



National Postal Mail Handlers Union

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LOCAL 303 INFORMATIONAL UPDATE

Once again, the Union and Management at the National and Headquarters level understand the gravity of what we as essential employees are going through. They extended all the MOUs until September 25, 2020 this may look like a small gesture, it's not.

The COVID-19 Liberal Leave MOU is as important to the mail handlers as FMLA was in 1993 when President Clinton signed it into law. As mail handlers continue to move the mail "Liberal Leave" prevents you from getting a red mark or unscheduled leave hit for absence related to COVID-19.

As with FMLA, management has a different interpretation than the Union. My understanding is as simple as, if you call in because of high blood pressure this is a regular unscheduled absence. A mail handler that has a stressful night thinking about working around others that may have Coronavirus and their blood pressure goes up, should follow the COVID-19 Liberal Leave MOU. Then contact their supervisor to inform them of the leave request covered under the MOU.

If you were a union steward back in the early to mid 90s after FMLA was implemented, you would recall filing countless grievances to protect the mail handlers who follow the rules, this will be the same. Any management attempt to issue discipline regarding attendance is to change it to following instructions. The real creative ones will state that the mail handler needs documentation. Neither of these tactics will work if we do our jobs as union stewards and the mail handler follows the MOU.

The MOU for MHAs to get 80 hours of paid sick leave has another set of management claims that are not true. You are an essential employee congress has not truly looked out for, but the 80 hours of paid sick leave is a small thank you.

We all see that more employees are testing positive for Coronavirus so I will quickly try to explain a bad rule that management is following. The topic is how and *who gets administrative pay*. If a mail handler is contacted by the Occupational Nurse and told they were identified as a person that had close contact with an employee that tested positive, they would be paid 2 weeks of admin leave. If that person were to go out and get a Coronavirus test and it showed positive before the 2 weeks were up they would no longer get the administrative pay.

The school system in most areas are shut down and will cause a problem for a lot of parents. The Liberal Leave and the Family First Act both protect you. Please inform management that your attendance issue is for school or COVID-19 related child care reasons. Make sure you write that on your 3971. If management generates a PS3971 for you, write in the "other" section of the PS3971, "COVID-19 related Child Care" for the reason of your absence.

Eddie Cowan
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