



The Hi-Lites



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

(Proud Postal Press Association National Awards Winner)

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Our Contract Is Ratified!

94% of Voters Say YES!

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (union contract) between the APWU and the USPS has been overwhelmingly ratified by the members. The contract was signed by APWU President Mark Dimondstein and PMG Louis DeJoy on February 28, 2022. This agreement will provide: Wage increases, COLA's, Job security, Improved PTF rights, PSE career opportunities.

We Did It...Postal Reform Passes!

Winning this critical legislation has been a massive collective effort spanning more than a decade. Your leadership has been absolutely critical in this long struggle. Together, we've prevailed. Passing this bill strengthens the public Postal Service, our national treasure. It protects our members' jobs. It gives us a new footing in the fight to defend the quality service the public deserves and to expand and enhance services in the years to come.

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**

Hello to all my Union Brothers and Sisters. I hope everyone is staying safe and warm this winter. Although we have made some significant progress, the challenging times we face as postal employees continues. Some of the challenges we continue to face are management trying to revert jobs even though we are already short staffed in a lot of areas. Protecting all APWU bargaining unit work from being outsourced or taken over by other unions. I continue to hear about carriers and supervisors doing bargaining unit clerk work throughout the city stations and Associate Offices.

Although we are filing grievances and are successful in most cases when notified, it is very important for all our bargaining unit members not to turn down any work that you are asked to perform unless you have some safety concerns. The APWU has always declared that all work is clerk (APWU) work.

It is not all gloom and doom. These challenges can be met with force. It's called members participation. For your Union reps to put together the best defense possible as to why we think it's ridiculous to cut jobs, change start times, properly staffing the stations, fighting against 204-b's on higher level...we are going to need all of our Union brothers and sisters to stand as one.

The Time Is Now To Get Involved !

"Divided we fall, together we stand strong."

You may ask, what does that mean? Let me tell you. Make sure you make all your basic punches. When you move from one section to another, take the time to move into the correct operation so you can get credit for that work. Notify your union reps when anyone besides us clerks are doing clerk work. When other crafts/supervisors do our work, and it goes unreported, we are not getting credit for that work performed. If we are not getting the credit, it makes it seem to upper management that the work is getting done, already short staffed. We believe that the data that management uses for calculating staffing is flawed. Why cut our own throats and help cut jobs by not making our basic punches?

The side deals must stop. I believe the system works better for everyone when the contract is followed by management and union members.

In fact, the JCIM which stands for (Joint Contract Interpretation Manual) mandates for the contract to be followed and any issues or disputes that are listed in the JCIM to be resolved. This is not the game show deal or no deal. We have a negotiated contract that we all must follow. These steps alone won't guarantee that we will be successful at stopping all the changes and challenges we face, but it will give us a great start.

We are going to face challenges that will not be won in the grievance procedure. These challenges

will have to be won by contacting your state, and federal representatives. We can start by calling your Senators and asking them to support the Postal Service Reform Act that the House of Representatives have already passed.

One of the key things this legislation does is get rid of the prefunding mandate for retiree health benefits and require postal service retirees to enroll in Medicare. We also must start voting for politicians who have our best interest at heart. Our job is our livelihood and should be at the top of the list when deciding on a candidate to vote for, whether it's a state or federal official.

Although we face these challenges, with your participation we are willing and ready to fight. We will not sit idly by and watch the destruction of the US Postal Service, and the continuing of mail delays. We are hoping each and every one of you join the good fight. Divided we fall, together we stand strong. Like my title says. The time to get involved is now.

Update

By now everyone probably has heard about the (5 million dollar) settlement that Milwaukee area Local has reached with management. Appropriately named **"The Global Settlement"** because it resolved 97 % of our local's grievances. We are in the process of finalizing the names and the number of payouts for anyone that is involved in this settlement. Thanks for your patience. This is a large sum of money to be paid out

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and I want to make sure everyone that is entitled to a payment be paid the correct amount. We will start sending the names to be paid out, beginning the first week in March. A list will soon be given to all stewards and officers in case any member has any questions or concerns about whether their name is on the list. Once the list is completed, if your name is not on that list, but you feel it should be, you have until August 30, 2022, to contact my office for us to investigate the issue.

I want to thank all our union brothers and sisters for being dedicated union members and those that take the time out to submit statements to process possible grievance violations. Keep doing what you are doing. That has helped us more than you know.

Lastly always remember, our members involvement is the key to whether we will have a fighting chance at stopping or minimizing whatever changes we may face. No more sitting on the sidelines. The future for our customers, our livelihood and our families livelihood is at stake. You cannot get much higher stakes than that. Let's get to work!

