

MEMO

To the Branch 2184 Leadership Council, Jan. 12, 2021



Walt McGregory
Mark Judd
Jackie McGregory
John Hite
Cathy Tondreau
Jim Powell
Scott Watts
Joe Golonka
Gloria Warthen
Felicia Davis
Leonard Zawisa
Kris Shaw
Mark Owen
Bryon Hendricks
Melvin MacDonald
Darryl Clay
Symone Coleman
Yvonne Jackson
Denise Viola
Lillian Bogosian
Chris Biegalski
Phil Ashford
Scherrie Lacey
Dave Reise
Erik Venzke
Joshua Nagy
Shavon Alexander
Elizabeth Bays
Valerie Watkins
Jennifer Rake
Tamara Bosman
Diego Forshaw
Kristie Nelson
Otis Barney
Keith Benedict
Tracy Mitchell
Nakia Whitfield
Katrina Jones
Ananias Epps
Ramon Robinson
Tyler Haverstick
Paul Bordine
Mike Tredway
Danita Smith

This first Leadership Council Memo of 2021 will begin with a Branch 2184 Administrative update. With the COVID-19 pandemic still in progress as the new calendar year begins, we will continue to conduct all of our steward and executive board meetings telephonically until further notice. Additional safety and distancing protocols also remain in effect at the Branch 2184 office. Also, please be aware of the following Branch policy, effective until further notice: No one is to be admitted inside the Branch 2184 office unless scheduled to work at the office. No one is authorized to come up to the building, even with a face mask on, unless they are working there. This is for everyone's safety!

Branch President Walt McGregory has appointed Mark Judd to fill the vacancy in the Executive Vice-President position created when Walt became Branch 2184 President. This appointment is effective immediately. As with all other Branch 2184 officers and stewards, Mark will serve in this position for the balance of the current term of office, which will be until Branch 2184's nominations and elections are conducted and the installation of officers and stewards for the next term is completed.

Branch President Walt McGregory has also made the following additional appointments, effective immediately: Dearborn Annex steward Mel MacDonald has been appointed as an alternate steward in the Dearborn Heights and the Monroe installations to perform informal step A grievance meetings. Branch Recording Secretary and Canton steward John Hite has been appointed as an alternate steward in the Dundee installation to perform informal step A grievance meeting. Branch Trustee Gloria Warthen has been appointed as an alternate steward in the Temperance installation to perform informal step A grievances.

Branch President Walt McGregory announced the establishment of a Branch level Contract Administration Unit (CAU) committee. The core function of the committee is to assist all Branch 2184 stewards and officers with contract enforcement-related matters and with mentoring. Branch Trustee Joe Golonka will serve as chairperson and as a senior advisor. Other members of the Branch 2184 CAU are Branch President Walt McGregory, Branch Executive Vice-President Mark Judd, Branch Vice-President Jackie McGregory, NALC Dispute Resolution Step B team member Erik Venzke, and Branch 2184 route inspection officer Dave Reise.

On Tuesday, December 29, then Branch President Mark Judd and Allen Park Postmaster Mark Taurence signed our Branch 2184 Local Memorandum of Understanding, thereby incorporating Allen Park into our LMOU. The LMOU signing was done in a unique manner, outside of the back of the Branch office in order to safely accommodate social distancing necessities. The provisions of our LMOU are now fully applicable to all 20 of the post office installations and stations where city letter carriers are represented by Branch 2184.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) expired as midnight, December 31, 2020. As of this date there has been no new legislative initiative passed by Congress to replace it. With this in mind, please be aware of the following information, because our members have lots of questions and a good deal of misinformation is circulating among letter carriers and other Postal Service employees.

January 12, 2021 Leadership Council Memo, page 2:

First, the NALC and USPS did agree on an extension of several COVID-related Memorandums of Understanding, through March 26, 2021. This extension is number M-01932 in the NALC Materials Reference System (MRS) and it applies to the following listed MOUs ONLY: Temporary expansion of Sick Leave for Dependent Care (M-01910); Temporary additional paid leave for CCAs (M-01911); Temporary use of the 7:01 rule (M-01913); Temporary Workplace changes to promote social distancing) (M-01915); and Temporary use of TCAs (M-01916).

Second, NONE of these extended MOUs have anything to do with an extension or granting of additional paid COVID leave under the FFRCA and the accompanying FMLA expansion, which expired along with the FFCRA on December 31. Thus, as of January 1, 2021, leave use for COVID-Related absences such as child care must be either the carrier's own paid leave (see M-01910), or leave without pay (LWOP). Additionally, through March 26, 2021, CCAs can still use up to 80 hours of paid sick leave in certain circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic (see M-01911).

The following information is provided in response to questions about the availability of the COVID-19 vaccines for USPS employees. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have issued guidelines establishing a phased rollout of the vaccines in a specific priority. The State of Michigan has indicated that they will follow the CDC guidelines in this regard. Under these guidelines, USPS workers are "essential workers" and are in the second phase (Phase 1b) of the rollout, meaning that the vaccine could be available to active USPS employees within the next few months.

Additionally, as of this time it is NOT mandatory that a USPS employee receive the COVID-19 vaccine. However, for the health and protection of all, this is strongly encouraged. As usual, there are ignorant naysayers spreading misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccines, which have thus far been shown to be both safe and highly effective. NALC members should be encouraged to take a fact and evidence-based approach to the COVID vaccines instead of listening to deceitful and politically motivated anti-vaccine nonsense or wild and delusional Internet-based conspiracy theories. Worried about what's in the COVID vaccine? Do you know what was in the hot dog you ate a few days ago?

Stewards, with the start of a new year, please be sure that you are using new grievance numbers for all grievances with an incident date on or after January 1, 2021. If an incident or contract violation took place in December, the grievance number would still be a "20" number. For example, in Westland the first grievance number for a violation or incident on or after January 1, 2021 would be WLD-21-01. In Ypsilanti it would be YPSI-21-01, and so forth.

Additionally, please remember that ALL grievances MUST be turned into the union office. In offices that have Branch officers either working in them or providing representative functions for them and who also are working at the Branch 2184 office, such as Dearborn, Taylor, and Westland/Canton; as well as Allen Park which is close to the union office, they will take care of getting the grievance files to the union office. All other offices, please mail in your grievances. You will be reimbursed if incurring any out-of-pocket costs.

Stewards, also please be aware of each of the following additional Branch policies: First, Branch 2184 stewards are NOT authorized to purchase supplies for their steward work unless this is first authorized by the Branch President, Executive Vice-President, or Vice-President. If you need to purchase supplies, please call the union office first and speak with one of the Branch officers listed above.

Second, any removal or emergency placement (Article 16.7) action issued to a Branch 2184 letter carrier MUST always be reported to the Branch President, Executive Vice-President, or Vice-President ASAP, and always prior to any appeal to Step B of the Dispute Resolution Process. Additionally, concurrent with any appeal of a removal or emergency placement grievance to Step B, a copy of the grievance file must always be provided to the union office.

January 12, 2021 Leadership Council Memo, page 3:

A reminder that any grievances that are necessary in regards to ODL quarterly equitability for the postal quarter that ended on December 31, 2020 must be initiated no later than Thursday, January 14, 2021 in order to be considered timely.

Stewards, when completing form 8190 for an appealed grievance to Step B , especially where a formal Step A meeting did not occur, please be sure that the incident date (Box 10) is included with the information at the top of the 8190. A grievance that is appealed to Step B without an incident date is in jeopardy because the union is then unable to document that the incident(s) have resulted in timely grievances. We would not be able to successfully take such a grievance to arbitration if it was subsequently impassed by the Step B parties.

A question arose about a long recurring problem in some Branch 2184-represented offices, which is non-payment or delayed payment of grievance settlements to our affected members. If/when a member comes to you with a concern about non-payment of a grievance settlement, first ask them to show you their last three pay stubs, which would indicate if pay adjustments have been made. Many members will overlook adjustments in their pay.

Additionally, the most effective way to codify a timeframe for making payment on a grievance settlement is to specifically establish this timeframe within the grievance settlement language itself. For example: "The parties agree that management will show proof of payment to steward _____ within 7 days of this settlement." After the grievance settlement is signed off on by all parties, advise the grievant(s) to look for payment within two or three pay periods, at most.