

THE FORCE

United We Bargain, Divided We Beg!

Most people believe they got what they have on their own merit. I don't want to disappoint anyone but it's not true! We all stand on the shoulders of heroes. Most were quiet survivors but some stand out as Leaders who moved the world. Crystal Lee Sutton, a.k.a. Norma Rae, Karen Silkwood, Mother Jones, John L. Lewis, to name a few. All of these folks worked to ensure groups of laborers were treated fairly in the work place. You would not get breaks, weekends off, overtime, paid holidays, equitable opportunities for jobs, workplace safety, paid sick or annual leave, flexible tour of duty or whistleblower protections if not for the millions of union members, stewards and leaders.

I know these things are expected, now. But these and other protections Unions fought for and won over the last hundred and fifty years can be lost by a blasé attitude toward unions. Non members are happy to bask in the blessings won by unions. There are folks who vehemently quit the union or react with verbal violence when asked to join. But I sure don't see them giving up any of the rights Unions won for them. They are still only working 8 hours a day, still expect to be treated with respect in the work place, still expect to be considered for promotions, fairly. Then actually complain that the union only protects bad employees. I hope it's because they are ignorant of the benefits bought by union member dues and work. But it often looks like entitlement. If you aren't paying dues to some union, you should work through Labor Day. AND you should do it with your head hanging in shame. Are you really so blind to the truth. Do you really believe any employer would have gifted you with premium pay, paid holidays, paid time off? All of that cuts into their bottom line. What makes you so special, they would give you free money? They do it because Unions lobbied Congress and got laws passed. Do you really think you would have been hired instead of their wife's nephew? Be real. Do you think if you were hurt at work they would pay your medical bills? NO, that would be your problem. And you would have to pay those bills while not collecting a pay check because you weren't at work!

Paying dues is not a euphemism for putting in enough time to get to the next level. Paying your dues is a real bill every bargaining unit employee should pay so the benefits don't get shut off!

I wonder if folks think "Well, that was the old days? Now days, this stuff is a given, I don't need a Union to keep this stuff." After all the Triangle Shirt Factory fire was a hundred years ago. Well, guess again! This time last year NTEU was fighting to keep Union rights for Bargaining Unit Employees in the Government. With the stroke of a pen, President Trump attempted to strip bargaining rights from all the analysts grade 11 and above. Imagine, you work years to get to a position within your Agency that makes it easier to afford food and it can all be taken away because a different political party gets elected. Yep, it could happen. This was one more demonstration of the slippery slope of labor law. All those benefits enjoyed for the last half a century can be eliminated in one bill, with one Executive Order. And don't make the mistake of thinking, well that was that guy or that party. It's not one political party or the other. It's because both sides think you don't care about your rights.

Because people mistakenly think they earned their holiday weekend.

Get your head out of the sand! Pay your dues! Fight for your rights! Join the Union! Stand Proud because you are the Union!

Enjoy this Holiday in Honor of Union Members!

-Debbie Mullikin, President

NTEU73

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TOGETHER WE BARGAIN



DIVIDED WE BEG

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Earning and Using Credit Hours

Did you know that when your department offers overtime you may be eligible to work those additional hours as credit hours?

First, you would need to speak with your manager to get the approval to work credit hours. Once you receive the approval, a maximum of 24 credit hours may be carried forward from pay period to pay period for full-time employees.

Credit hours can be earned and used in 15-minute increments. Credit hours earned can be requested to be used the same as you would request other types of leave such as annual leave. Management will make reasonable efforts to grant the employees request to use credit hours consistent with workload and staffing needs. Management must provide a written explanation within two workdays if they deny the use of banked credit hours.

Credit hours may not be used the same day they are earned; however, you can use banked credit hours on the same day you are earning more credit hours. Also, credit hours can be used in place of or in combination with other types of leave if approved of in advance by management.

Earning and banking up to 24 credit hours helps employees in several ways:

- (1) It gives employees a way to balance home and work life without using all their accumulated leave;
- (2) it gives employees the opportunity to grow their leave banks; and finally,
- (3) (3) it lets employees, who work the extra hours, decide which is best for them and their family, overtime pay or credit hours to use as needed.

Hope Osborne Towe



*“The most important word in the language of the working class is
“solidarity.””- Harry Bridges*



Article 28-Breaks

Labor unions were created to assist employees with difficulties faced on the job, including unsafe working conditions, low pay, and long hours. Your National Agreement is like an insurance policy that you will not face these challenges alone. As an IRS employee, you are entitled to short breaks throughout the day to give your mind and body a breather. Article 28, Section 1 (on page 101) of the National Agreement goes over how breaks will be set, which will be based on the amount of time you work. Because there are a variety of schedules created to fit the needs of the employer and employee, we thought addressing it couldn't hurt.

