



# The Hi-Lites



**The official publication of Milwaukee, WI Area Local APWU, AFL-CIO**

**(Proud Postal Press Association National Awards Winner)**

67

**JANUARY 2022**

**Volume 44 Issue 1**

## **APWU, USPS Reach Tentative Agreement**

The American Postal Workers Union and the U.S. Postal Service have reached a tentative three-year Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), announced APWU President and Lead Negotiator Mark Dimondstein. "I salute the entire bargaining committee for their outstanding and collective work,"

The tentative agreement was reached on December 9th and, in accordance with the APWU Constitution, was presented by the National Negotiating Committee to the Rank & File Bargaining Advisory Committee. On December 10th, the Rank & File committee unanimously approved the Tentative Agreement for a ratification vote of the members. The Tentative Agreement has the unanimous approval of the National Negotiating Committee and the support of the National Executive Board.

"This is great news! We have reached an agreement that protects the rights and interests of our members," Mark Dimondstein said. "The tentative National Agreement contains annual wage increases, protection of full COLAs and no-layoff protections, new opportunities for career work, gains for part time flexibles and a host of other improvements."

"We appreciate the due diligence and hard work exhibited by the Rank & File Bargaining Advisory Committee. We also recognize and appreciate all the officers and staff for their important contributions to these negotiations. Congratulations to every member for Standing Union Strong, All Day Long!"

Importantly, APWU members across the country waged a strong campaign, "Our Union, Our Contract, Our Future," and united in the demand for a good contract that rewards postal workers for their dedication and hard work. "The APWU is preparing the complete Tentative Agreement to be sent to members with their ratification ballot. Detailed information on the ratification vote will be announced in the near future.

*The summary terms of the new Tentative Agreement can be found on Page 3.*

### **Milwaukee Wisconsin Area Local**

Big Bend Brookfield Burlington Butler Cedarburg Cudahy Darien  
Delafield Delavan East Troy Elkhorn Elm Grove Franklin Fredonia  
Germantown Grafton Greendale Hales Corners Hartford Hartland  
Jackson Kewaskum Lomira Milwaukee Menomonee Falls Mequon-Thiensville  
Muskego Mukwonago New Berlin Oak Creek Oconomowoc Oakfield  
Okauchee Pewaukee Plymouth Port Washington Salem Slinger S. Milwaukee  
Sussex Wales Walworth Waterford Watertown Waukesha Whitewater





**Glenn Griggs  
President**

## Breaking News

*"January's General Membership Meeting  
is right around the corner  
and you don't want to miss it!"*

**January 31, 2022 - 6pm**

I will be providing the membership updates on the Global Settlement for the Milwaukee Area Local #3 covered offices.

These updates will include:

- ALL Milwaukee and Associate Office Line H grievances settled
- ALL Maintenance article 32 grievances concerning contracting out work settled
- ALL one person to machine grievances settled up thru the end of 2021
- ALL SPSS grievances for the Milwaukee installation settled
- ALL 204b grievances for the Milwaukee installation settled
- ALL MPA grievances for the Milwaukee installation settled
- ALL MVS cases settled

This agreement settles about 97% of grievances that were pending for quite some time. This agreement also clears up the backlog of grievances and puts the local union in a better position to address issues in a more timely fashion. Hopefully this will allow for quicker resolutions to your issues moving forward.

Due to anticipating a possible large crowd and with Covid ramping back up...there will not be food or refreshments served at this January 31, meeting. **Masks are required!** This will be enforced for anyone planning on attending! We appreciate your understanding in this matter. Hope to see you all on Monday, January 31 at 6pm.

As most of you already know, The National APWU recently announced a tentative agreement contract covering our members for a new 3 yr contract thru 2024. There are a lot of bullet points to read up on for all of the crafts involved. Please read the next several pages. Soon we will receive ballots in the mail for us to ratify this agreement. Any additional details can be found on the American Postal Workers Union website at [apwu.org](http://apwu.org) !





