

February 2025



M.T.S. NEWS

APWU LOCAL 152 NEWSLETTER



HOT TOPICS:

- ☒ FMLA: Is your Leave Protected?
- ☒ Protect Your Job, Avoid Discipline
- ☒ What Project 2025 and Schedule F Mean for Postal Workers, Union Members, and more
- ☒ Employee Assistance Program - Prioritize Your Health!
- ☒ Eagle Clean and Work Schedules
- ☒ Why You Should Participate in Your Union!
- ☒ Info from MVS Director Michael Foster
- ☒ Social Security Fairness Act Enacted

The President's Report | By President Trina Wynn

Making Sure Your Leave is Protected



Once again, discipline for attendance is on the rise. It is imperative that as an employee, we are in regular attendance at work. The Union understands that there are circumstances that may prevent you from being able to report to work and report on time. This is part of the reason why the APWU has fought and secured earned sick leave and annual leave in our contract. As an employee, you must learn how to utilize this sick leave and annual leave in a manner that protects you.

If you have a qualifying condition which falls under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), your absences can be protected by having your doctor complete the

forms. Once you submit your FMLA certification, you must follow through and make sure it is accepted and approved. When using FMLA, make sure that you put your FMLA case file number on your 3971. If you have any questions or concerns, please see your shop steward.

Everyone is late from time to time. Perhaps there was an accident on your way to work and you were held up in traffic or had to take a detour. Maybe you had a flat tire and had to pull-over to change it. Sometimes tardiness can be beyond the control of the employee, and they are rare. In cases like such, the Union believes management should not count these incidents as unscheduled. Usually, if you inform your supervisor of the extenuating circumstances which made you late, the supervisor will allow you to take scheduled leave or allow you to change your schedule. If management denies you the opportunity to do so, ask to see your steward and file a grievance.

Management has a right to request documentation to protect the interest of the Postal Service. For example, if you were on restricted sick leave, if you have shown a pattern with calling out, or if you had been denies annual leave for the day. These are examples of reasonable explanations for management to request documentation. The mere fact that it is the Superbowl or a holiday weekend is not justification to request documentation. Management does not have the right to blanket request documentation without reasonable cause for requiring the documentation.

However, please keep in mind that if an employee leaves sick prior to completion of an eight (8) hour work day, management can require the employee to provide documentation to support why they left sick. If management informs you that your documentation is unacceptable, please file a grievance immediately with your shop steward.

How Can I Have Scheduled Leave Without FMLA?

Sick leave insures employees against loss of pay if they are incapacitated and cannot perform their duties because of illness, injury, pregnancy and confinement, or medical (including dental or optical) examination or treatment.

Often when employees are out sick for more than 3 days, they provide medical documentation to management upon their return to work. Which will result in management marking your sick leave as unscheduled (unscheduled absences are any absences from work that are not requested and approved in advance). However, if you are sick and you visit the doctor and he/she takes you out of work for multiple days, an employee should supply your supervisor with the doctor's note immediately along with a completed 3971 requesting sick leave. This will allow your absence to be scheduled. The union will argue you made management aware prior to your scheduled report time. Keep in mind your doctor's note needs reflect the employee is incapacitate for a certain amount of time. Typically, medical statements such as "under my care" or "received treatment" are not acceptable evidence of incapacitation to perform duties. If you provide medical documentation in advance and your supervisor disapproves or marks the absences as unscheduled, you need to request a shop steward.

Discipline is The Path to Your Job Being In Jeopardy

The American Postal Workers Union has fought long and hard to protect employees under our Collective Bargaining Agreement. One of the best protections the APWU has secured is Article 16 in the CBA. Where a basic principle shall be discipline should be corrective in nature, rather than punitive. If you receive discipline such as a Letter of Warning, Suspension of 14 Days or Less, Suspension of More Than 14 Days or Discharge you must grieve it within 14 days of receiving the written discipline. Discipline stays live in an employee file for 2 years.

**In Unionism,
President Trina Wynn**

APWU
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

EDUCATION IS THE KEY

What Does Project 2025/Schedule F Mean for Postal Workers?