- Employees working a traditional 5-day 8-hour work week are entitled to two 15-minute breaks, and a 30-minute unpaid lunch. Your paid breaks cannot be more than 300 minutes every pay period.
- Employees working a 5/4 days 9-hour work week are entitled to a two 15-minute break, a 30-minute unpaid lunch, plus a 5-minute break normally scheduled two hours after your last break or lunch. Your paid breaks cannot be more than 310 minutes every pay period.
- Employees working a 4-day 10-hour work week are entitled to two 15-minute breaks, a 30-minute unpaid lunch, an additional 10-minute break normally scheduled two hours after your last break or lunch. Your paid cannot be more than 320 minutes for the biweekly pay period.

Management will create your break schedule. However, you can always work out an alternative break schedule with your supervisor so long as you fit within the total allotted break time per biweekly pay period. The IRS resource page provides a great chart and some Q&A on the subject as well

<https://irssource.web.irs.gov/Lists/Timekeeping/DispItemForm.aspx?ID=29>.

Rachel Lovins

STEWARDS' CORNER

Your NTEU Stewards are here to fight for you! We are available in person, by phone, email, or skype!

GATEWAY STEWARDS

President: Debbie Mullikin

Vice President: Chris Pierce

Secretary/Chief Steward:

Shannon Lovins

Day Shift Full Time Stewards:

Loretha Hudson, Rachel Lovins,
Angela Moore

Day Shift Part Time Stewards:

Tonya Morris, Nicole Guethlein, Jennifer Smith

Swing Shift Chief Steward:

Alex Walker

Swing Shift Part Time Stewards:

Brandy Belew

ANNEX BUILDING STEWARDS

Day Shift Full Time Steward:

Hope Osborne Towe

ISO BUILDING

Treasurer/Full Time Steward:

Janet Colwell

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Coming Attractions to Article 50 (Telework Agreement)



Since September has arrived, what better way to celebrate and recognize bargaining unit employees by giving you some new updates on the telework agreement! Many NTEU officers, NTEU attorneys, and local presidents worked months to put together a new 6-year contract for all bargaining unit employees. The new contract is effective beginning October 1, 2021. We are very excited that the new Biden Administration is union friendly!

We know the pandemic has been a challenge for everyone. However, despite the challenges, NTEU took advantage of employees' success in the workplace and was able to successfully expand telework eligibility to numerous positions previously not eligible for telework. The list of employees now eligible for telework under the new contract has expanded so much that these employees are now in a new section of the contract (Exhibit 50-2). However, keep in mind that if your position is not listed under Exhibit 50-2, that does not mean that your position is not qualified under the general telework criteria under Article 50. Who could have guessed that such a bad situation would have such a good change for bargaining unit employees? Now you can stay home where you can be safe, save more money and use less gas for your car, and eat healthier from your own refrigerator.

Additionally, the required tele-

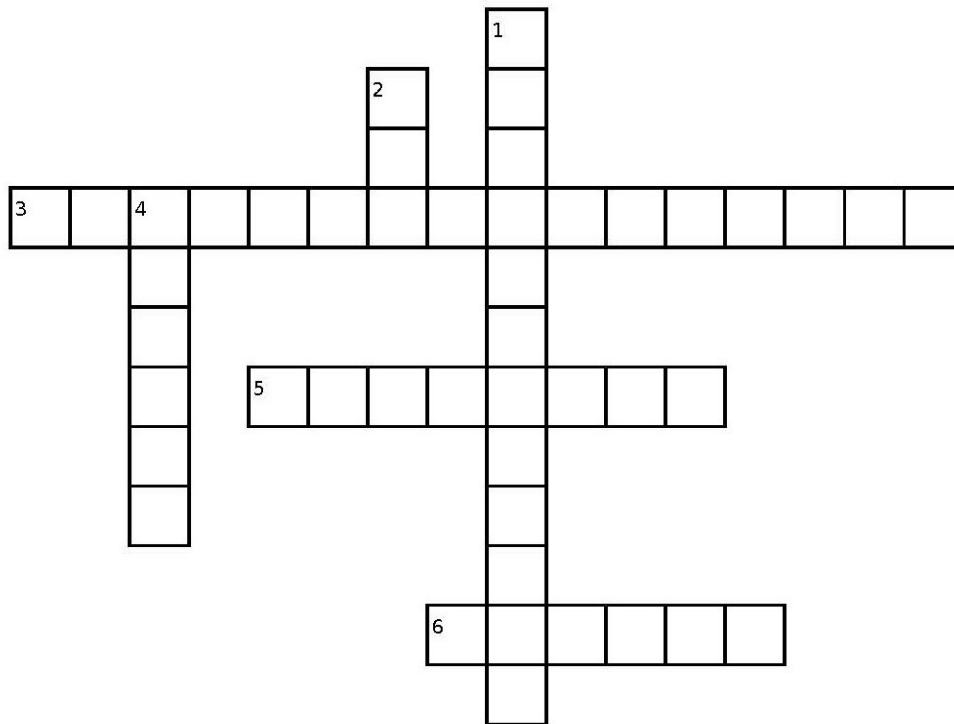
work mileage radius from home to your post of duty has been extended to two hundred (200) miles from one hundred fifty (150) miles. This means that if your position is eligible for telework, you can telework for up to 200 miles from your post of duty. In the event that you want to telework outside of these 200 miles for a short period of time, the new contract includes a provision allowing employees to request a waiver of the 200-mileage restrictions for up to two pay periods per year. This could help you care for a sick relative and still telework during your tour of duty or maybe telework from the beach for an entire month during a family vacation! This means that you would be able to save your sick or annual leave for this situation. What a good benefit!