## **SUMMARY OF THE 2021-2024 TENTATIVE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT**

### **Contract Time Period**

- Three-year contract: September 21, 2021 through September 20, 2024

### **General Annual Wage Increases and Cost of Living Allowances (COLA)**

- 1.3% November 20, 2021 (Will be Retroactive)
- 1.3% November 19, 2022
- 1.3% November 18, 2023
- Six (6) Cost of Living Allowances (COLA) for career employees (March and September of each year) with no change to the current formula based on the July 2021 CPI-W. (After the fourth month of the six-month measuring period, the COLA increase is at \$0.39 per hour and will be based on the January 2022 CPI-W Index)
- PSEs receive the general wage increases and an additional 1% increase each year in lieu of COLA (i.e. 2.3% each November)
- \$0.50/hour additional increase for PSEs effective the first pay period of the second full month after the Agreement is ratified

### **Job Security**

- Protection from layoff for career employees with six years of service remains in effect
- Any current career employee on the rolls as of September 20, 2021, with less than six years of service will be included in the no layoff protections for the life of the National Agreement, providing an additional 72,000 career employees protection from layoffs.
- 50-mile limit on excessing of employees
- The current moratorium on subcontracting of Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) work will continue in its present form during life of the Agreement

### **Holiday Pay**

- Juneteenth added to the holidays for career employees for a total of 11 paid holidays per year
- PTF pay rate will be increased effective January 1, 2022 to reflect 11 holidays each year

### **Health Insurance**

- No change to the Postal Service contribution to premiums for those participating in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program
- 95% Postal Service contribution to premiums of the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP)
- PSEs converted to career will receive credit for time they were enrolled in a FEHBP plan towards the 1-year qualifying period for the 95% Postal Service contribution to CDHP premiums

*(next page please)*



*(continued from previous)*

**Enhanced Level 8 & 11 Pay Scales**

- **Grade 8 Pay Scale:**
  - \* Bottom Steps FF-AA eliminated with Step A becoming the first Step
  - \* New top Step P added
  - \* Employees currently in Grade 8 will move into new steps while retaining all credit toward next step:
    - > Steps FF-BB moved to Step A
    - > Step AA moved to Step B
    - > Steps A-O moved up one Step
- Grade 11 Pay Scale increased by an average of 2.3% prior to any general increases or COLA

**Part-Time Flexible (PTF) Work Rules**

- Schedule guarantee of 24-hour per pay period, increased from 2 hours a pay period
- Guaranteed at least four hours of work or pay when scheduled
- Forty (40) hours of annual leave will be advanced at the start of each leave year for immediate use
- Guaranteed a minimum of one (1) non-scheduled day each service week except during the peak season exception period with notice Wednesday the week prior
- Within 90-days of ratification a One-time Voluntary Transfer Opportunity to residual Full-Time Regular vacancies in larger offices within a district

**Automatic Conversion of PSEs in Level 20 offices and above**

- PSEs will be converted to career status upon reaching 24-months of relative standing
  - \* Clerk PSEs assigned to offices Grade 21 or higher will be converted to Full-Time Flexible with such assignments made in accordance with the Clerk Craft provisions of Art. 37.4
  - \* Clerk PSEs assigned to Grade 20 offices will be converted to Part-Time Flexible
  - \* MVS PSEs assigned in any size office will be converted to Part-Time Flexible
  - \* PSEs converted under this provision start at a new Step GG in Grades 5-7 and Step A in Grade 8.
  - \* Automatic Conversion does not apply to PSEs assigned to Grade-4 RMPOs
- Conversions will still occur prior to the 24-months
  - \* The "Filling of Residual Vacancy MOU" and Article 37.5.D remains in full force and effect
  - \* MVS Craft Conversions will be made in accordance with Article 39.2.A.11
  - \* Conversion occurring earlier to 24-months start at Step FF for Grades 5-7 and Step-A for Grade 8

**Other PSE Provisions**

*(next page please)*



*(continued from previous)*

- Forty (40) hours of advanced annual leave upon completion of an initial 360-day PSE appointment in Level 20 offices and above
- PSEs assigned to Level 4 RMPOs receive an additional one (1) hour of paid annual leave per pay period upon completion of two (2) 360-day appointments
- PSEs assigned to Level 4 RMPOs upon completion of two 360-day appointments will receive 40 hours of advance leave
- PSEs will be offered one (1) non-scheduled day each service week except during peak season with notice the Wednesday the week prior