Americans all over the world depend on efficient government services such as post office deliveries, social security checks, and veteran benefits for everyday living expenses and needs. Senior citizens who receive pension benefits, social security benefits, and other forms of assistance rely on these services to continue without interruption.

Almost everyone in the U.S., especially senior citizens, depends on postal services to receive their mail, greeting cards, and gifts from loved ones and grandchildren who live in different states. As you can see, nearly everyone depends on the services provided by the post office in some way—whether it is receiving a paper check for benefits, paying bills, or getting important packages delivered worldwide.

With Project 2025 seemingly going into effect under the new Trump administration, job classifications for appointment in the excepted service of the United States federal civil service and related positions will most likely be affected. If successful, Project 2025 would not only be damaging to low-income Americans but also to middle-class families and anyone in America who relies on government-based resources.

This act would eliminate millions of federal jobs and propose deep budget cuts to many government departments that process essential benefits and programs. It would also lead to eliminating and privatizing agencies like the post office and imposing a hiring freeze on employment, which would cause even greater staffing shortages.

Additionally, all union workers would have their union rights revoked, as collective bargaining would be deemed illegal under Project 2025. This would impact all public sector employees, including postal workers, TSA workers, and DOJ employees.

The Impact of Project 2025/Schedule F on Union Employees and Veterans

If Project 2025 Schedule F gets reinstated, it would mean that hundreds of thousands of union employees and members would have their rights stripped away. Veterans would also be negatively affected, as many of their programs would lose essential protections.

The federal government has long been indebted to veterans and military personnel, who have served and defended the Constitution. However, under Project 2025, the Trump administration would strip veterans of their healthcare, disability benefits, and other entitlements they have earned.

Veterans receive most of their care from hospitals and clinics across the world. If Project 2025 is reinstated, these hospitals and clinics could be closed or privatized, leading to devastating consequences. Many of us know military personnel who deserve these benefits more than anyone due to their sacrifices for this country.

To stay updated on these developments, visit www.news.va.gov.



Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free, confidential program that offers short-term counseling, life coaching, and crisis support. EAP also provides services for employees and family members who need assistance with emotional issues, financial and legal matters, and general support.

Additionally, EAP offers free drug and alcohol education classes for all postal employees and their families. Employees can even schedule their first appointment during work hours to ensure they do not miss out on their compensation for that day.

If you or a family member need these services, please reach out and schedule an appointment.

An EAP representative for PA-2 will be at the Wilmington, Delaware plant around the last week of February or the first week of March to provide an orientation on the available EAP programs for postal employees. Be on the lookout for a flyer with more details.

Remember, these services are free for all postal employees and their families.

PHONE NUMBER: 1-800-EAP-4-YOU
(1-800-327-4968)
WEBSITE: USPS.NDBH.COM/EAP
TTY NUMBER: 1-877-492-7341

SECRETARY- TREASURER'S NEWSLETTER



A nonprofit corporation is a legal entity that exists not to generate profit, unlike LLCs and for-profit corporations, which are designed to do so. A nonprofit corporation is purpose-driven, such as the APWU. The APWU believes in fairness across the board. Therefore, one of its key purposes is to enforce and defend the APWU National Contract, ensuring a better workplace for all members.

Our organization also follows a set of bylaws and a Constitution, both of which the local adheres to. Each member contributes dues, which are deducted from their paycheck biweekly. These dues are used to operate the organization.

One example of an operating expense is a seminar. Members who attend receive training and education to better defend APWU members. When attending, they are in a status of Leave Without Pay (LWOP). However, the union compensates them. To receive payment, attendees must complete a voucher, which must be reviewed and signed by the President or Vice President and the Secretary-Treasurer.

Lastly, the Trustees conduct an audit of the union's books and inventory to ensure that funds are being properly utilized.

NEWS FROM THE CLERK CRAFT DIRECTOR:



Higher-Level Assignments are covered in Article 25 of the CBA and JCIM. Higher-level work is defined as "an assignment to a ranked higher-level position, whether or not such a position has been authorized at the installation."

An employee who is detailed to higher-level work shall be paid at the higher level for the time actually spent performing such duties. The higher-level pay is equivalent to the amount they would receive if promoted to that position. If an employee is temporarily assigned or detailed to a lower-level position, they shall continue to be paid at their own rate, meaning they will not experience a pay cut.