* * *

First COLA Increase To Be \$1,310.00

On February 10, 2022, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released the Consumer Price Index (CPI) data for the month of January 2022. January was the final month of the six-month measuring period used for determining the cost of living allowance (COLA) for those covered by the National Agreement.

Every full-time career employee in every step and grade will receive an annual increase of \$1,310 or 63 cents per hour. In percentage terms, the median percentage increase across all steps and levels for career employees will be 2.3%. The hourly rate for career part-time flexible employees will be adjusted up accordingly. The new rates based on this COLA will be effective on February 26, 2022, the start of Pay Period 6-2022. The \$1,310 will be the third highest COLA increase received in APWU's history.

This COLA will go into effect for the 2021-2024 National Agreement. This would be first of six COLAs career employees will receive under a ratified 2021-2024 National Agreement. COLAs are in addition to the general increases that employees will receive in November of 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Due to the timing of the ratification process, the exact date the increase will begin to show on pay checks has not been determined. The COLA will be paid retroactively to February 26, 2022. In addition, the results of the ratification vote will affect the November 21, 2021, general increase as this increase would be paid retroactive to November 21, 2021.

"Today's inflation numbers show how important maintaining full COLA for every career employee was in the 2021-2024 negotiations." President Mark Dimondstein said. "A 'yes' vote for ratification will ensure our members receive this COLA and the other wage increases negotiated as part of the new agreement" he continued.

Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman added, "Not only does a 'yes' vote preserve your COLA and wage increases, but it also allows the other negotiated portions of the CBA to go into effect including the new work hour guarantees for PTFs, advanced leave provisions, and guaranteed PSE conversions.

The New Union Contract Is Ratified!

94% of Voters Say YES!

The main Collective Bargaining Agreement (union contract) between the APWU and the USPS has been overwhelmingly ratified by the members. The contract was signed by APWU President Mark Dimondstein and Postmaster General Louis DeJoy on February 28, 2022. Ninety-Four percent (94%) of the members who voted, voted "Yes!" in favor of ratification. The vote tally was 36,632 votes for ratification and 2,290 against. "I am ecstatic that the membership recognized the solid gains that this Agreement provides to the 165,000 APWU members from all crafts," President and lead negotiator Mark Dimondstein stated. "Every member should be very proud of this huge accomplishment. Our power at the bargaining table begins with each of you, the foundation of our union."

Director of Industrial Relations and chief spokesperson, Vance Zimmerman said, "I am proud of this Agreement and happy that the membership recognized the hard work of the National Negotiating Committee, the other officers who helped with the negotiations, and the diligent work of our support staff to make this contract a reality." He continued, "Now the work of implementation begins in earnest." In addition to the lead negotiator and chief spokesperson, the NCC consisted of Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks, Motor Vehicle Director Mike Foster, Maintenance Director Idowu Balogun, Support Services Director Steve Brooks, Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy and Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth "Liz" Powell.

The tentative contract agreement was reached on December 9, 2021 with unanimous approval of the National Negotiating Committee. It was then unanimously approved by the Rank & File Bargaining Advisory Committee to be sent to the members for a ratification vote. The vote ratification process was coordinated by APWU Secretary-Treasurer Powell and administered by the American Arbitration Association (AAA.) A sub-committee of the Rank & File Bargaining Advisory Committee consisting of Peggy Whitney, Sandra Munoz, Scott Hoffman, Nicole Burnett and Stacy Brown were on site monitoring the entire vote count, which took place from February 23 – February 28.

Now that we have a new contract, one of the first items to be dealt with are the pay raises due to employees. These include the first general wage increase of 1.3% for career employees (2.3% for PSEs), effective November 21, 2021; the \$1,310 per year COLA increase due to career employees, effective February 26, 2022; and the additional 50 cents per hour increase for PSEs effective on April 9, 2022.

APWU-represented bargaining unit employees in the IT/AS sector will soon begin programming the payroll system that is required to make these pay changes. Once programming is completed, retroactive payments will be made to the affected employees, with the dates of these payments to be announced.

Please check apwu.org for updated information on retroactive payments.

Additionally, the parties are in the process of finalizing a print version of the Collective Bargaining Agreement as well as updating the Joint Contract Interpretation Manual.

"I congratulate the members on this agreement which will provide wage increases, COLAs, job security, improved PTF rights and even more career opportunities for the non-career workforce," Director Zimmerman said.

President Dimondstein concluded by saying, "We should never forget that our Collective Bargaining rights were won through the courage of our forefathers and foremothers in the historic 1970 wildcat strike. The lives of literally millions of postal workers and our families have been changed for the better over the last fifty years."