### **PSE Staffing**

- The 12 PSEs per District assigned to Level 4 RMPOs will no longer count against the 20% District cap
- 10 PSEs in the 46 Package Support Annexes (PSAs) will not count against the District cap (for a total maximum of 460 PSEs) and will be allowed to work in any facility in the installation the PSA is attached to
- A four (4) weeks “ramp-up” period prior to the start of accounting period 3, the 20% PSE District cap will be temporarily increased by 1% per week equating to no more than a 4% increase
- New protections for the OTDL during “ramp-up” whereby prior to utilizing a PSE more than 8 hours in a day or 40 hours in a service week, qualified and available employees on the appropriate OTDL will be utilized. No requirement to use an OTDL employee on the second non-scheduled at the penalty rate prior to using a PSE in excess of 40 hours

### **Uniform/Work Clothes Program Allowances**

- 2.5% increase to the uniform/work clothes allowances in 2022, 2023, and 2024
- Delivery/Sales Service Distribution Associate (DSSDA) will receive Type 1 uniform allowance
- New “Rollover” program where unused funds

### **Additional Work Rule Improvements**

- Remote Encoding Center staffing ratio changed to 62% Full-Time Regular and 38% PSE and all career duty assignments are Full-Time Regular
- 90-day waiting period to use annual leave eliminated for new career employees with 90-days continuous service prior to their conversion.
- Updated the Deaf and Hard of Hearing MOU

*(next page please)*



*(continued from previous page)*

- Work Environment Improvement Task Force
- Work Place Free of Harassment
- Enhanced and Expanded Services
- Environmental/Sustainability issues, EAP, and Child and Elder care, included in the jurisdiction of the National Labor Management Committee
- District Safety Committees made permanent
- Right of Union Officials to Enter Postal Installations
- Regional Safety and Health Representative Training Opportunities
- Repromotion MOU
- Article 8 Task Force to address excessive overtime, particularly in relation to non-list employees
- Election Mail Task Force MOU
- Full per diem for employees training at the NCED facility

**Additional Clerk Craft Provisions**

- Window training starts within 10-days after posting of the senior bidder
- Updated NTFT duty assignments language
- Pilot program to test new pecking order for the assignment of PTF Hub Clerks
- Filling of Residual Vacancy MOU updated

**Additional Motor Vehicle Service Craft Provisions**

- PTFs identified for conversion to FTR converted within 28-days
- APWU will have opportunity to submit recommendations on new vehicles prior to specifications being sent to contractors and before manufacturing and completion of new vehicles
- National committee established to address training initiative and opportunities
- HCR limitation on Subcontracting MOU remains in full force and effect

**Additional Maintenance Craft Provisions**

- No additional custodial staffing packages will change from MS-47 TL-3 to TL-5 for life of the contract
- Change the calculation method of PS Form 4852 for Juneteenth Holiday

*(next page please)*



*(continued from previous page)*

- Annual cap on the number of times an employee can be involuntarily assigned to off-site training courses
- Career employee may request to be tested for maintenance craft positions and if rated eligible may request placement on the appropriate in-service register.
- Updates to the posting of relief assignments in the craft
- Agreement to consolidate and upgrade multiple legacy jobs
- Employees traveling to NCED for training receive full per diem for length of stay

**Additional Support Services Craft Provisions**

- In Material Distribution Centers Maintenance Mechanic General Grade 7 eliminated and Building Equipment Mechanic Grade 9 added
- Penalty Overtime provisions applied to Operating Service employees

**WAGES**

- Under the 2021-2024 agreement the average salary increase including general increases and COLAs will be 11.9% across all Grades and Steps
- All Grades and Steps will receive three 1.3% general wage increases.
- This 1.3% will be 1.3% of the wage for the Grade and Step pay in effect on September 20, 2021 (i.e., the August 28, 2021 pay scale). The pay scale the 1.3% will be calculated on will be included in the tentative agreement booklet included in the ratification packet.