An employee detailed to higher-level work shall receive a written order from Management, stating the start date, the approximate termination date, and directing the employee to perform the duties of the higher-level position. The detailing of employees to higher-level bargaining unit work in each craft shall be based on eligibility, qualifications, and availability, and shall come from the immediate work area where the temporarily vacant higher-level position exists.

Employees working short-term on a higher-level assignment or detail will be entitled to approved sick and annual leave paid at the higher-level rate for a period not exceeding three (3) days. "Short-term" refers to an assignment or detail lasting 29 days or less. If the detail extends to thirty (30) days or longer, the detailed employee is entitled to compensation for authorized sick and annual leave at the higher-level rate, provided they resume the assignment upon returning to work. Holiday pay is also granted at the higher-level rate, provided the employee performs higher-level work on both the workday preceding and following the holiday, or if they work the higher-level assignment on the holiday itself.

Additionally, every clerk duty assignment job should have a "Principal" or "Primary" assignment listed in the job description. If a job does not include a "Principal" or "Primary" assignment, the employee should file a grievance to have one added. The absence of this designation could result in the employee being moved out of their bid job regardless of seniority if junior clerks in the section have an assignment listed in their job descriptions. Management may argue that the employee is not part of the section due to the lack of a Principal or Primary assignment, potentially leading to exclusion from class-action grievance payouts related to that section.

Article 37.3E, "Information on Notices," in the CBA states:

"Information shall be as shown below and shall be specifically stated:

5. The principal assignment area... where the greater portion of the assignment will be performed;
 - a. Management will post the duties on Mail Processing Clerk duty assignments."

Ensuring that every clerk duty assignment includes a Principal or Primary assignment is essential to protecting job security, preventing improper reassignments, and ensuring eligibility for grievance settlements.

- CHARLES PHILLIPS MTS APWU LOCAL 152

MAINTENANCE NEWSLETTER

WRITTEN BY:
JOHN HARRIS
MAINT CRAFT DIR

OPEN SEASON

Open season for all crafts to take the 955 exam is coming up in March 2025. SPREAD THE WORD!!



CHECK THE BOARD FOR SCHOOLS

Check the boards near the maintenance supervisor office every once in a while to see what new training is available.



WHAT'S GOING ON IN MAINTENANCE

Hello brothers and sisters. There has been a lot going on in the maintenance craft in the past few months. They have been filled with a lot of wins and losses concerning our craft. In this newsletter, I will break down what is going on within each occupation of maintenance. First, I am going to start with the Custodial occupation. I cannot stress enough the importance of filling the correct time out on your DAC sheets. These times that you are filling out on your DAC sheets are part of the determination of the end of the year line h grievances. If the work was not completed, please do not put any time on it. You would be shooting yourself in the foot and making it impossible to get paid from the line h grievance.

Speaking of line h, I met with Labor rep Tanisha St. John about the line h grievance in December of 2024, and it was table until our next meeting which will be on February 4, 2025. The supervisors are not letting employees make up their time anymore. If you are late, it will count against you if you do not have FMLA leave to cover your lateness. Grievances cannot be filed to argue about you being late and making up your time by taking a short lunch or clocking out late at the end of the day. This goes for anybody, not just the custodians.

Next, the Maintenance Mechanics; we all know the MM7 occupation has dwindled down in the number of employees from retirement and resignations. Double check your DAC sheets and make sure you don't have double the work. Management is good for giving you double the work and trying to have you complete it in an 8-hour day. If they offer the overtime to do the extra work, take advantage of it. There are a few MM7 jobs that went out of the building due to no successful bidders and nobody being available from the inservice list that HR held job fairs for. When I get the information on the job fairs, I will let everyone know so that you all can pass it to your family members and friends.



UNDER MAINTENANCE

MPE's and ET's - I have grouped these occupations together because these two occupations have similar problems. These problems have been ongoing, and have been stated in previous newsletters. Although it is management's job to get the turnover report from the previous tour to make our jobs easier, we need to try and communicate with our fellow peers from tour to tour. I know it is very frustrating to come into work with machinery already down, and not know anything about it until operations comes in and starts yelling over the radios. Lets just do ourselves a favor by working together and communicating with each other and not try to rely on management, as we all know that management is unreliable.