Thank you so much for being a member and contributing your funds that support all employees.

Best regards,
Janet Colwell



Crossword Puzzle



Down:

1. Representation designated by employees regarding a matter of concern
2. The amount of hours employees are granted to participate in Labor Recognition activities
4. These will be taken in two (2) fifteen (15) minute increments

Across:

3. Recognized 1 week each year
5. time in addition to what is normal, as time worked beyond one's scheduled working hours
6. A maximum of twenty-four (24) hours may be carried forward from pay period to pay period

COVID-19 Emergency Paid Leave Guidance Issued



The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has issued an updated guidance regarding the Emergency Federal Leave Fund. This updated guidance provides agencies with the tools they need to administer leave to employees in need. Previously, there was uncertainty from the agencies on whether certain employees would qualify for this leave.

OPM has identified the circumstances where employees can qualify for the emergency leave. Generally, it is for situations related to personal or family COVID-19 illness, required quarantine because of possible exposure, and the closures of schools or daycare facilities for children or dependent adults. OPM has clarified that this leave could be applied retroactively, but it is limited. Emergency leave can only be applied to pandemic-related sick or annual leave you have already used since March 11, when the law was passed. Pandemic-related leave used before March 11 is not eligible for conversion.

Three updates from OPM to be aware of:

1. Employees will need to complete the application form, as well as sign an employee agreement. The agreement acknowledges that the approval of the emergency leave is contingent upon money still being available in the leave fund. If the fund is depleted and you miss work, you agree to reimburse the agency for any funds they may have been distributed to you. This can be done by substituting the appropriate leave or by monetarily reimbursing the value of your leave.
2. The emergency paid leave program expires on Sept. 30, 2021, or when the \$570 million fund created by Congress runs dry. It is available for up to 600 hours or 15 weeks per employee.
3. Most employees will receive the same pay for emergency paid leave hours they would receive if they were on annual leave. Each employee can use up to \$2,800 worth of emergency paid leave in a two-week pay period; this equates to a \$35/hour rate.

NTEU is working diligently to ensure this leave is made available to employees who qualify. For the most up to date information regarding COVID-19 and your workplace, please visit nteu.org. There you will find a detailed explanation of the emergency paid leave program as well as other leave types.

Alex Walker



NTEU members receive a 15 percent discount for all services at any participating Jiffy Lube® location, including a Jiffy Lube Signature Service® oil change or other preventive maintenance services. Just present your valid NTEU membership card and NTEU's fleet account number to receive the discount.

Hotel/Motel And Car Rental Discounts

Choice Hotels Enjoy a 10 percent discount on reservations at participating Choice Hotels. These hotels include Sleep Inns, Comfort Inns, Quality Inns, Clarion Hotels, Friendship Inns, Econo Lodges and Rodeway Inns.

Avis Car Rental Avis offers NTEU members a discount on all rentals. Whether it's during the week or on the weekend, using the Avis/NTEU AWD number will have you on the road with extra money in your pocket.

Budget Rental Cars NTEU members can now enjoy discounts at Budget. For personal and/or business rentals, NTEU members will get the best rate available and can save even more with re-usable coupons.

Order your Membership Activation Certificate online only to receive this special promotion. Not available at Costco locations.



Join Costco as a new member and receive a \$30 Costco Shop Card.

Use a Costco Membership Activation Certificate to: • Join as a Gold Star Executive Member: Purchase a Costco Membership Activation Certificate for \$120. • Join as a Gold Star Member: Purchase a Membership Activation Certificate for \$60. • Give the gift of a Costco Membership Activation Certificate for any occasion.

Not valid for renewal of existing membership.

You will receive an email that includes your Costco Membership Activation Certificate. Valid for new memberships only. *Costco Membership Activation Certificates are offered online only and are not available for purchase at Costco locations.*

To activate your Costco membership you must bring your Costco Membership Activation Certificate to any U.S. or Puerto Rico Costco membership counter. Costco Shop Card will be mailed after you have joined Costco as a new member. Costco Shop Card is not generated by purchasing a Costco Membership Activation Certificate. Visit Costco.com to find a location near you.



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Cancer Insurance Plans



Whole (Permanent) Life Insurance Policies (Cash Value + Paid Dividends)

Other Benefits available Dental, Vision and Legal Shield



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