**On Average, Salaries will Increase in Each Grade as Shown Below**

- Grade 3 Salaries will increase by \$6,257 or 13.0%
- Grade 4 Salaries will increase by \$6,302 or 12.7%
- Grade 5 Salaries will increase by \$6,464 or 12.0%
- Grade 6 Salaries will increase by \$6,539 or 11.7%
- Grade 7 Salaries will increase by \$6,620 or 11.5%
- Grade 8 Salaries will increase by \$7,635 or 13.2%  
> Bottom 6 steps eliminated; new top step added
- Grade 9 Salaries will increase by \$6,956 or 10.4%
- Grade 10 Salaries will increase by \$7,124 or 10.0%
- Grade 11 Salaries will increase by \$8,924 or 12.3%  
> New salaries established by increasing base wage

The APWU pay package will also continue to protect against inflation. Should inflation continue on a track that is higher than the current projected track, COLA increases will be larger than what has been currently projected.

**In total, a Grade 6 Step H will have over \$10,000.00 added to their salary at the conclusion of the agreement**

**That is a 17.1% increase over the 3 year contract !**





**Chris Czubakowski**  
**Local Business Agent**

*During the past six months there has been a seismic shift in the downtown Milwaukee workplace culture that has resulted in a surge of incidents and misconduct involving the same managers and supervisors that have long been identified by the APWU as serial abusers and bullies. As such, conditions in certain shifts and places on the workroom floor have again begun to deteriorate back into a toxic stew that is all too reminiscent of a few years ago.*

And although accountability for these serial abusers and bullies is long overdue, their acts of provocation, intimidation, harassment, and physical assault have only become more prevalent. Serial bullies and abusers cannot exist, unless management ignores, tacitly approves or outright encourages their abusive behavior. As such, the Union can only conclude that a continual lack of accountability from these managers and supervisors from on high has only emboldened them to believe they can continue to act with impunity.

The current workplace culture, as detailed to APWU representatives on an almost daily basis, is described as demeaning and humiliating by far too many APWU members. When abusive tactics are part of a supervisor's or manager's everyday repertoire there exists a reasonable presumption that certain members are subject to a hostile work environment. Sadly,

## The Tone Is Set From The Top

*"...the APWU considers the current level of abuse and bullying levied by certain supervisors and managers upon our members as an unacceptable..."*

this presumption on behalf of those in charge of this facility- no matter how hard we hammer them with evidence and fact- has yet to occur.

Nonetheless, the APWU considers the current level of abuse and bullying levied by certain supervisors and managers upon our members as an unacceptable and unnecessary health and safety risk.

Abusive misconduct, including physical assault, on behalf of certain managers and supervisors within the installation is not and will not be ignored, rationalized or tolerated. Ironically, an atmosphere where intimidation and threats carried out towards workers is an everyday occurrence is precisely the atmosphere that the Zero Tolerance Policy was issued to eliminate.

In 1997, a postal worker within this facility killed a co-worker, wounded a supervisor, and injured another worker. Had incidents and employee concerns that occurred prior to the shooting been investigated and treated with the attention it deserved, that tragedy may have been averted.

We have repeatedly reminded management of this and that "the tone is set from the top". It is long overdue that someone with intestinal fortitude step up and make the necessary changes to defuse and deescalate tensions on the workroom floor.

APWU members deserve nothing less than a healthy work environment that improves morale and fosters positive relationships between

employees and supervisors based upon a two-way street of dignity and respect. You are the eyes and ears of the Union. As such, we are asking for your help and vigilance in exposing these serial abusers and bullies.

The APWU has developed the following form to make it easier to report incidents of provocation, harassment, and intimidation. We are asking that you fill this out, provide it to a union official after witnessing or being subject to any abusive conduct or bullying on behalf of management.

Also, remember that you have a right to see a Union steward for your issues in an atmosphere that is free of interference or retaliation. Misconduct of that nature should also be reported immediately.