Chris Czubakowski
Local Business Agent

Any postal reform legislation that passes into law will likely include "Medicare integration." There have been many questions I have been receiving on this issue, in part, due to the large amounts of misinformation being shared on social media. What follows are clarifying questions and answers

Q: What is "Medicare Integration"?

A: Medicare Integration means that future USPS retirees will be enrolled in both Medicare and FEHBP once they become eligible for Medicare at age 65. Medicare will become the primary provider and FEHBP will be the secondary provider. Only future retirees, upon becoming Medicare eligible, will have to join Medicare Parts A and B and purchase Part B in order to remain in FEHBP.

Q: Will current retirees have to join Medicare to maintain their FEHBP health insurance?

A: "No, the language only applies to future retirees. In addition, there is a provision that allows for current retirees who did not voluntarily choose to join Medicare B when they were eligible to do so and have the late enrollment penalty waived.

Q: Does Medicare integration mean that active postal workers and postal retirees will no longer be part of the

Federal Employees Health Benefit Program?

A: Absolutely not, and the APWU will not support any legislation that attempts to remove us from FEHBP. The legislation will establish a separate "postal pool" within FEHBP so that postal workers and the Postal Service receive the savings created by Medicare integration.

Q: How will such savings be generated and who will benefit?

A: Medicare will become the primary provider. What Medicare does not cover, FEHBP will then provide as the secondary insurance. This will reduce the cost of the FEHBP plans. By reducing, or slowing the increase in FEHBP health premiums, both the USPS and postal workers will save money on their respective share of the premiums.

Q: If all future retirees must pay the premium for Medicare, how is Medicare integration a positive development?

A: There is no cost associated with Medicare Part A. Currently Medicare Part B has a required premium of approximately \$150.00/ month. With Medicare integration, retirees receive 100% coverage with elimination of co-pays, deductibles and catastrophic limits. In addition, healthcare premiums will increase more slowly over time than they would otherwise.

Q: Are there any exceptions to re-

quiring future retirees to enroll in Medicare A and B in order to keep their FEHBP?

A: Yes. The legislation includes exceptions for veterans who receive their benefits through the VA, for retirees in areas where Medicare services are unavailable, and for those who have retired and moved outside the United States.

Q: Do most of our retirees already belong to Medicare?

A: Yes. Almost 80% of our current retirees voluntarily join and pay for Medicare B because it saves them money and provides 100% full coverage when it comes to health insurance.

Q: Would I lose health coverage in the unlikely event that Medicare becomes insolvent?

A: No, if such an event occurred, health coverage reverts to the secondary plan under FEHBP.

Medicare Integration Q & A's

"There is no cost associated with Medicare Part A. Currently Medicare Part B has a required premium ..."



Medicare



**Larry Brown Jr
Vice President**

Last month I had an article reprinted concerning Harassment and Discrimination. Whenever possible, I try to ask people what they want to see me write about in the Hi-Lites. A lot of people are met with the same response from me; I wrote about that before. I never like repeating myself as I feel as people will get tired of hearing the same thing over and over, but after dealing with a couple of issues recently, I came to the realization that, I have to repeat myself.

Many of the people that need to hear the old messages, weren't here when those messages were given, so they don't know. So I apologize to anyone that may not want to read what I'm typing but that just means you know these little things, and practice them hopefully. So with that being said, let us continue.

First things first, we have to learn to request stewards. I don't understand how so many people wait until they get off work, run to the office on their break, or call me at home just to ask a question. I get the little things. The quick yes or no questions that literally takes a second, but people come into the office and want a breakdown of the contract, question the seniority roster, an explanation of overtime rules, a look into if they were bypassed, learn how to bid, FMLA, and file a harassment grievance in 15 minutes. Or worse, they

I'm Sure I've Said This Before

"Since I am repeating myself today..."

walk by my machine while I'm working and want the same. This can't happen. Article 17 gives employees the right to a reasonable amount of time to consult with their steward. Reasonable amount of time cannot be measured by a predetermined factor. This means they can't tell you how long you can meet with me. (*...As long as it doesn't take me 3 hours to explain to you how to fill out a 3971, there should be no issues...*)

Speaking of 3971's, too many questions asking how long does management have to return your 3971 approved or disapproved? Or, Management gave my slip back the day before my annual leave was supposed to start, can they do that?

