political campaign of a partisan candidate or candidate for political party. To canvass for votes, endorse candidates and circulate petitions as well as canvass for votes and serve as party officers and convention delegates, also to attend rallies and even run for office in nonpartisan elections. "The key is not to do any of these activities on the clock, in uniform or on postal property," said Gonzalez. [see osc.gov FAQs for guidance]