### 2022 GMM Meetings

January 31 - 6pm

March 30 - 7pm

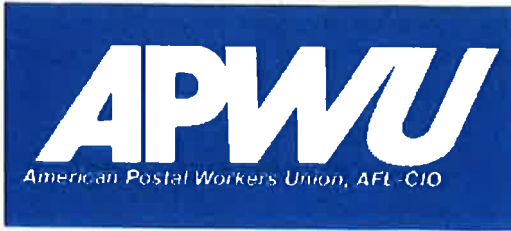
May 27 - 7am

July 18 - 6pm

September 28 - 7pm

November 25 - 7am





## ABUSIVE SUPERVISOR INCIDENT WORKSHEET

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Section/Tour \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Incident \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident \_\_\_\_\_

Date Union was notified \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses to Incident \_\_\_\_\_

EEO Previously Filed? \_\_\_\_\_ EEO for this Incident? \_\_\_\_\_

**NATURE OF ABUSIVE INCIDENT (check all that apply and explain in detail below)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overly Demeaning                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Threats     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sarcastic Remarks                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Profanity         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yelling                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Threats  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Threats of Discipline or Discharge   | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Gestures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Threats to take Victim off the clock | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Contact  |

Detailed Explanation of the Abusive Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(attach additional pages if necessary)





**Larry Brown Jr  
Vice President**

*I would like to use my article this month to discuss favoritism and discrimination.*

### **Favoritism**

Is favoritism a bad management practice? Absolutely! Sadly, there is no law that currently prevents a company from having "horrible bosses" that use it as a management tool on an all too often basis.

Everyone who has observed favoritism at its worst would stand in agreement with me.

Favoritism kills employee morale, which in turn destroys employee work performance. Which then, causes management to attempt to, "hold the employees accountable for the way the mail is being processed." (...hmm, heard that before haven't we...)

It is the Union's job to make sure that all employees are treated fairly and equitably. What applies to one should apply to all. Article 34 of the Nation-

## **Favoritism & Discrimination**

*"As your steward, I will stand up for you whenever you feel you are being mistreated by management."*

al Agreement is clear when it states the Employer agrees that any work measurement systems or time or work standards shall be fair, reasonable and equitable. Notice that it doesn't say that management may pick and choose who they deem to be their "best" employees and shower them with preferential treatment.

Its important to remember that while many issues regarding favoritism may not be grievances they may still constitute legitimate gripes. As such, the Union will do its best to address each issue on an individual basis and try to come up with a favorable resolution.

### **Discrimination**

If favoritism is based on a certain religion, sex, age or other characteristic protected by law it is considered discrimination!

One of the best ways to prevent discrimination in the workplace would be for management to abide by its own handbooks and manuals and treat **everyone** with "dignity and respect."

Sadly, some supervisors can't get with the program, so this is easier said than done.

As your steward, I will stand up for

you whenever you feel you are being mistreated by management. I can file harassment grievances for you and send them up to Step 2 immediately.

I'll let you know in advance that all you may get is an apology or a settlement stating that you and the supervisor agree to treat each other with dignity and respect. While this might not seem like much, this is your first step in officially starting your paper trail on the supervisor that you believe is harassing you. However, it doesn't need to stop there.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is the federal agency that interprets and enforces the laws prohibiting discrimination. The number to call is 1-888-336-8777. If you truly feel that you are being discriminated against then you must take matters into your own hands.

No union official will file an EEO complaint for you. Management cannot retaliate against you for reporting discrimination, or favoritism in the form of discrimination.

*"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background or his religion. People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite. " - Nelson Mandela*





**John Miceli**  
**Treasurer**

*The present economic conditions certainly determine your spending ability as well as your save-ability. This is why you should be proactive in your participation of your 401(k). TSP's ability to put enough money away along with the mindset that your employer contributions allow you to have that nest egg, if not for the simple reason to retire comfortably.*

You still need to be aware of how each fund performs and what amounts suit your goals and lifestyle. This requires staying on top of these funds based on what the market and current economic conditions are. For the last several years you could have been greedy holding the I and S funds. Now, you just have to be happy playing the waiting game in the G fund, but in time that trend will once again change. The point is to participate !!!

The Postal Service automatically contributes 1% whether or not you are enrolled. But why wouldn't you elect for more ???