Since I am repeating myself today, our Local LMOU explains that 3971's should be filled out in triplicate. Why is that? So, that you can get a notified copy proving that you submitted a 3971 to Management. "If the supervisor does not return the PS Form 3971 within the aforementioned time frame, then the requested leave shall be considered approved, as long as the employee has a PS Form 3971 signed as "notified" by the supervisor." That is directly out of the Local LMOU. If your supervisor doesn't want to notify your copy of the 3971, what should you do? (*...re-read First things first...*)

Supervisors always want you to sign something. That is because your signature means something. It makes whatever document your signature is on, true. This is what I learned from one of my Step-two

representatives. If your signature is on it, it makes it true, so be careful as to what you sign your name to.

If you sign a 3971 and in the comments Management has, not I.O.D. not FMLA, and you sign it, don't come back later at the RFD, or better known as the day in court, and say, "No, that should have been FMLA." Management is going to say why did you sign it then? Pay attention to what you are putting your signature on.

Let it be known that you have a right to anything that you sign. A 3971, a statement or anything else. One of the most common things that employees never ask for is a copy of the PS Form 1260. This is the form that you fill out when you don't have access to your time card, or you forget a punch. Management will tell you to fill this form out stating what time you punched.

Since I am repeating myself today, please do not just fill out your work schedule. Just because your schedule says your Begin Tour is 5 am, if you didn't make it to work until 5:15 am, put 5:15 am. What management will do is reference the time you put with the time you gated into the building. That is protocol for them, **If you submit a PS Form 1260 Management will pull your gate rings!!!** If something doesn't add up, or something looks fishy, prepare for a RFD, or day in court for those who know it as such, for time card fraud. So if you submit a PS Form 1260, and run to the gas station on your break, you will be the subject of discipline, up to

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a removal. **I repeat**, You cannot leave the building while on the clock, even it is to simply move your car. That requires a PS Form 7020 signed off on by your immediate supervisor. (...I should've named this article the numbers game with the reference to so many PS form...whatever.)

Make a copy of the PS Form 1260 before you turn it into management. Therefore, if something comes up in the future regarding your time, you will be able to prove that you put the 1260 in and that everything is legit on your part. The last thing you want is to be brought in and questioned about time, with no way to prove that you did nothing wrong. Even though the burden of proof is on Management in all discipline cases, they will request a notice of removal, for time card fraud, and make the Union have to prove your innocence. Trust me when I tell you, I've seen it too many times. Depending on the supervisor, you are guilty until proven innocent. (...that was an old article I wrote years ago also, maybe I'll dig that one up and reprint that one too...)

Those are just a couple of the basic things that I deemed important to remind you about, or inform you about if you hadn't heard them before. I'm sure you will know by the time the Hi-Lites reaches you...our contract has been ratified. 94% voted yes. 36,632 votes for ratification and 2,290 against. Roughly 165,000 APWU members across all crafts. That means roughly 24% of represented members decided to return their ballot to ratify our contract. **Our Contract!** Let that sink in. The one thing that when we don't have it, everyone is concerned about it. Only 24% cared to vote. Everyone worried about our COLAs, worried about the percentage of raises we will get, if Juneteenth was going to get added as National Holiday, the 50 miles for excessing; PSEs asking me everyday when they are going to make regular, this contract has language in it concerning that, yet we could only get 24% of people to care to return the ballot. I appreciate everyone that appreciates what the Union does, but for those of you who have anything negative to say about the Union I point to these numbers right here.

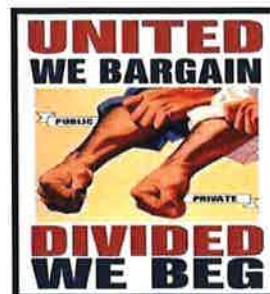
President Dimondstein stated, "We should never forget that our Collective Bargaining rights were won through the courage of our forefathers and foremothers in the historic 1970 wildcat strike. The lives of literally millions of postal workers and our families have been changed for the better over the last fifty years." People need to go back and do their history on Unions in America. Understand why they are needed and why your participation is critical. Since I'm repeating myself today, the Union is not the Stewards and Officers in the office, but every single one of you on the workroom floor. Just as we needed the ones before us to step up and fight in order for us to live better lives now, many are hoping that we do the same thing. Fight for them, NOW, so that their lives can hopefully be better in the future. The Union is always looking for new stewards that want to get involved, care about their jobs and want to represent the membership, but I'm sure this is nothing that you haven't heard me say before.

Attend Your Union Meetings !



