

POSTMASTER



DATE: July 22, 1998

OUR REF: RJHamilton:rh:-9998

SUBJECT: Grievance Procedures/Steward Rights

TO: Managers, Customer Services
Supervisors, Customer Services
Salt Lake City, UT

As we have previously discussed, the following procedures are to go into effect immediately.

STEP 1

- **Grievances are to be settled at STEP 1 to the maximum extent possible!**
- The steward is to be encouraged and assisted to assure they have the necessary time to investigate and discuss the grievance, including using the **Joint Contract Administration Manual**.
- The supervisor is to conduct a full and complete investigation at Step 1.
- All documents requested by the steward must be provided, and a copy kept for the management files.
- The steward's time is on the clock and at a postal facility.
- A steward's request for time must be granted in the following priority: Immediately if possible; within 24 hours if not possible; within 48 hours without any exception, even if overtime is required.
- If the time requested by the steward seems unreasonable, the supervisor MAY NOT refuse the time nor arbitrarily state a different time "is all that is needed." The supervisor will grant at least a portion of the requested time, with instructions for the steward to return at the end of that time to request more time if needed. At that point the process may repeat. Only in extreme circumstances shall a supervisor or manager deny further time when the concept of "reasonableness" is grossly exceeded.
- Requests for steward time and the time granted must be documented by the steward's immediate supervisor on the "REQUEST FOR STEWARD TIME – Supervisor Worksheet."

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- Step 1 meetings per the contract require an oral discussion between the employee and the supervisor. A written "grievance" sheet may not be substituted for the required discussion. Any such sheet submitted by the Union shall be discarded, and the employee shall be reminded of the contract requirements and invited to discuss the problem.
- While no "blanket" extensions shall be granted for "all" grievances, the supervisor and steward have the right at the local level on a case-by-case basis to mutually extend time limits to meet at Step 1, but must document their mutual agreement to extend the time.
- The cover letter included in the SUPERVISOR STEP 1 package, which includes the statement that the steward has "completed his investigation," is to be discarded and not used.

STEP 2

- Grievances not settled at Step 1 should be settled at Step 2 to the maximum extent possible. Only issues of broad significance and critical importance, where the management Step 2 designee feels we have a strong case (supported by opinions from Labor Relations), shall be pursued to Step 3 and above. Most issues are addressed in the **Joint Contract Administration Manual**, and it should be used as the guiding principal so that issues will be settled at Step 1 or Step 2.
- The policy is that you shall follow: A) **The National Contract** (Handbook EL-901) and B) **The Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)**. Personal opinions of "right" and "wrong" are not relevant. The contract, pertinent arbitrations, Step 4 decisions, and the JCAM are the procedures that **MUST** be followed.
- A Step 2 designee requesting time **MUST** be granted that time in the following priority: **IMMEDIATELY** if possible; within 24 hours if not possible; within 48 hours without any exception, even if overtime is required. The NALC will be encouraged **NOT** to request time on heavy business days such as Monday or the day after a holiday. Management does have the right to delay authorizing time if there is a justifiable service need such as volume and manpower shortages, but **ONLY** if such delay does not prevent the Union from having sufficient time to process their investigation and write-up. Unnecessary delays will be reported to the Manager of Customer Service Operations (MCSO) and action taken (This means don't use this legitimate option as a weapon).
- Managers will **NOT** determine what information may be collected nor who may be interviewed in the grievance process with the single exception that if a customer is to be interviewed, the manager may call the customer in advance to assure their willingness to be interviewed.
- Requests for information that is available will be acted upon immediately, if possible, or within 24 hours. You need not "create" information. If the Union requests "review," but not copies, of information that must be produced by computer output, that information shall be provided. However, the hard copies that exceed the "free" page limit shall either be paid for by the Union or retained by Management.

- The procedure for setting up a Step 2 meeting shall be as follows:
 1. The NALC representative files their appeal (assume a Friday).
 2. The appeal is received on Monday (day 1) and the clock starts on the 7 days with Day 1 being Tuesday. The Step 2 meeting must be held no later than the following Monday.
 3. Labor Relations scans the appeal and transmits it to the affected manager on Monday or Tuesday.
 4. ON RECEIPT, the affected manager shall contact the specified NALC Step 2 designee and set up a Step 2 meeting time and date.
 5. The affected manager may, at their discretion, request any other manager to act as the Management Step 2 designee and will communicate that choice to the MCSO and City Labor.
 6. While "blanket" extensions are prohibited, the Step 2 designees for Management and the NALC may, on a case-by-case basis, choose to mutually grant an extension to time requirements, but must document their mutual decision.

- The procedure for granting investigative and preparation time for a Step 2 NALC designee is:
 1. The NALC representative requests time from their supervisor.
 2. The NALC representative shall request investigation access from the supervisor of the affected unit.
 3. In the event there is any difficulty in arranging time, the Manager of West Valley will step in and arrange for the time within the time frames previously specified.
 4. The NALC has indicated that they do not wish to sign a joint page of settlement at Step 2 meetings. Such a page may be "offered" to the NALC Step 2 designee, but if they do not wish to sign it, a letter of decision will be written. If it IS signed, a letter of decision is NOT required. The page should be hand annotated – Letter of Decision.

The general reasons for these instructions are several. We do NOT wish to continue arguing over "procedural" issues or "rights" issues in the grievance process. The process should be for resolving legitimate grievance issues from employees. Thus, the above procedures should address many of the concerns of the NALC and allow us to return to more appropriate concerns. This is NOT to say that there are no procedural issues worth arguing about. Consult Sherri, Jim, or myself if you feel that such a situation exists. The second reason is to strongly encourage settlement of grievances at the lowest level, in a timely manner. Decisions imposed by others on you are not self-satisfying.

If you have any questions, please call Jim or Sherri.



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