After the automatic 1%, they match an additional 3% dollar for dollar that you contribute each pay period and 50 cents on the dollar for the next 2% of pay. The amounts you contribute above 5% are not matched.

**You're turning down free money by not taking advantage of this opportunity.**

## Thrift Savings Plan, Choose Your Options Wisely

*"“L Funds” are chosen by your need. Participants with longer investment horizons are able to tolerate more risk.”*

It is your responsibility to manage these funds based on how well the stock index you've selected is performing. You can research the five individual funds to choose from:

**G Fund** (Government Securities)  
**F Fund** (Fixed Income Index)  
**C Fund** (Common Stock Index)  
**S Fund** (Small Cap Stock Index)  
**I Fund** (International Stock Index)

TSP began offering “Life Cycle Funds” in 2006. This option relieves you of the headache of managing the performances of the funds you allocated your money to.

“L Funds” are chosen by your need. Participants with longer investment horizons are able to tolerate more risk. Participants who are approaching or have reached the time when they will need to use their retirement savings have a lower tolerance for risk.

The mix of stocks, bonds and Treasury securities differ according to the date when someone needs to use the investment money. An employee with many years left will invest in a L Fund that includes more stocks, which are riskier but have potential for higher returns in the long run.

But as the date approaches in terms of needing the money, the L Fund will automatically change to include more bonds (less riskier than stocks) and Treasury securities (risk free). These are the (5) L Funds:

**L Income** (for those preparing or already withdrawing their money)

**L 2030** (for those who plan to withdraw between 2025 and 2035)

**L 2040** (for those who plan to withdraw between 2035 and 2045)

**L 2050** (for those who plan to withdraw between 2045 and 2055)

**L 2060** (for those who plan to withdraw between 2055 and 2065)

You can enter and leave any of the funds whenever you want. All postal employees can use Postal EASE to process your TSP elections. If you are changing an election, it must be processed by 12 noon (central) by the second Wednesday (day12) of each pay period for the election to be effective in that pay period otherwise it will take effect the following pay period.

Your USPS pin and TSP pin are needed. Employees in need of their TSP pin can go to the web site at [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov) or call the TSP thrift-line toll free at 877-968-3778 (TDD: 877-847-4385).

**Be active and knowledgeable in  
what your investing...  
it's your money and future.**





**Kenni Liggan**  
**Customer Service**  
**Director**

*This article was part of a email sent out by APWU Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman*

Currently, there is a spike of COVID-19 diagnosis throughout the United States. Postal Employees are not exempt from contracting COVID-19. Following national trends, there is also a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases at the Postal Service. Not knowing how COVID-19 can affect any one person whether it is a mild illness, a severe case, a case of "long" COVID-19, what the long-term effects might be, or sadly even death, it is vital that those who contract the virus understand that it is their right to apply for worker's compensation benefits to protect themselves and their families.

If you are a postal employee, no matter if you are a career employee or non-career employee, you are entitled to file a claim with the Office of Workers Compensation Programs. The one caveat is that you must have worked at the Post Office at some point during the 21-days prior to your COVID-19 diagnosis. Employees that have claims approved are entitled to have their medical costs and lost wages paid. Approved Claimants are also entitled to request that any annual sick or annual leave used be "bought back" and re-deposited to their leave balances. Also, should a postal employee pass away due to

## You Have A Right To File An OWCP Claim When Diagnosed With COVID-19

*"Employees that have claims approved are entitled to have their medical costs and lost wages paid."*

COVID19, their survivors are entitled to benefits under the compensation programs if there is an approved claim.

As previously reported, under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 signed into law on March 11, 2021: Section 4016 of the law provides that a federal employee who is diagnosed with COVID-19 and carried out duties that required contact with patients, members of the public, or co-workers, or included a risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus during a covered period of exposure prior to the diagnosis, is deemed to have an injury that is proximately caused by employment. In simple terms, this means that if you are diagnosed with (have a positive test) and you file an OWCP claim, it will be more than likely approved. You are not required to prove you contracted the disease at work. In order to receive benefits, those diagnosed must submit a claim. Do not expect management to do this for you and do not expect them to inform you that you have the right to file a claim. When you file a claim for COVID-19 you are entitled to request continuation of pay (COP). This is pay at your regular rate of pay paid to you by the postal service during your COVID-19 illness absence.