2022 GMM Meetings

January 31 - 6pm
March 30 - 7pm
May 27 - 7am
July 18 - 6pm
September 28 - 7pm
November 25 - 7am





Greg Becker
South Sectional Director

Hello Union Brothers and Sisters, I would like to discuss what I have observed at some of my South Sectional offices. Clerks have informed me about this issue, which pertains to the reduction of Duty Assignments at their A.P.O. in past years. While Duty assignments posted for bid to career clerks have been reduced through reversion, etc; it seems that management has utilized more and more non-career PSE personnel. It can only be concluded that management has made a concerted effort to reduce duty assignments and replace with PSE hours in some locations.

I believe that the contract has been violated at these locations. As a Steward and Officer, It is my responsibility to investigate these violations in my areas. I have investigated and filed grievances at the Brookfield office. Franklin/Hales Corners is being investigated at this time. Management forgets that they have negotiated language which must be complied with, unfortunately, it frequently takes three steps of the grievance procedure for them to adhere to the contract.

The basis for these grievances is in several areas of the National Agreement. Article 37.3.A.1 reads, "EVERY EFFORT WILL be made to create desirable duty assignments from all available work hours for career employees to bid." This lan-

Management Must Make Every Effort To Create Desirable Duty Assignments

"There is one more important person required to help prove our grievance. This person is You! "

guage was so contentious that the APWU and USPS disputed the interpretation of the above language in National Dispute RE: Q10C-4Q-C 15066902/HQTC20150219.

The parties resolved this dispute on November 24, 2015. The language in Article 37.3.A.1 includes the language, "...from all available work hours...".

This means that overtime hours, grievance settlement hours, NTFT, etc. can be used to create desirable duty assignments. In addition, PSE hours must be included. All PSE's can benefit from this contractual language as PSE's could be promoted to career into duty assignments through the Residual Vacancy Memorandum.

The language in Article 37.3.A.1 is not the only language that helps create jobs. Article 7.1.B.4 states, "When the hours worked by a PSE on the window demonstrates the need for a full-time preferred duty assignment, such assignment will be posted for bid within the section." This language is reiterated in the PSE MOU. The NTFT MOU also contains language to allow for the creation of Duty Assignments. Grievances of this type require a lot of data.

All work hours must be requested going back months. These work hours get inputted into a computer program created by the APWU called MDAT (Maximization Desirable Duty Assignment Tool). This

program helps to graph the hours requested by the Union, and provided by management. Only management has access to the hours worked in TACs and we hope that a grievance isn't needed to receive this relevant information.

There is one more important person required to help prove our grievance. This person is You! Only you can provide us with the names of outside PSE's (or PTF's at level 20 and below) who have worked at your Associate Post Office. Normally, management will not provide that information if it is not requested in writing.

Management will frequently schedule outside PSE's at your office and these hours are very important to add to the graphing. Better yet, a PSE can keep a record of all hours they work at their office and others and notify their steward of when they worked at a specific office. During one of my investigations, a non-member PSE gave me information on when he/she worked at a select office. This information will be inputted to fill hours on the graph and help prove our grievance.

The language in Article 37.3.A.1 and Article 7.1.B.4 are very important to maximizing our desirable Duty assignments at all offices for career employees to bid, and ultimately helping to promote our PSE's to career positions, or PTF's to Full-time positions in the U.S.P.S. through the Residual Vacancy MOU. If you have

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a question about this or any other issue, contact me at 414-530-3449. Thank you.

* * *



Jim Arneson
Maintenance Director

Maintenance Updates

"...please contact a steward....and write a statement for the Steward..."



With the Global settlement we will finally have closure on the Line H cases from 2015 through 2019. One thing that I noticed with the Line H cases is that each year the times were getting closer to the estimated time. And few routes that were completed over the estimated time. Heck we have had an uptick in routes completed under the estimated time.

All of these factors led to a decrease in the Line H penalty at the end of the Year. If you need to take more time on the route because of numerous factors, either put the time on the route or if Management is instructing you to put it on a work order make sure it is the one that is labeled, work not on the 4852.

From what I am understanding that is the only work order available. If they do not allow you to do either please contact a steward. Follow the instructions but make a copy of the EWARS sheet and write a statement for the Steward.

The same applies for the other divisions of Maintenance. If you do not complete the entire route yourself then you need to put down a partial. Management is getting so desperate in their zeal for completion rates that they are closing out tasks in a route because someone put down a complete on their paperwork. Even after being told that they only completed the steps of their level. Management is doing this because they stopped hiring MM7s for a while because they were "over staffed" with BEM9s. And that is another issue that is being grieved.

On August 8th, 2019 the Union and the Service signed an agreement concerning the MS-1. One part of it was that the employees performing the work at the stations would continue to until attrition. Evidently this was too much for the Service to stick with, so they removed them and excessed one of the BEM's to MM7. The service is just compounding violation after violation.

