

MEMO

To the Branch 2184 Leadership Council, April 28, 2020



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Joe Golonka
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Jim Powell
Scott Watts
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Yvonne Jackson
Denise Viola
Lillian Bogosian
Chris Biegalski
Phil Ashford
Scherrie Lacey
Dave Reise
Erik Venzke
Joshua Nagy
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Elizabeth Bays
Valerie Watkins
Jennifer Rake
Tamara Bosman
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Kristie Nelson
Keith Benedict
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Ananias Epps
John Hite
Ramon Robinson
Tyler Haverstick
Paul Bordine
Mike Tredway
Danita Smith

During the past few months Branch 2184 and our members have been dealing with challenges that are certainly unprecedented in the more than 95-year history of our Branch. However, out of crisis often comes innovation, and here in Branch 2184 this has also been an opportunity to test and implement changes in long-established ways of conducting our business on behalf our members. Most notably have been changes in manner of conducting our internal meetings, specifically our steward and executive board meetings. Teleconferences have now been shown to be a viable alternative to onsite meetings, when this is necessary. Additionally, our Branch website has been upgraded with front page COVID-19 information, and our Steward Resources on the Branch website now includes a steward meeting link with all documents pertinent to current and still evolving issues. Thank you to webmaster Jim Hales for his excellent and timely work with the Branch website.

Stewards and Branch officers are strongly encouraged to continue to access and monitor all available sources of authentic and pertinent information such as the NALC National website, the NALC App, the Branch website, and the *Postal Record*. Because of the perilous financial and political situation currently impacting the Postal Service, all Branch 2184 officers and stewards should also be taking an active leadership role with legislative matters. Until further notice, all steward and executive board meetings will continue to be conducted via teleconference. Decisions regarding future Branch membership meetings and other Branch events will be made by Branch President Mark Judd after a review of the decisions by government entities as well as other relevant information and projections that becomes available going forward.

After a discussion during the telephonic Branch 2184 Executive Board meeting on Monday, April 27, the Board members unanimously agreed to cancel this year's Branch picnic for members and their families, which had been scheduled for Sunday, June 28. It was determined that we could not safely conduct the picnic this year, and it is anticipated that we will resume our annual picnic beginning in 2021.

Effective April 21, 2020, USPS policy requires that where local and state governments have ordered or directed people to wear face masks, Postal Service employees should comply. Michigan currently has a requirement that face masks must be worn in public facilities or settings. Additionally, any USPS employee who is unable to achieve social distancing in the workplace should also wear a face covering. This policy will remain in effect until further notice.

Three additional National Memorandums of Understanding have been agreed to by the NALC and the USPS. The first (M-01917) is a further extension of the previously agreed upon 30-day time limit extension for grievance appeals to Step B and to arbitration. The time limits extension now runs through May 20, 2020. The second (M-01918), is a one-time modification of Article 8, section 5.A, where those that did not sign an Overtime Desired List (either the regular or Work Assignment list) during the two-week sign up period at the end of March will be able to place their names on either list for the current second quarter of the 2020 calendar year. The intent is to allow more letter carriers to be on the Overtime lists for the balance of the current the quarter in order to compensate

for employee absences due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The third National MOU (M-01919), provides that beginning on February 29, 2020, COVID-19 related absences will not be considered when reviewing the attendance record of employees requesting reassignment under the Memorandum of Understanding, Re: Transfers, Section D, which is also incorporated into Article 12, section 6 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

We've received a few calls that indicate a misunderstanding regarding the application and use of the two types of additional leave (Emergency Sick Leave and Family Medical Leave Act expansion) as provided for under the provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). A similar misunderstanding exists with some regarding the additional paid leave available to CCAs (M-01911) for specific reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It appears that some of our members were expecting to see additional leave credited to their earned and accumulated leave balances as shown on pay stubs. That is neither the intent or the application of these additional types of leave. Instead, this leave will be applied and paid through the use of specific TACS codes that were created for this purpose. Also, the additional leave is only available when one or more of the qualifying COVID-19 related criteria have been met. It is otherwise not available as "extra leave."

A question arose regarding a situation where a PTF carrier in one of our stations was assigned to fill a temporary T-6 vacancy. The issue involved the assignment of the PTF when the regular carrier on the route that the PTF was assigned to on the T-6 string was called in on their NS day. For this situation to be properly addressed, we must begin by remembering that a temporary T-6 vacancy is NOT filled via the opt/hold down process discussed in Article 41, section 2.B of the Contract as well in our Branch 2184 Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU), Item 21, sections 3 and 4. Temporary T-6 vacancies are instead filled through temporary higher-level assignments (essentially, temporary in-craft promotions), per the provisions of Article 25, section 4 of the Contract.

As such, the opt/hold down rules in Article 41 and in our LMOU are NOT applicable in this situation. Although any career level carrier (part time flexible or full time regular) can fill a temporary T-6 vacancy and receive the higher level T-6 pay (an additional 2.1%), and he/she is entitled to remain on the T-6 assignment for as long as it is temporarily vacant, they otherwise can be moved to another assignment if/when the regular carrier on the route they were assigned to works his/her NS day. Additionally, if they are moved to another assignment in this situation, they are still entitled to receive the additional 2.1% T-6 level pay for the day. Finally, and related to this subject, because temporary T-6 vacancies are not filled through Article 41 opts/hold downs, the "duration clause" in Article 41, Section 2.B.5 also does not apply, and the carrier can voluntarily terminate the temporary higher-level assignment at any time.