You are entitled to COP if you file your claim within 30-days of your diagnosis. If you are filing more than 30-days after your diagnosis, you are not entitled to COP. Please note, that for the first three days, the

law requires a "waiting period" that you must use sick, annual, or leave without pay (LWOP) before COP kicks in. However, if your absence lasts longer than 14-days, the first three days will be converted to COP. Any non-scheduled days also count towards the three day "waiting" period. COP can be paid for up to 45 calendar days after which any additional missed time will be paid as worker's compensation payments by OWCP.

In order to file a claim, it is recommended that you do so through e-COMP. You must register at <https://www.ecomp.dol.gov>. Doing so ensures that OWCP receives your claim form, receives the necessary laboratory reports because you upload the documents. The system automatically forwards documents to your supervisors to complete and tracks whether or not the Postal Service has done their part. Using e-COMP gives you tracking and you can hold management accountable because you can see what they have and have not done. It should be noted that you can register on e-COMP at any time—whether you have an injury or not. In fact, it is a good idea to register and establish an account in case you need to use it anytime during your career for any at-work injury. It is also one thing less to worry about if you are diagnosed with COVID-19.

The instructions below are not all inclusive and do not guarantee claim approval. To file a claim and to receive COP:

*(next page please)*



*(continued from previous page)*

- Notify your supervisor that you are sick with COVID-19
- Submit a PS-Form 3971 and check COP as the reason
- Register on e-COMP if you have not done so: <https://www.ecomp.dol.gov>
- Once registered on e-COMP, login to your account
- Click on new claim on top right of page
- On next screen, make sure "Federal Employee" is selected
- Make sure to select Postal Service as the agency
- Click "File Claim"
- Click "next"
- Select the COVID-19 Claim and enter information requested in the online form
- Once requested information is entered, upload a copy of the positive laboratory COVID19 results or other relevant medical documentation
- After uploading, make sure you select "continuation of pay"

It is recommended you save a copy of your claim or at least write down the ECN number for your claim Here are some links to references for OWCP claims due to COVID-19: Video Tutorial on Registering for e-COMP Video Tutorial on Filing COVID-19 Claim through e-COMP Register for e-COMP: <https://www.ecomp.dol.gov>

#### Now It Is Easier to File FECA COVID Claims

- American Postal Workers Union ([apwu.org](http://apwu.org)) Claims under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act due to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- U.S. Department of Labor ([dol.gov](http://dol.gov)) FECA Bulletins (2020-2024)
- U.S. Department of Labor ([dol.gov](http://dol.gov)) this is the instructions claims examiners must follow

You have the right under the law to file an OWCP claim for COVID-19! Do not let management discourage you from filing a claim. Do not let them tell you that you have to prove your sickness was contracted at work as this is not a requirement of the law. It is in your best interest to file for the benefits. You protect yourself and your families by doing so. If you follow the steps and have a laboratory test confirmed case of COVID-19, you will likely be approved. However, the APWU cannot guarantee claim approval.

If you have any question on this issue please set up a appointment with former vice president Bob Wood by calling the Union Hall at 414-273-7838.

## **Juneteenth National Independence Day**

President Biden signed into law the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act on June 17, 2021, making June 19 a federal holiday. This new holiday commemorates the final end to slavery in the United States and the Postal Service is fully supportive of annually observing and setting aside a day to recognize this historic event. Because the Postal Service is part of the nation's critical infrastructure and our customers are relying on us to deliver our essential services, we were unable to cease operations to observe Juneteenth this calendar year. Beginning in 2022, the Postal Service will recognize the Juneteenth National Independence Day as a holiday eligible to full-time and part-time career employees. The observance will be included in the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) 518, Holiday Leave and be subject to the corresponding provisions of the section.





**Mark Krueger**  
**Motor Vehicle Director**

I hope everyone had a joyous, relaxing and pleasurable Holiday season. As you all know by now, we received an early present in the form of a Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) announced just before Christmas. There are numerous items that will positively affect every APWU member, but I would like to concentrate on those which have an effect on MVS/VMF.