MAINTENANCE



Nikki Anthonasin
Manual/Mechanization
Director

In a letter dated July 12, 2019, the Postal Service issued its national craft determination for the USS or Universal Sorting System. The Postal Service has determined that "the primary craft operation of the USS is the Mail Handler Craft." The actual number of employees required to perform the duties associated with the USS at any time will be determined based on local configuration and operational needs.

In that letter of craft determination, it stated: "After reviewing the equipment operation, carefully considering the input from the APWU and the NPMHU, and applying the principles of RI-399, the Postal Service has determined the primary craft operation of the USS is the Mail Handler Craft.

The volume of rejected parcels, requiring the operation of the one keying station, is minimal and could not be efficiently separated from the other duties performed on the USS. The reject keying station is not integral to the distribution operation of the machine".

The APWU has filed a dispute on this craft determination. That dispute has not been resolved as of this time. This is a national dispute. The USS processes non-machinable objects (NMOs), which are inducted on the system through parcel dumpers. The system singulates and orients the par-

The USS Machine

"This machine sorts medium to large packages up to 70 pounds."



cels and barcodes are read by a six-sided scan tunnel and camera system. The USS is modular and can be configured based on available floor space, with the number of outputs ranging from 4 to 18, and it can scan and sort parcels up to 2,200 per hour. This machine sorts medium to large packages up to 70 pounds. And cannot take packages over 46 inches long and 28 inches wide.

On the USS, packages are dropped from a container called the universal unloader, onto a loading belt, and the packages make their way around the machine. The parcels then go through the singulator that lines them up in single file to go through a mirrored camera tunnel. It scans all six sides of the package simultaneously for a barcode and enters the information into the system. It also keeps a tally of all the packages it processes that day. There are some facilities that have an automated Scan Where You Band (SWYB) directly attached to the machine. In those facilities, the Clerk Craft is the primary craft for

operation of the automated SWYB units (when attached to a USS).

It has not been decided yet if our facility will have one of these units. The APWU has previously disputed craft determinations and prevailed.

In 2015, the craft determination for the SPSS was reversed. In the letter released 8/7/2015, their determination for the reversal states: "We have determined that the hands-on induction, including the singulating/separating and facing of individual packages on the five induction stations of the SPSS is similar to the induction stations on both the Small Parcel Bundle Sorter (SPBS) and the Automated Package Processing System (APBS), which are staffed with mail processing clerk craft employees".

The Postal Service Reform Act Passes The Senate & Will Become Law

APWU News

In a historic moment, the Senate passed the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 on March 8 with a vote of 79-19. The House passed the bill last month with a vote of 342-92. The legislation will now go to President Biden's desk, where he will sign it into law.

The enactment of Postal Reform marks a turning point in the fight to protect and strengthen the people's public Postal Service. "It is not an exaggeration to say that this bill is one of the most critical pieces of postal legislation in modern history — the struggle to win Postal Reform has been 15 years in the making," said Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard. "The passage of this legislation, on a strong bipartisan basis, is a monumental victory for postal workers, the wider postal community, and the communities we are proud to serve," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "This legislation strengthens the public Postal Service, a national treasure that has connected us for over 250 years."

The Postal Reform bill will place the United States Postal Service on the path toward financial stability by repealing the onerous and financially debilitating pre-funding mandate, ensuring six-day delivery, adding much-needed transparency to postal operations, and maximizing participation in Medicare — a program which the Postal Service and its employees have contributed over \$34 billion toward — by enacting prospective Medicare integration.

Postal Reform is fair to active and retired postal workers and is a crucial development in the fight to preserve and strengthen the peoples' Postal Service. "Thanks to the efforts carried out by postal workers, our sister unions, allied organizations, and the American public, comprehensive postal reform is now a reality," said Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard. "The APWU applauds every member of Congress who played a role in crafting and passing this monumental legislation."

Wisconsin Union Members Rally Over USPS Vehicle Contract

Union workers rallied outside Oshkosh Corp. Saturday over a plan to build the United State Postal Service's next generation delivery vehicle in South Carolina instead of Wisconsin. Hundreds of members held up signs demanding that the company reverse a decision made last summer regarding production. Local 578 Union President Bob Lynk called it an attack against union labor. "If Oshkosh leaves here, Oshkosh can be done. We're the biggest employer here," says Lynk. "But we're dwindling. We went from 3,100 plus members 10 years ago to 1,600." Company officials said the site in Spartanburg, South Carolina will be 900,000 square feet, which is more than twice the size of any facility in Oshkosh.