Last but not least, BEM's. All I need from the BEM's is to let me, or any other maintenance steward of any contracting going on. Management is good for sneaking some contractors in the building to do work that I know our BEM's can handle. Also, if you are ever asked by management if you can complete a task, please do not tell them you cannot do it and to contract it out. That will hurt our chance to be able to file a grievance on sub-contracting.

EAGLE CLEAN (E4776)

Heads up custodians, with all the money paid out in line h grievances all across the country, the postal service is bringing a new program in to track custodial work and hours. This program is called Eagle Clean. There will be a scanner that a custodian will have that will track the work they do when you clock in and out from work and lunch. It will keep track of any work orders and extra tasks that are performed by the custodian. This could be a good and bad thing. This will give management the power to track you and your work and as soon as they find a discrepancy in your work or time, they will try and discipline you. When I find out when this program will be launched in Delaware, I will let the members know.

WEEKLY WORK SCHEDULE

It has come to my attention that some employees don't know about or don't know where the weekly schedule is posted. Each tour has a bulletin board by the SMO office that shows the weekly schedule, the overtime desired list, and any other information pertaining to that tour. It's a good thing for employees to check their tour board to see if they have any overtime and when. When a holiday comes up, the sign-up sheets will be hung up on the back of the DAC sheet cabinets across from these bulletin boards. If you have any questions about these locations and where they are, please ask.

THE MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES CRAFT

By Glen H. Davis

The Importance Of Membership Participation

In every training class I have attended, every Tri-State Conference, every National Convention, it is emphasized that the membership is the backbone of the Union. Individual members are the eyes and ears, the movers and shakers in the APWU. I remember MVS Supervisor Janine Love-Finkler telling me that “drivers will do whatever they are told to do”. That statement is true only when drivers feel they have no representation or anyone fighting on their behalf.

Things change once the membership start believing that management can be held accountable, that they do have rights which can be enforced. When members believe in their Union Representatives everything changes. Possible violations of the contract are reported, members are more assertive with the knowledge they have gained after reading the CBA/JCIM/ELM.

The one drawback is that often members won't do the things they need to do to support grievances. Documenting violations in real time, completing statements which are accurate with facts, encouraging other members who witnessed the violations to come forward and give testimony. It could be that they agreed to do something not knowing that their grievance would have less chance of being successful. Sometimes they are unaware that a violation has occurred and fail to report the violation in a timely manner. Management has a bunch of tricks up their sleeves which members fall prey to.

The key for membership is to do those things which help make grievances successful. This is why membership participation is essential in a strong Union.



Info From APWU MVS Director Michael O. Foster

Surface Visibility Issues:

If your Bid Run Sheet says PS Form 4533V(m) the “V” means that your bid run was generated using the Surface Visibility Program. If you see the words (Pivot/Combination/Flex) on your Driver Weekly Schedule it means management is using Surface Visibility to produce the schedule. This program was created by the Postal Service to give them flexibility in assigning work. Management uses something called a “Zero Base Review/Audit” to determine how many employees/runs/vehicles it needs in a given facility. This is the responsibility of the Schedule Examiner but management performs this work to maintain control of the information.

The problem with this is that the Union is not a signatory to the Surface Visibility Program. Director Foster stated that management cannot direct a driver to follow what is listed in a scanner over what is stated on your bid run sheet. In other words, you did not bid on what is in the scanner. Any deviations to your written (4533) bid run sheet should be reported to the Union. According to instruction (PO-701) drivers are supposed to fill out a PS Form 4572 a written record of each stop and the time, arrival/departure at the stop. P&DC DE drivers are reluctant to physically record this information because the scanner records the same information. The difference is when you are assigned other work and it is not included in the scanner you have no way of documenting the extra work you performed. Hard as you might try, you cannot find the words (Pivot/Combination/Flex) in the CBA or 2022 JCIM. If management assigns one of these to your bid run, you should report it to the Union.



Route of Travel:

Handbook PO-701 Fleet Management states that all 4533's, driver bid run sheets will include what is called a route of travel. Specific instructions on how to get from one stop to another. Management is good for assigning a driver to a run they have never done before and you are just supposed to figure it out. If there are multiple docks at a location you don't know which one to use. If you have to use side streets to get to the back of stop GPS is useless. It fought hard to get higher level pay for drivers performing route training duties but even this falls short because a new driver is not trained on every run he/she may be assigned to. Drivers enjoy the higher level pay but there is no way to ensure that a new driver is trained on every run they need to be trained on. Director Foster instructed all Union reps to grieve this violation.

Communication with the Driver:

Director Foster stated that no supervisor should be contacting a driver on a run by phone or use of the scanner with instructions changing your run. This is a violation of Art 1.6. Many of you may have gotten a call from the Vehicle Dispatcher stating that they were instructed by a supervisor to call you with a change in your run. This is the proper way to do it. Supervisors know this. Recently a Union steward was told by the Schedule Examiner to leave Union time and return to craft at 17:00. Around 18:30 the steward receives a call from the manager asking why he has not returned to craft? The steward calmly told the manager that he is on Union time and that a SEVR cannot direct him to return to craft, only a supervisor can do that, and that no supervisor had contacted him. The manager understood that the steward was correct and said "okay".

If supervisors are contacting you directly while on your run with changes to your run, you should document the conversation and report it to a Union rep. By the way, all drivers at DE P&DC are aware that they are not required to answer a call from management on their personal cell phone yet continue to allow management to conduct official postal business in this manner.

Salary Exemption:

Many drivers don't understand how this exemption works stated Director Foster and Union reps should be instrumental in helping them to understand. Here is an example from DE P&DC, a level 8 driver bid on a level 6 position. He is a level 8 step c (hourly rate \$31.10). He receives a PS Form 50 moving him to a level 6 step f (hourly rate \$31.12). He is now a level 6, making .02 an hour more than he did as a level 8 step c.

This is what is meant by you will not lose pay. When you bid on a lower-level position, your pay should remain as close to what you were making at the higher level (but not less). Look up Step 4 Settlement HQT20190130 dated June 13 2022 on the APWU website. If you bid on a lower-level position and are not being paid at least the same amount as the higher-level position you should be contacting HR (finance) to get it corrected. MVS Manager Al Walls is good for telling drivers they will lose pay regardless of what the craft director tells them. The above example proves that he doesn't know what he is talking about.

Maximization:

There are 2 ways to qualify for conversion to FTR.

1. Art 7.3.C, working 8 hours within 10 hours, on the same 5 days each week, on the same assignment (run) over a six-month period.
2. Memorandum of Understanding: Maximization/Full-Time Flexible: A part-time flexible performs duties at least 40 hours a week (8 within 9, or 8 within 10 as applicable), 5 days a week, over a six-month period, the senior part-time flexible shall be converted to full-time status. In the second scenario, it is possible that the employee who qualified for the 40 hrs a week for a six month period is not the senior PTF who would be converted. This distinction should be understood.

In Loving Memory of Glen H. Davis, (1953–2025). His dedication, kindness, and unwavering spirit will always be remembered.

WORDS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On January 21st, we had a safety management meeting where both unions addressed several issues. Some concerns were on both agendas, with one of the biggest being the condition of the restrooms. Since the meeting, management has been working to get the stalls repaired. We can all do our part by avoiding flushing gloves and paper towels. If a stall is not working, please report it to a supervisor.

Custodians should be documenting stalls that are out of order daily, as this is the established procedure. If no action is being taken, fill out a 1767 form and notify the union. It was also brought up that restrooms are not being fully cleaned on all three tours. If this continues, please inform a shop steward.

I have noticed that several DBCS machines have warning lights that are out. Please start reporting the location of any malfunctioning lights on your machine. These issues are often missed during walkarounds since they are only visible when the machine is running. If a red light is out, report it in the same manner.

If there are any issues with your pie cart, you'll find a half tray with papers at the end of each machine. Write down the cart number and describe the problem. If 619 blocks the end of your machine, notify a supervisor immediately to ensure the mail is moved promptly.



We also discussed the dock plates and brackets for holding the door chains. Management informed us that all brackets have been installed. Drivers, please use these as intended; a few months ago, an injury occurred when a bay door fell on someone. Some dock plates are still awaiting parts for repairs, and maintenance is actively working on them.

Since the meeting, management has been making efforts to clean up the trays, an issue raised by both unions. The process will be more efficient if trays are stacked properly.

We also addressed the malfunctioning gates. We were informed that Plan 5 would be implemented daily, and by February 1st, the gates would be fully operational. There were concerns about potential backups at the gate. To avoid delays, consider giving yourself a few extra minutes to ensure punctuality. The gates are being activated for safety reasons.

If your badge does not work, report it to a supervisor. We also discussed installing a call button at the gate to assist employees whose badges are not functioning.

If you have a handicap placard, please ensure it is displayed before leaving your vehicle. Two vehicles were towed recently because placards were not visible. Make sure to park legally, as management is strictly enforcing parking rules.

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Let's continue to work together to maintain a safe and productive environment.

IN UNIONISM, DIEDRE KERR

By Hannah Lowe

A WORD FROM THE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year, Brothers and Sisters,

I want to take a moment to discuss a few important updates. First, the One-Time Retirement Incentive that was offered on January 13, 2025, as well as the Social Security Fairness Act and House Resolution 70: Protecting the People's Post Office.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) and the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) have agreed on a one-time retirement incentive, which includes an "early out" option for eligible employees. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issued by the APWU outlines the details of who qualifies, how the incentive works, and the timeline for implementation.

Details of the Retirement Incentive:

The agreement states that the Postal Service will provide lump-sum incentive payments totaling \$15,000 (less applicable taxes and deductions) to eligible full-time career employees who choose optional retirement or retire under a Voluntary Early Retirement (VER). Part-time employees will be eligible for a prorated amount based on their status.

Eligibility and Timeline:

- Open to career clerk craft employees in the APWU bargaining unit and IT/ASC employees
- Employees must indicate their intent by March 7, 2025
- Retirement date is set for April 30, 2025
- VER eligibility requires:
 - Age 50 with 20 years of creditable federal service, OR
 - Any age with 25 years of creditable federal service
 - Minimum 5 years of creditable civilian service
- Packages will be mailed to eligible employees by January 31, 2025

Payment Structure:

- Full-time employees receive \$10,000 on August 15, 2025, and \$5,000 on August 28, 2026
- Part-time employees receive prorated payments based on hours worked:
 - 1,520+ hours: 100%
 - 1,020-1,519 hours: 75%
 - 520-1,019 hours: 50%
 - Under 520 hours: 25%

Important Notes

- Maintenance and Motor Vehicle crafts are capped at 12% participation nationally
- Some facilities, including HRSSC and HQ Facility Services, have 10% caps
- Retirement counseling will be conducted via phone in group sessions
- Individual counseling available for additional assistance
- No health insurance coverage break for retiring employees

For eligibility questions or retirement estimates, contact HRSSC at 1-877-477-3273 (option 5) or email VER2025@apwu.org. Additional support is available at (888) 668-7132.

Social Security Fairness Act Enacted

The Social Security Fairness Act, signed into law on January 5, 2025, brings significant changes for postal workers. The law repeals both the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset, benefiting CSRS retirees who qualified for Social Security through other employment, as well as their spouses or widows.

Key Points

- Changes will be retroactive to January 2024
- Implementation timeline pending from Social Security Administration
- Senators Brown and Collins are advocating for swift implementation
- Current beneficiaries only need to verify contact and direct deposit information
- New applicants can file online at ssa.gov

For questions about these changes, contact SSA at (800) 772-1213 or visit www.ssa.gov.

House Resolution 70: Protecting Public Postal Service

Amid renewed privatization threats, a bipartisan group has introduced H.Res. 70 to ensure USPS remains an independent federal establishment. The resolution aims to protect the public's interest in maintaining a public Postal Service that serves all communities equally.

Take Action

Call APWU's Legislative Hotline at 1-844-402-1001 to connect with your representative and voice your support for H.Res. 70. Defending our public Postal Service from privatization remains our top priority in 2025.

For the latest updates on these matters, visit the APWU website or contact your local union representative.