Let's start with the Pay Scale Enhancement in Grade 8.

- \* Six Steps will be eliminated (Step FF- Step BB) with all being moved up to Step A.
- \* Those who are in Step AA will be

moved up to Step B and Step B – O will be moved up by One Step.

- \* There will be a New Top Scale Step Added, Step P.

- \* For PTF's there will be an increase in their pay to represent the increase to 11 holidays with Juneteenth Day. They will also be afforded 40 hours of Annual Leave advanced at the start of each year for immediate use.

Additionally, there will be something done for those PTF'S converted to "Full Time Regulars" (FTR). This conversion will be done in 28 days instead of taking months like it has for numerous employees which resulted in large chargeback's due to pay inaccuracies.

There will be a 2.5% increase to our uniform allowance in each year of this contract. New to the uniform program is that we will be able to

"Rollover" unused funds to a successor allowance year instead of losing it due to nonuse.

Finally, there will be the formation of a National committee to address training initiative and opportunities to improve our work environment. I believe all those involved with these negotiations did a Fantastic job! The next step in this procedure is to ratify this National agreement and then we can concentrate on our Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU)). If there are issues that you would like to be addressed feel free to contact me and I will work to get those concerns addressed once we get to that step in negotiations with local management.

## MVS / VMF CBA Info

*"There are numerous items that will positively affect every APWU member."*

## Action: Urge Congress To Pass Postal Reform

It is critical that Congress take up the Postal Service Reform Act of 2021 (H.R. 3076) before the end of session. This legislation, which has broad public support, will provide the Postal Service with much-needed financial relief by eliminating the 2006 pre-funding mandate (PAEA) for retiree health benefits. In addition, this bill maintains 6-day delivery, mandates more frequent reporting on service performance, and includes Medicare integration.

In May, the bill received bipartisan approval in the House of Representatives Oversight and Reform Committee, the primary committee that addresses postal issues. It was also introduced with bipartisan support in the Senate. Now, we are waiting for it to advance through the Ways and Means committee, chaired by Congressman Richard Neal.

The APWU is closely monitoring any potential changes to the legislation and urges members to contact Congressman Neal and encourage him to act swiftly to pass this legislation by the end of the year. Write to Chairman Richard Neal & encourage him to help get postal reform done.





Dr. Jonathan Saigh

## CA2 Cases

### Advanced Care Specialists



## Osteoarthritic Injuries, Rehabilitation, Medical Services, PRP (platelet-rich plasma)

On behalf of everyone at Advanced Care Specialists, we are hoping all of our Post Office friends are having a great start to your holidays. For years we have helped many carriers, clerks, and mail handlers with work injuries across the Midwest. It has been a lot of fun and very rewarding on our end to help with all of these difficult and complex cases. It is even more rewarding to be able to supply care to those who needed it most when dealing with work injuries- we would like to thank you all for these opportunities to help.

As many of you who have been patients here know we are more than just a clinic for rehabilitation and medical services. As of late, we have established proven, successful protocols that have helped those with chronic and acute joint or muscle pain – whether it is a result of a work injury or simply from being a weekend warrior. These treatments include utilizing PRP (platelet-rich plasma) which may decrease pain and increase range of motion.

As a postal employee, too many of you suffer from osteoarthritis of the knees, shoulder, lower back, and more. A majority of these injuries can be classified as CA2 injuries, which do tend to be a little more difficult to relate to specific job duties – however, we specialize in opening these difficult CA2 cases. Many think that once they are diagnosed with osteoarthritis, this excludes them from utilizing their OWCP benefits - this is simply just not true for the vast majority of postal employees.



We have established specialized processes and treatment plans to suit these osteoarthritic injuries. Oftentimes, arthritis is challenging to treat but with our new procedures we can offer treatments that go beyond the standard rehabilitation offered to patients.

If you have any questions in regards to your work injuries that you feel may have caused arthritis we are here to assist you in the process; even if you feel it may have not been caused by work but don't know where to turn, we are here to help.

From all of us at Advanced Care Specialists, we would like to wish you and your families Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!