In addition, officials said the contract will not take away jobs from Oshkosh and 100 technical jobs are being added. Union leaders disputed the notion that Wisconsin did not meet size requirements. "We do have the capacity. We do have the space, and if they need to hire we can find workers here in this great state," said Tim Jacobson, chief union steward. Said Lynk, "Why is it under one roof? Because all of those jobs would have to be unionized. Our warehouse is in Greenville. It can be here in Oshkosh." Production on the postal vehicles is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2023.



**John Miceli
Treasurer**

(TSP.GOV)

Updated on February 25, 2022

Later this year, we're introducing exciting features to make your TSP experience even better. You'll have more flexibility in how you access My Account, more options to contact TSP representatives if you need help, and even more transactions you can complete smoothly and securely online. We look forward to sharing details with you and answering any questions you may have during the coming months. Be sure to pay attention to TSP correspondence in the coming months and visit this webpage for updates.

Participant services when and how you want it

Get participant services on your terms. You'll have access to a virtual assistant 24/7 to help you find answers and resources. And, when you're logged in to My Account or the new TSP Mobile App, you can connect with a TSP Representative during business hours using a new live-agent chat function.

As always, you'll still be able to reach us by phone and send us secure messages in My Account.

A new My Account interface designed with you in mind

New TSP Features

"The first thing you'll notice is a fresh look to the new My Account interface."

The first thing you'll notice is a fresh look to the new My Account interface. Your account summary will display your investments clearly, and the navigation menu will make it easy for you to find and use account management tools. You'll find all the functions you're used to—and several new ones—in a responsive, mobile-friendly environment.

The official TSP Mobile App for on-the-go access to My Account

Monitor your TSP account and complete transactions from anywhere, anytime. With the TSP Mobile App, you can do just about everything you'd be able to do if you were signing in through the TSP website. Along with checking your account balance, tracking fund performance, and making transaction requests, you'll be able to submit documents, manage payment information, and more. You'll even be able to log in with your device biometrics, such as your fingerprint or facial recognition, for an extra layer of security.

Complete more transactions online

Save time and reduce paperwork using new online features in My Account. Complete forms, sign your name electronically, make loan payments, and do more with easy and secure processes.

Personalized support for rolling money in to your TSP account

Rolling money from an IRA or plan in to your TSP account? Get support from specialized agents who will walk you through a simplified process.

More ways to invest your money

In addition to the TSP funds you know and love, you'll have more investment options. As long as your account meets certain eligibility requirements, you'll have the option to invest some of your TSP in a mutual fund window for additional fees. Unless you make a change to your investment elections, your current TSP investment choices will remain the same for both future contributions and current allocations.

What's Changing and When

As part of the transition to add these new features, we'll need to temporarily suspend some transactions and services for a brief period in May 2022. Your money will remain invested in the TSP funds you've chosen during this time. Be sure to pay attention to TSP correspondence and check this webpage in the coming months for more details.

You don't need to do anything right now. However, you will need to take some steps to set up online access to the new My Account interface after the transition is complete. We'll let you know what you need to do when the new My Account interface becomes available.

Latest News and Announcements

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New features to make the TSP even better — Later this year, we'll introduce new TSP features and tools to make your TSP experience even better and to further help you achieve your retirement goals. As a TSP participant or beneficiary, you'll have more flexibility in how you access My Account, more options to contact TSP representatives if you need help, and even more transactions you can complete smoothly and securely online. Learn more about the new updates to the TSP.

High call volume on the ThriftLine

The week of Washington's Birthday is one of the busiest for the ThriftLine. From February 22 to February 25, we expect to experience high call volume and longer-than-normal wait times for speaking to a TSP representative. To minimize your wait time, consider calling the ThriftLine later in the week, before 10:00 a.m. eastern time, or after 4:00 p.m. eastern time. We appreciate your patience.

Annual participant statements are online and in the mail

Your annual 2021 participant statement, covering the period from January 1 through December 31, 2021, is now available in My Account. To receive e-mail updates when new participant statements are available, select the "Subscribe" button on Plan news.

2022 Contribution Limits

The Internal Revenue Code places specific limits on the amount that you can contribute to employer-sponsored plans like the TSP each year. The limits for 2022 have been announced. To learn more, visit "Contribution limits."

Remember: The TSP catch-up process is now easier. Just add any contributions toward the catch-up limit in the same place as your other TSP contributions. Learn more: tsp.gov/catchup.

Questions? 1-877-968-3778

Find other ways to contact us:

(<https://www.tsp.gov/contact/>) , (<https://www.facebook.com/tsp4gov>) , (<https://www.youtube.com/user/tsp4gov>)





Kenni Liggan
Customer Service
Director

Claims Under The Federal Employees Compensation Act Due To COVID19

"...Updated On February, 15, 2022..."

U.S Department Of Labor
www.dol.gov

COVID-19 and Federal Workers' Compensation

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) makes it much easier for federal workers diagnosed with COVID-19 to establish coverage under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). To establish a COVID-19 claim, you simply need to establish:

- You were diagnosed with COVID-19 via a positive test result (excluding home tests) or medical professional; and
- Within 21 days of your diagnosis of COVID-19, you carried out duties that required contact with patients, members of the public, or co-workers.

Will I get paid if I miss time from work for isolation after a COVID-19 positive test? Do I qualify for Continuation of Pay (COP)?

Yes, Continuation of Pay (COP) is payable under the FECA but only if:

- 1) You can demonstrate you have COVID-19 via a positive test result (excluding home tests) or a medical professional. A notice to quarantine for exposure without a COVID-19 diagnosis as described above is not sufficient.
- 2) You file your CA-1 form within 30 days of the date of the injury (the last date you were exposed at work, prior to the positive test result). See 20 CFR 10.205.

If you file a CA-1 and elect to use COP, you must ensure that medical evidence substantiating you have COVID-19 via a positive test result is provided to your employer within 10 calendar days after filing the CA-1. If a qualifying positive test result is on file, you are eligible for COP during that period.

If you are disabled and must be out of work beyond that initial 10-day period, you must submit medical evidence to your employer supporting disability resulting from COVID-19. If evidence supporting disability due to COVID-19 is not submitted, your employer can stop COP after that initial 10-day period. You should also submit/upload proof of your COVID-19 diagnosis and inability to work into your OWCP case file.

How many days of pay (COP) can I receive during isolation if I have COVID19?

If you meet the two requirements noted above, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as of this date recommends a period of isolation of at least 5 days following your symptoms and/or positive test. Therefore, if your file contains a COVID-19 diagnosis via a positive test result (excluding home tests) or medical professional, OWCP will not intervene during the first 10 days of COP since isolation following a positive test result is akin to disability.

OWCP acknowledges that the current recommendation for isolation is 5 days, but because that timeframe has varied and is dependent on symptomology onset, if your file contains a COVID-19 diagnosis via a positive test result (excluding home tests) or medical professional, OWCP will not intervene until the 10-day regulatory timeframe provided

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for in 20 CFR 10.222 has passed.

What if I file a FECA claim but cannot demonstrate I had COVID19?

If you do not submit evidence you had COVID-19 via a positive test result (excluding home tests) or a medical professional within 10 days, and your employing agency requests that OWCP make a formal determination on your claim, OWCP will formally adjudicate your claim and make a determination on COP. If your claim is denied because you cannot demonstrate your COVID-19 diagnosis via a positive test result (excluding home test) or a medical professional, your employing agency can recover any COP previously paid to you.

What if I need to quarantine for exposure and cannot demonstrate I had COVID19?

If you do not have COVID-19 but cannot work because you must quarantine, consider the following:

Quarantine periods are for when you have been exposed to COVID-19, but there is no evidence that you have COVID-19. Quarantine recommendations vary based on vaccine status, whether you have had COVID-19 in the last 90 days, and other factors. Visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19 website for more detail on quarantine recommendations.

OWCP cannot accept a worker's compensation claim based solely on quarantine or exposure, and COP is not payable solely for quarantine or exposure.

Consult your employing agency for leave options that may be available if you must quarantine. You can also visit the Safer Federal Workforce website for the most up to date information pertaining to available leave options to include potential weather and safety leave. The Safer Federal Workforce Task Force is led by the White House COVID-19 Response Team, the General Services Administration (GSA), and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and provides valuable information for federal employees regarding the federal response to COVID-19 and how the federal government is responding to keep its workforce safe.

Did you hear it's Easier to File a FECA Claim for COVID-19 now?

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 that President Biden signed on March 11, 2021, makes it much easier for federal workers diagnosed with COVID-19 to establish coverage under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. To establish a COVID-19 claim, you simply need to establish that you are a "covered employee," meaning that:

You were diagnosed with COVID-19. Specifically, you were diagnosed with COVID-19 while employed in the Federal service at any time during the period of January 27, 2020 to January 27, 2023; and...

Your duties include any risk of exposure. Specifically, within 21 days of your diagnosis of COVID-19, you carried out duties that...

- a. required contact with patients, members of the public, or co-workers; or
- b. included a risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus