

The Postal Record

The monthly journal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

Welcome new members



New Insignia Products



NALC Insignia Collection

		ITEM DESCRIPTION		PRICE	QTY.	TOTAL
		INDICATE QUANTITY DESIRED NEXT TO SIZE		EACH		AMOUNT
1.	Men's Weston Moisture Management Shirt	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$35.00		
2.	Men's Performance Crewneck Sport Shirt (Blue)	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$24.00		
	Men's Performance Crewneck Sport Shirt (Khaki)	M	LG XL 2X 3X			
3.	Lightweight Mock Turtleneck (Navy)	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$25.00		
	Lightweight Mock Turtleneck (Black)	M	LG XL 2X 3X			
4.	Men's 1/4 Zip Slub Pullover Jacket (Navy)	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$38.00		
	Men's 1/4 Zip Slub Pullover Jacket (Black)	M	LG XL 2X 3X			
5.	NALC Classic White T-shirt	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$10.00		
6.	Men's Performance Sport Shirt	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$35.00		
7.	Youth T-shirt	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$ 8.00		
8.	Micro-Fiber Sport Jacket	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$60.00		
9.	Men's Traditional Sport Shirt (White)	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$28.00		
	Men's Traditional Sport Shirt (Black)	M	LG XL 2X 3X			
10.	T-shirt Worker's Right (Royal)	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$10.00		
11.	T-shirt "Save America's Postal Service"	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$12.00		
12.	Ladies' Stretch Poly Sport Shirt (Navy)	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$33.00		
	Ladies' Stretch Poly Sport Shirt (Brown)	M	LG XL 2X 3X			
13.	Ladies' Full Zip Slub Jacket (Charcoal)	M	LG XL 2X 3X	\$38.00		
	Ladies' Full Zip Slub Jacket (Brown)	M	LG XL 2X 3X			
14.	NALC AFL-CIO Twill Cap (White or Navy)	White	Navy	\$15.00		
15.	Men's Medallion Watch w/ Steel Link Bracelet			\$85.00		
16.	Ladies' Medallion Watch w/ Steel Link Bracelet			\$85.00		
17.	Men's Black Medallion Watch w/ Expandable Bracelet			\$85.00		
18.	Ladies Black Medallion Watch w/ Expandable Bracelet			\$85.00		
19.	Gold Medallion Pocket Watch			\$110.00		
20.	Past officer lapel pin (Branch or State)			\$10.00		



Completely fill out shipping instructions below. Please print or type

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In your hands



**Fredric V.
Rolando**

Welcome to the National Association of Letter Carriers. You have made the right decision to join with us to work to improve the pay, benefits and working conditions for all letter carriers. Together, we can make a difference.

One of the best tools to help you make the most of your membership is right in your hands—our monthly magazine, *The Postal Record*.

Each month, you'll find this magazine chock full of interesting stories and resourceful columns, from articles about what is happening in the halls of Congress that could affect the future of the Postal Service to columns by NALC's national officers and headquarters staff, to stories covering topics that include protecting your contractual rights, what to do if you suffer an injury

and how to plan for your eventual retirement. You'll also find interesting features on carriers just like you, who do amazing things both on and off the clock, including the many brave and resourceful carriers who rescue people on their routes. Also included are items from members in branches throughout the country who talk about the issues they're facing and how they're striving to improve the working lives of other letter carriers.

As a special tool to help you get up to speed, we have reprinted several *Postal Record* articles geared toward new members, explaining the grievance process, how to get help from your steward and national business agent, how to read your paystub, advice for getting the best uniforms, what it means to belong to the AFL-CIO, how to get involved in the union, and much more.

The union only succeeds when we all work together, so it's important that we all help each other. You're joining a long tradition of letter carriers working together for a common cause, a tradition that dates back to 1889 and will continue for decades to come.

Welcome to NALC. Let's get to work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fredric V. Rolando'.

NALC's structure designed to help, defend members

There has been a major influx of new members into the NALC over the past couple of months due to the surge in hiring of city carrier assistants (CCAs). As we welcome our new brothers and sisters into our union family, now seems like a good time to review how the union is structured to serve the membership.

Our message to all carriers and especially to the new CCAs: "You are the union." The NALC is designed to provide the best representation for you, both on the workroom floor and at the national level, through collective bargaining. Your union, headquartered in Washington, DC, is led by 10 elected national resident officers, 15 officers known as national business agents (NBAs) overseeing the 15 geographical regions that make up the country, and locally elected officers who lead our branches.

There are also NALC state associations responsible for legislative and political

Within each local branch, letter carriers are designated as union shop stewards in each individual station. Whether you're a newly hired city carrier assistant or a 30-year veteran, you should know that NALC business starts, and often ends, with the work of the shop steward. From filing grievances to offering workplace advice, these frontline defenders of the contract are the union's main presence in a carrier's station.

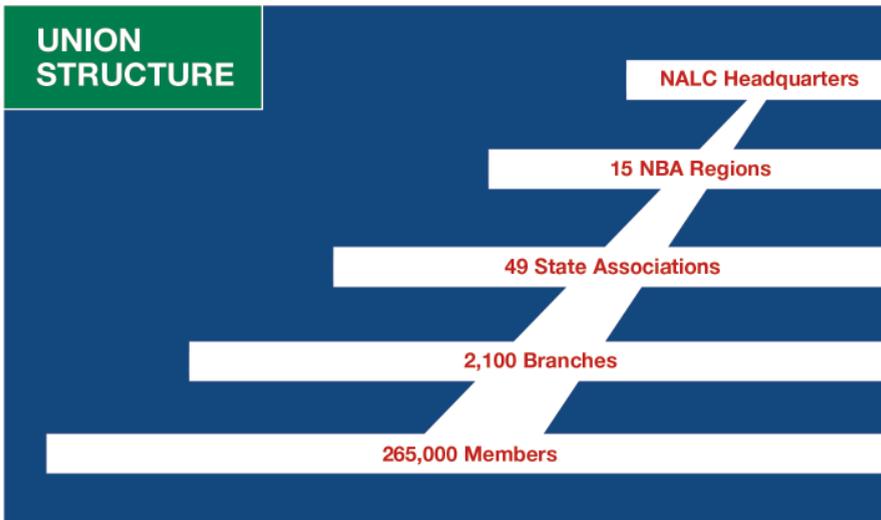
"It's long been said that stewards have the hardest job in the union," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "and I believe that to be true. But the work stewards do is among the most important, too, because it all starts with them."

No matter how big or small your issue is, your steward is the person to approach. If your work schedule is incorrect, consult with your steward. If you see an issue with your paycheck, talk to your steward. Whatever the issue, bring it to your steward. The steward will know whether management is violating the contract, and if so, what to do about it.

The contract, known as the National Agreement, is the "law of the workplace" for letter carriers. It guarantees your wages, hours and working conditions. ("Working conditions" covers a wide range of job-related topics, such as seniority, promotions, job security, and so on.)

The steward is empowered by the National Agreement to investigate, present and process grievances on behalf of any letter carrier, group of letter carriers or the union. A grievance is, according to the National Agreement, "a dispute, difference, disagreement, or complaint between the parties, related to wages, hours and conditions of employment." While this technical definition is very broad, most grievances involve complaints by employees and/or the union about unfair treatment on the job or violations of

matters that affect letter carriers. State associations work closely with branches, NBAs and headquarters on legislative and political issues. This work is important as we fight in Congress for the future of the Postal Service and for our jobs.



the rights that the NALC has bargained for you.

The grievance process has several steps. It begins with the steward filing and discussing the grievance with your immediate supervisor. If its not resolved, the grievance is elevated to the branch president and postmaster (or their designees). If still not resolved, it is sent to a team—made up of one NALC member and one USPS member—called the dispute resolution team (DRT). Any grievance the DRT is unable to resolve is forwarded to the appropriate national business agent, who may appeal the grievance to arbitration. In the arbitration process, both sides present evidence and testimony to a neutral arbitrator, who writes a final and binding decision on the grievance.

While there are grievances that go all the way to arbitration, the vast majority are resolved in the lower steps of the process. There is one constant—the steward investigates, develops and files the grievance initially. If you have a problem, always notify your steward as soon as possible so he or she can have ample time to investigate the situation, correct it and/or prepare a grievance.

If your steward is unavailable, contact your branch. In a small branch, that could mean contacting the branch president directly. In a larger branch, you might be directed to talk to a specific officer who is responsible for your area. If the officer isn't in your station and you can't talk to him or her in person, call the branch.

Your steward and branch officers can and will handle most contractual situations. If you are unable to contact the steward or branch officers, that's when you should contact your national business agent's (NBA) office. You can find your NBA on page 2 of any issue of *The Postal Record* or online at nalc.org. NBAs can help you deal with just about any issue, and provide you with answers.

Frequently dialed

Telephone NALC Headquarters: Weekdays, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Eastern Time

Main Switchboard: 202-393-4695

Supply Department (publications and merchandise): 202-393-4695, ext. 874

Legislation and Political Action: 202-393-4695, ext. 833

Retirement: 202-393-4695, ext. 877, or 800-424-5186 (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 10-noon and 2-4 p.m. EST)

Communications (media contact, public relations): 202-662-2850

Membership and Dues (address changes): 202-662-2836

Mutual Benefit Association (MBA): 202-638-4318, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. ET; 800-424-5184, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday

**Health Benefit Plan: 888-636-6252, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. ET
20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA 20149-0001**

Community Services: 202-393-4695, ext. 489

Compensation (on-the-job injuries and OWCP): 202-393-4695, ext. 878

Contract Administration Unit: 202-393-4695, ext. 867

By-Laws: 202-393-4695, ext. 865

Research: 202-393-4695, ext. 828

Information Center: 202-393-4695, ext. 879

“NALC is here to make sure the Postal Service follows the contract, and we all know management doesn't always follow the letter of the contract,”

Rolando said. “So remember, when you have an issue, no matter how big or small, start with your steward, then your branch, then your NBA. Help us so we can help you.”

Contact us

Much like the rest of America, many letter carriers are turning to the Internet to communicate. There is a wealth of information available to you on the NALC website. However, when it comes to communicating with your union representatives, the best way to do it is in person, by letter or by phone. While stewards and branch officers can be contacted locally in person or by phone, sometimes your NBA's office may be a few states away. To communicate with your NBA, call or write his or her office. The office numbers and addresses are listed on page 2 of any issue of *The Postal Record* or online at nalc.org.

(For your own privacy and security, never send personal information to the NALC Health Benefit Plan by e-mail.)

Additionally, NALC National Headquarters is made up of many departments—all designed to serve you.

A list of departments and phone numbers can be found above. **PR**

Federation is benefit of membership

NALC members enjoy many benefits, especially the security of having fellow letter carriers looking out for them. But joining the NALC is about more than getting benefits and sticking with your fellow letter carriers—it's about a movement to protect all workers and the middle-class way of life. That's a goal many Americans share, but being an active union member makes it easy to get involved, because union members look to fellow workers outside their own union for support.

Simply put, union members work together to ensure that workers get fair wages and benefits. They also advocate for laws that protect their rights and help more people reach the middle class. NALC members work to protect their jobs, pay and benefits by speaking out to Congress and the media, among others. But many of us work beyond our own union by joining with workers at other unions and with other partners to advocate for all workers and strengthen our economy.

"When you join NALC, you join a global union movement, too," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "What a great opportunity to become active in big-picture issues, such as economic equality, job creation, the minimum wage, worker safety and health—issues that matter to all workers, not just at the Postal Service. Or to stand up for other unions in their struggles—marching in solidarity with your local teachers who want pay cuts restored, for instance."

It's that sense of solidarity—speaking up for all workers, not just letter carriers—that built the labor movement, and it played a part in NALC's gains over the years as well. Members of other unions, postal and

otherwise, have stood by us when we struggled for collective-bargaining rights, better pay and benefits or Postal Service reforms. We can do the same for other workers.

One great way to get involved is through the AFL-CIO.

As the umbrella organization for most American unions, including the NALC, the AFL-CIO allows workers to magnify their voices by unifying their efforts. With the AFL-CIO uniting us, letter carriers have more than our fellow carriers behind us—we have steelworkers, teachers, nurses, miners, police officers, firefighters and millions of other workers on our side, and they can depend on us.

Many local union chapters, including NALC branches, work with AFL-CIO state federations and local labor councils to bring activists together. These groups are coalitions of union workers in a state or metropolitan area. They're the heart of the movement, partnering with state and community organizations and conducting local, state and national campaigns to improve life for working families.

When you see workers from different unions raising money for a local charity, or marching in a Labor Day parade, or protesting efforts by a state legislature to take away collective-bargaining rights, or walking door-to-door to support a local pro-worker candidate for office, chances are an AFL-CIO state fed or local labor council brought them together.

Local members of the affiliated unions, including letter carriers, run the local AFL-CIO chapters and labor councils. For example, Denver, CO Branch 47 member Cindy Kirby is president of the Colorado AFL-CIO. Kirby organizes traditional activities

such as protests or marches when the need arises, but her focus is on getting workers, especially young ones, involved in the movement and educated about labor history through events like charity fundraisers, volunteer work and social activities.

“That’s my favorite way to introduce new union members to the labor movement,” she said, “as a family—a community that takes care of each other.” Working through the AFL-CIO gives letter carriers in Colorado an easy opportunity to expand community work beyond NALC. For instance, the building trades unions volunteer to work at Habitat for Humanity construction sites. On the other hand, NALC members in Colorado can enlist other unions to support NALC’s charity events, such as bowlathons for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

The same sense of solidarity occurs when one group of workers needs help in a labor dispute—or with efforts to oppose cuts in mail service or closing post offices. “We do lots of rallies,” Kirby said. “We go in solidarity for other folks who face challenges on the job and need everyone to pitch in.” Many events like these are as much about learning labor history as they are about activism. For instance, Kirby said, the Colorado AFL-CIO’s recent march to celebrate César Chávez, the iconic farmworkers leader, focused on explaining his legacy to the young union members who participated.

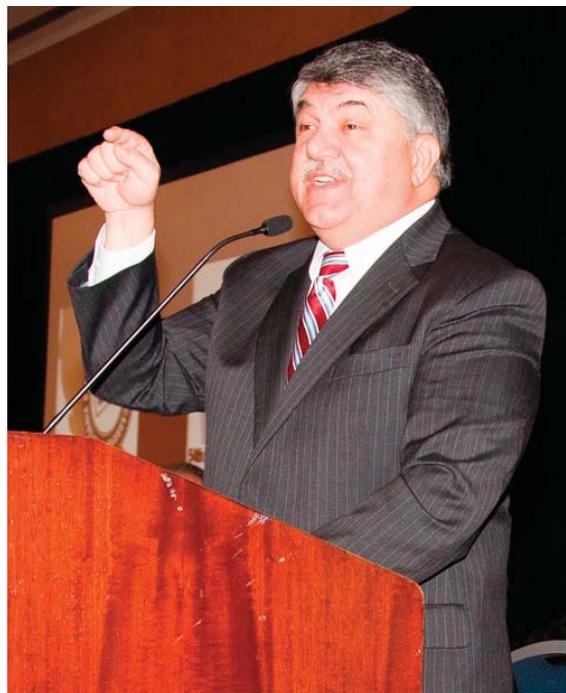
“It’s easy to forget that so many of the benefits American workers take for granted today—most workers, not just union members—were won by union members all working together,” Rolando said. “Overtime pay, health

and retirement benefits, workplace safety rules—the list goes on and on. Employers didn’t provide those out of the goodness of their hearts. Union activists won them, and union activists are still standing up for all American workers and middle-class families today.

“You don’t have to sit by and watch other people confront the pressing issues facing working people and families today,” Rolando said. “As a union member, you can do something to help.”

Here are some ways letter carriers can participate in labor efforts:

- Attend your branch meetings. You can find out about the latest issues and news, ask questions, and learn from other members.
- Join NALC’s e-Activist Network. You will get e-mail messages or texts alerting you to fast-moving developments on Capitol Hill and USPS and to how you can help. Go to nalc.org for more information.
- Donate to COLCPE. The Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE) supports pro-labor candidates for office. Go to nalc.org/depart/legpol for more information.
- Participate in a local AFL-CIO event. Ask a branch officer or branch AFL-CIO liaison or go to aflcio.org/Get-Involved/Find-a-State-or-Local-AFL-CIO to find your local AFL-CIO group.



Above: AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka addressed the NALC California state convention in April.

Union Plus benefits

Since NALC is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, NALC members enjoy extra benefits through the Union Plus program.

Using the strength of unions and purchasing power of more than 13 million union members, Union Plus negotiates competitive prices for a host of products and services for working families, including scholarships, travel discounts, auto insurance, financial services, legal service, everyday savings, hardship assistance and much more.

NALC members are automatically eligible for Union Plus. For more information and a complete list of benefits available to NALC members, go to unionplus.org. PR

Getting involved in the union starts at your branch meeting



Whether you're a new NALC member or a longtime veteran, there are always plenty of opportunities for you to get involved. For some members, all they see of the union is what the shop steward does on the workroom floor. But that's just scratching the surface of what the union is all about. There are many ways to get involved with the union beyond workroom-floor issues.

- If you enjoy giving back in your community, branches often engage in blood drives, collections for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and other volunteer opportunities. But the biggest volunteering event every year is the Letter Carriers' Food Drive. The local food drive coordinator is responsible for everything involved with the food drive, from promoting the event to organizing delivery of the collected food. If your branch has a food drive coordinator, he or she would appreciate any assistance you'd like to give, and if your branch doesn't have one, you could take on that role and give back to your community.
- If you like to write, branches often are looking for writers and editors to help on the branch newsletter, or even to start one. If you're technologically savvy, many branches have or want to start a website, Google group or Facebook account, and you could put your skills to good use.
- If politics is your cup of tea, there are many opportunities to come face to face with your legislators and tell them about

the importance of letter carrier and worker issues.

- If you're tired of the way you and other carriers are treated on the workroom floor, maybe you're ready to start gaining the knowledge and skills to serve as a shop steward. There's no better way to know what is going on in the union and play a role in how the union operates than by becoming a steward.

These are just a few of the many ways you and your family can get involved. All you need to do is ask.

And it all starts in one simple way: Attend your branch meeting.

As an NALC member, you are automatically a member of your local branch—one of 2,100 NALC branches of varying size throughout the country. Your branch consists of, and is run by, letter carriers like yourself. Members elect their own branch officers in free and fair elections, and any regular member in good standing may run for office.

Branch business is conducted at regular membership meetings, which any member may attend. Most branches hold meetings monthly, though some hold them less frequently. You can find out when your branch meets by reading a posting on a bulletin board at your station, in the branch newsletter or on the branch website; by asking carriers in your station; or by contacting your shop steward, branch leaders or your national business agent's office.

Most meetings are held on the same night each month and some have food and refreshments. While it's best to arrive on time, the meeting isn't closed if you arrive after the start time.

The meeting will be called to order by the branch president and then,

most likely, it will follow the normal order of business spelled out in the *Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches*:

1. Roll Call.
2. Reading of Minutes of Previous Meeting.
3. Reading of Communications, Notices, Bills, etc.
4. Application for Membership.
5. Balloting for Candidates.
6. Initiation of Elected Candidates.
7. Reports of Standing and Special Committees.
8. MBA.
9. Health Benefit Plan.
10. Unfinished Business.
11. New Business.
12. Good of the Association.
13. For the Improvement of the Service.
14. Financial Secretary's Report of Receipts.
15. Treasurer's Report of Expenditures.
16. Adjournment.

Many of these items can go fast or be skipped if unnecessary, so you are unlikely to feel overwhelmed. If you're a first-time attendee, the branch might have a special welcome or introduction for you.

If you have something you'd like to bring up, the best time to do it is during "new business" or "good of the association." If you want to make a motion—to get the entire branch to take action—do so during "new business." If you just have a question or concern, bring it up during "good of the association." As you talk it through, you might realize you need to make a motion, but that will have to wait until the next branch meeting.

Raising issues in this way will assist you in getting the answers you're looking for, help you realize that other carriers are facing the same issues you are, and

spur you on to take action to better your work situation. You just might discover that you can be your own solution.

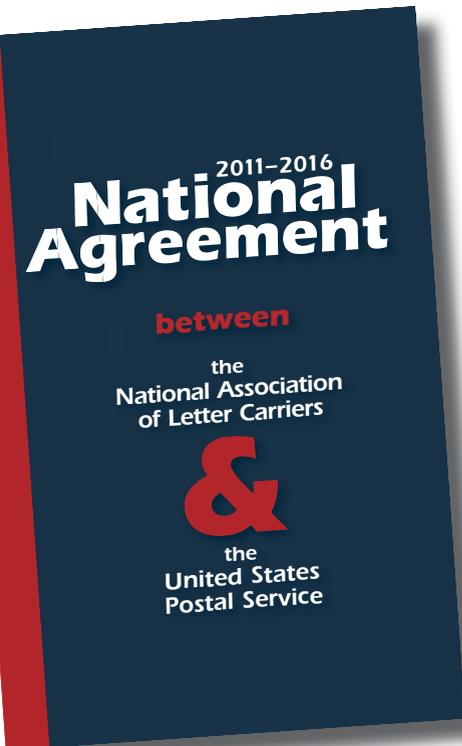
Branch meetings also are great sources of information. You'll find out what is happening with other carriers and at other stations in the branch, which may operate differently from yours. You'll find out when there are trainings and conventions, as many branches offer classes to help new carriers "work smarter" on the job and conduct special classes for shop

"...participating in the NALC is simply a great way to help strengthen the one organization dedicated solely to protecting carriers' interests in the workplace..."

stewards and other union activists. You'll find out about offerings from the branch and national union on vision and dental benefits, additional retirement benefits, accidental death benefits and scholarships, to name a few. You'll also hear about legislation that could affect your job or benefits.

Branch meetings aren't the only organized activities. Many branches also promote fellowship and solidarity among branch members and their families by offering a variety of social activities, including bowling nights, picnics, dances, ball games and special dinners for retirees, stewards and other groups.

"For tens of thousands of letter carriers, participating in the NALC is simply a great way to help strengthen the one organization dedicated solely to protecting carriers' interests in the workplace and in the halls of Congress," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Find out how you can get involved." **PR**



2011-2016 National Agreement

between
the
National Association
of Letter Carriers



the
United States
Postal Service

The grievance procedure

How your contractual rights are enforced

The new National Agreement between NALC and the USPS, set by an interest arbitration panel in January, replaced the transitional employee (TE) category with city carrier assistants (CCAs). Thousands of CCAs have now been hired all over the country. The interest arbitration award gave CCAs added job security with “relative standing”—a form of seniority, a career path to becoming full-time career letter carriers and several other important contractual rights that TEs did not previously enjoy.

“The new National Agreement gives CCAs significantly more contractual rights and job security than TEs previously had,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “To best enforce these rights, all letter carriers, including CCAs, should understand the grievance procedure and how it works.”

Article 15 of the contract lays out the grievance-arbitration procedure that is used to resolve disputes. Though the process includes several steps, it is designed to resolve disputes and grievances at the lowest possible step. Understanding the grievance process will put you in a much better position to help yourself, your shop steward and your fellow carriers if management violates the contract.

It starts with your shop steward

Shop stewards are the foot soldiers in the NALC’s efforts to enforce the National Agreement. Stewards are letter carriers with special training and knowledge of the contract. Whenever management fails to provide a letter carrier with what he or she is entitled to under the National Agreement, the steward is the first to handle the problem.

“The shop steward is the person to start with. Talk to your steward if you have an issue, no matter how large or small the issue may be,” Rolando said.

Sometimes problems are resolved without the letter carriers involved even knowing about it.

“When a steward goes to a manager and fixes a problem, or a potential prob-

lem, just by informing the manager of the situation or reminding the manager of what the contract requires, sometimes that’s enough,” said Rolando. “The issue gets nipped in the bud, and letter carriers down the line may never have to deal with the problem in the first place.”

All letter carriers, including CCAs, have rights under the National Agreement, and all letter carriers should ask a steward to enforce those rights if they have been violated or denied.

If other attempts to resolve a dispute or correct a contract violation fail, the steward may decide a grievance is necessary. A grievance is a dispute, difference, disagreement or complaint between the parties related to wages, hours and conditions of letter carriers. The process gives each and every letter carrier an opportunity to have his or her voice heard when management violates letter carrier rights under the National Agreement.

The National Agreement requires grievances be filed within 14 days of when the contract violation took place, so be sure to talk to your steward as soon as possible after you become aware of a problem.

In each grievance, the union asks for a remedy. The remedy request should accomplish a few goals. It should require management to stop violating the contract. It sometimes requires a monetary award to compensate the letter carrier if he or she suffered a loss in pay or some other loss as a result of the contract violation. It is important to give your shop steward all the information about the issue so that he or she can request the appropriate remedy.

The grievance process starts with Informal Step A, which involves the steward discussing the issue with the supervisor. This initial step gives supervisors a chance to fix the problem immediately by talking to the steward without much paperwork.

If the grievance is not resolved at Informal Step A, the union may appeal it to Formal Step A within seven days of

the Informal Step A discussion. At Formal Step A, the NALC branch president and the postmaster (or their designees) are responsible for fully developing the facts of the grievance, exchanging relevant documents and meeting to attempt to resolve the grievance.

If the grievance is not resolved at Formal Step A, the union may appeal the grievance to Step B of the process. The union and management Formal Step A representatives each write their facts and contentions about the issue and send them, along with all relevant documentation, to one of the 58 full-time dispute resolution teams (DRTs). Each DRT is composed of a letter carrier and a manager who consider the evidence, consult the National Agreement and try to resolve the grievance. DRT members are jointly trained on the contract and how to apply its terms to resolve disputes.

If the DRT can't agree and instead reaches an impasse, the national business agent for the region may appeal the grievance to arbitration. An arbitration hearing is held where the union and management present evidence and testimony to a neutral arbitrator. The neutral arbitrator then issues a final and binding written decision on the grievance.

"The list of contract violations we have reversed, or prevented, through the grievance process could fill libraries," Rolando said. "Shop stewards stand up for letter carriers day in and day out by enforcing the contract on the workroom floor. Their work turns a contract written on paper into a living document that protects our rights and makes our jobs better and safer."

A successful process

To make the job of applying the National Agreement even easier, the USPS and NALC publish a *Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)* that clarifies, section by section, the meaning of the contract as agreed upon by both the union and management—often based on the outcome of previous griev-

ances. With the *JCAM* in hand, stewards and managers can settle many disputes quickly. The *JCAM* is available in most post offices and branch offices and on the web at nalc.org/depart/cau.

The NALC process has proven to be one of the best dispute resolution processes among postal unions, or even unions in other industries, Rolando said.

"Our grievances are settled relatively quickly and fairly because everything is disclosed up front," he said. "The process is designed to use the facts to find out what happened, and to use the contract to determine if a violation has taken place and what is needed to remedy the violation. It encourages confronting the problem head-on and preventing it from happening again in the future."

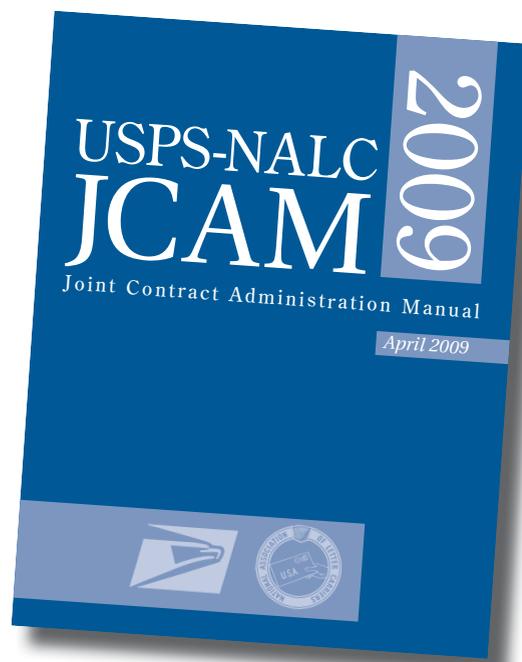
Rolando pointed to the number of cases in arbitration as evidence. Even though NALC is the largest postal union, only a small percentage of grievances from postal employees that go all the way to arbitration involve letter carriers.

Full disclosure of the facts at the beginning of the grievance process generally makes for speedy and fair outcomes—but it also makes a letter carrier responsible for supplying facts, and possibly evidence such as a written statement, up front.

"Your best chance for a successful grievance is to give your steward all the information you have and whatever else he or she needs to build a solid case," Rolando said. "Don't hold anything back for any reason. Help your steward make the best case for you."

Many shop stewards became stewards after seeing the success of the grievance process and wanting to help their fellow letter carriers. "Increased knowledge and understanding of the grievance process among all letter carriers will only make the process more successful going forward and get more letter carriers interested in serving as shop stewards in the future," Rolando said.

If you have further questions about the grievance process, contact your shop steward. **PR**



123		12-3456		IM Carrier		12345678		10 13		1234567890	
PAYLOC	FINANCE NO.	EMPLOYEE NAME				EMPLOYEE ID	PAY PERIOD	SERIAL NUMBER			
DETAIL EARNINGS						GROSS TO NET		LEAVE STATUS			
MK	RSC/LEV	RATE	CODE	TYP	HOURS	PAY	THIS PERIOD	YEAR-TO-DATE	ANNUAL LEAVE		
2	Q 01	15.00	84-4	W	4000	600.00	GROSS PAY 1402.50	4207.50	FROM PREV YR		
2	Q 01	15.00	84-4	O	300	67.50	FEB TAXSD 159.89	477.32	EARNED THIS YR 1200		
1	Q 01	15.00	84-4	W	4000	600.00	ST TAX HSSD 64.52	186.07	BAL 1200		
1	Q 01	15.00	84-4	O	600	135.00	SOSEC 85.55	255.13	USED YR		
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							UN L 23.02	69.06	BALANCE 1200		
									SICK LEAVE		
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									USPS RETIREMENT		

Important notice for CCAs: Check your pay rate!

If you recently returned from your five-day break between appointments, check your pay stub to be sure you are being paid correctly. There have been instances reported where the CCA hourly rate was incorrectly reduced from \$16.25 to \$15.

Pursuant to the Jan. 10 interest arbitration award issued by the panel chaired by Arbitrator Shyam Das, CCAs who were on the rolls as TEs as of Jan. 10 shall be paid at Step AA of Table 2, which is the higher hourly rate of the two steps for CCAs. Below are both the previous hourly rates and the new ones, which became effective Nov. 16.

CCA Grade	Previous	
	BB	AA
1	\$15.00	\$16.25
2	\$15.32	\$16.59

CCA Grade	Effective Nov. 16, 2013	
	BB	AA
1	\$15.30	\$16.58
2	\$15.63	\$16.92

Also, check the new re-appointment letter you receive in the mail from Shared Services, PS Form 50, Notice of Personnel Action, item number 62, "Base Salary" to be sure your hourly rate is correct.

If you are being paid incorrectly, contact USPS Shared Services at 877-477-3273, Option 5 to advise them that you are being paid incorrectly. Also, talk with your NALC shop steward or local branch officer and local managers. **PR**

Understanding what your paycheck says

While it feels great to get your first paycheck as a letter carrier, it's important to understand the information on your pay stub to assure that you're getting paid properly. Whether you get a paper check or payment by direct deposit, you receive a pay stub every period explaining what you've earned and any deductions from your pay.

"Knowing what the codes on your pay stub mean and checking the information every time will assure that you get the pay and benefits you're entitled to," NALC President Fredric V. Rolando said. "All carriers, new and experienced, should remember to check their pay stubs each pay period."

First, look under "Detail Earnings"—a list of the hours you worked and how you were paid for them. Under "WK," you will see a '1' or '2' indicating the first or second week of the pay period you worked the hours, and the number of hours worked, pay rate for each type of hours, and total pay for each.

Pay close attention to the 'TYP' column, which indicates the type of hours you earned. The standard type codes are: W—standard hours; O—overtime, for hours worked past eight a day, paid at 1.5 times the regular rate; V—penalty overtime, for hours worked past 10 a day or 56 a week, paid at twice the regular rate; N—night shift differential, for hours worked between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.; H—holiday pay; L—leave hours taken; and G—guaranteed time, for

daily hours guaranteed by USPS but not worked.

If you worked more than 40 hours a week, your pay stub will show you how many "FLSA" hours you worked. FLSA stands for Fair Labor Standards Act, a federal law that establishes requirements for items like overtime pay. It doesn't indicate additional hours you worked.

Add up the pay for each category of hours worked and you have your gross pay, which is indicated under "Pay." Of course, that's not the final number on your paycheck, since several items will be deducted first. Those items are shown under "Gross to Net." They may include taxes withheld, any allotments you have chosen, transfers to a retirement account like the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), charitable donations you have authorized through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) or automatic donations to the NALC's Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE).

At the bottom of the stub, "Net Pay" shows the amount you receive after these deductions.

Under "Leave Status," you will see how many annual or sick leave hours you earned for the current pay period and how many you have accumulated for the year to date. If you have taken leave without pay, that will be indicated in this section.

"Reading your pay stub is easy once you get familiar with it," Rolando said, "and it's a good habit because you want to be sure the information is accurate." **PR**

The symbol of service

The letter carrier's uniform

When Americans think of the United States Postal Service, they think of their uniformed letter carrier. Letter carriers are the public face of one of the country's largest employers, representing the more than 500,000 employees of the USPS. That's what it means to put on the light-blue uniform with the USPS logo.

Uniforms serve several purposes. They provide immediate visual identification to the public, which makes the job safer when going down streets and up to houses all over America. And uniforms project a neat and professional appearance that customers associate with the outstanding service provided by letter carriers.

The NALC has negotiated an annual allowance with the Postal Service for all letter carriers to help pay for these uniforms. This allowance is defined in Article 26 of the National Agreement and is currently set at \$390 for all carriers, and it will increase each year of the 2011-2016 National Agreement to allow for increasing uniform costs. First-year career letter carriers are provided with an additional \$90, which increases for new hires each year as well.

While they both have \$390 to spend, the method of providing the allowance for purchasing uniforms differs for career city carriers and for city carrier assistants (CCAs). For career employees, the allowance comes in the form of a USPS credit card, which they can use to purchase uniform items from the approved vendors. CCAs are given a voucher that they can use to purchase uniforms through an approved uniform vendor. Once the CCA provides the voucher to the vendor, the vendor is paid by the USPS.

While Article 26 governs the amount of the uniform allowance for CCAs, the Questions and Answers 2011 USPS/NALC National Agreement document (M-01833) covers uniform allowances

that are provided to and used by CCAs. (see Q-and-A's on nalc.org).

What to get first?

Ask veteran carriers and they'll tell you that uniform allowances, even the larger-than-normal first-year allowance, only go so far. To help, many branches collect gently used and unwanted uniform items from veteran and retired carriers and give them to new carriers as they join the union. That can help make the uniform allowance go a little further.

So what should you spend your first allowance on? To help you make an informed decision, *The Postal Record* reached out to branch presidents throughout the country to ask what advice they give to new carriers.

"Obviously out here it's shorts," Arizona Merged Branch 1902 President **Ron Resop** said, before adding that when he was carrying on a daily basis, he loved his pith helmet. "Something that protects your head from the sun. Make sure you buy a hat that covers your ears and the back of your neck."

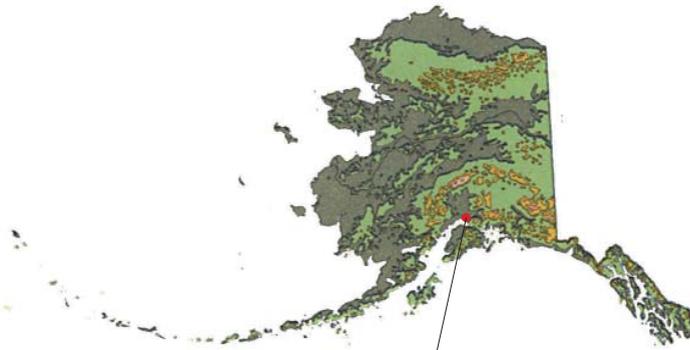
With an average of only three days of rain a year in his area of Arizona, he doesn't recommend rain gear but does recommend long-sleeved shirts to protect from UV radiation—and he recommends getting a lot of them. "The problem in Arizona is, you think you wouldn't be able to spend your clothing allowance, but you go through a lot of shirts a year," he said. "It's a dry heat, but you still sweat. When I was carrying, I'd go through a lot of shirts. They'd be good for about a month and then I'd be getting rid of them."

It's a different story in Eugene, OR, where they get more average annual rainfall than Portland, OR, or Seattle, WA.

"Our big focus is on footwear and rain gear," Eugene Branch 916 President **Tom Gates** said. He liked the material



What to get first?



Anchorage, AK, Branch 4319: A good jacket and a good pair of shoes

Eugene, OR, Branch 916: Raingear and footwear



Arizona Merged Branch 1902: Headgear, shorts and a lot of shirts

on the newest rain gear products. “From my experience from 30 years on a straight walking route, I wouldn’t put on my rain gear but a half-dozen times per year. The old rain gear we had wouldn’t breathe. So by the time you had it on for any time at all, you were just as wet and more miserable.”

But carriers seem to be using the new gear a lot more because of its breathability, he said. He often saw carriers using the new rain gear along with a cape. “It works out well. Even with the rain gear on, you can have the cape over the bag and the mail. And then you still have your arms free to work in there.”

Moisture is a concern in Mobile, AL, where “the heat and humidity is the main issue,” Branch 469 President **Atrisha Looney** said. “The humidity takes quick tolls on the shirts.”

Her focus is on the core of the uniform first. “I would suggest on the first round of purchases, it be two pairs of pants, two shorts, two pairs of socks and the rest in shirts. Rain is a big issue, but for the first year they can get by borrowing rain gear.”

In Anchorage, AK, rain gear isn’t a priority, either. “Raincoats aren’t very popular up here,” Branch 4319 President **Jim Raymond** said.

“Here in Anchorage, it gets to 20, 30 below, here in town. But if you go up to Fairbanks, which is the northernmost city in the country to have city delivery, they’ll get temperatures of 30, 40 below when they’re out delivering.”

His recommendation for uniform allowance purchases: “a good jacket and a good pair of shoes.” He says that carriers in his city are buying a lot of the three-layer jacket systems, primarily getting the inner fleece and the outer shell, as well as insulated pants.

Finally, there is Honolulu, HI, where the temperature ranges from low 70s

Q-and-A’s

The following questions and answers were agreed upon between management and the union regarding CCA uniforms:

47. When does a CCA become eligible for a uniform allowance?

Upon completion of 90 work days or 120 calendar days of employment as a CCA, whichever comes first. CCAs who have previously satisfied the 90/120 day requirement as a transitional employee (with an appointment made after September 29, 2007), become eligible for a uniform allowance when they begin their first CCA appointment.

48. What defines the anniversary date for the purpose of annual uniform allowance eligibility for a CCA?

The calendar date the CCA initially becomes eligible for a uniform allowance.

49. How is the uniform anniversary date determined for a CCA who is converted to career status?

The employee retains the same anniversary date held as a CCA.

50. How is a uniform allowance provided to a CCA?

When a CCA becomes eligible for a uniform allowance, funds must be approved through an eBuy submission by local management. After approval, a Letter of Authorization form must be completed and provided to the employee within 14 days of the eligibility date. The CCA takes the completed form to

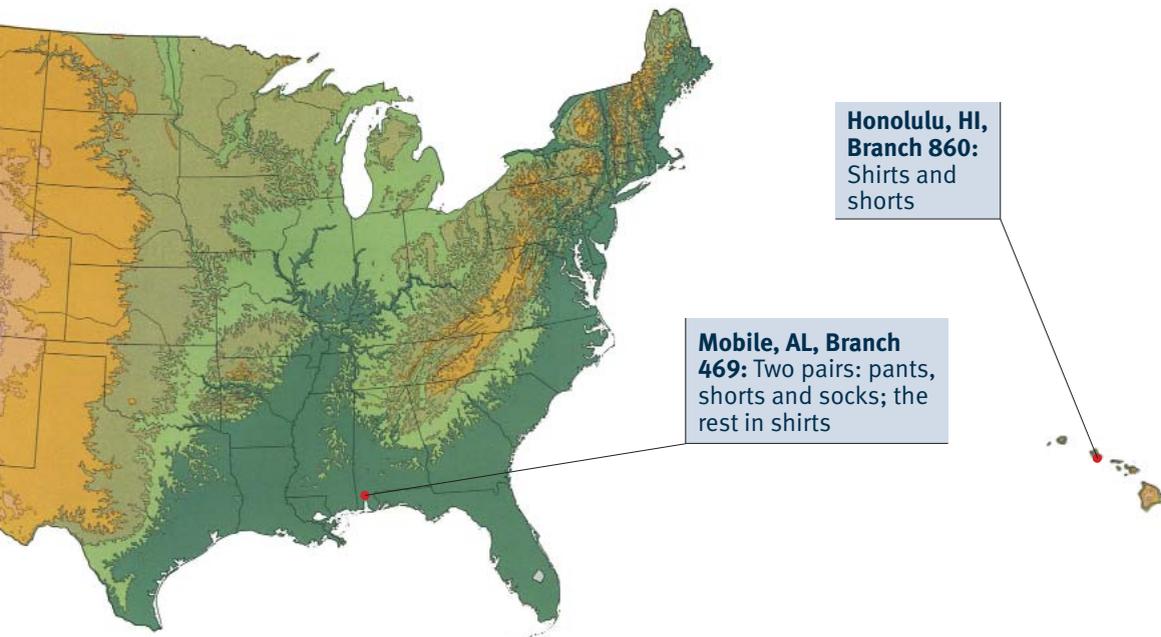
a USPS authorized vendor to purchase uniform items. The Letter of Authorization can be located on the Uniform Program website on the Blue Page under Labor Relations.

51. How are uniform items purchased?

Uniform items can only be purchased from USPS licensed vendors. A list of all authorized Postal Service Uniform vendors is located under the Labor Relations website: Uniform Program from the Blue Page and also on Liteblue under My HR, and look for the link for Uniform Program.

52. How does a licensed uniform vendor receive payment for uniform items purchased by a CCA?

The licensed vendor creates an itemized invoice of the sale, provides



Honolulu, HI, Branch 860: Shirts and shorts

Mobile, AL, Branch 469: Two pairs: pants, shorts and socks; the rest in shirts

to low 80s year round. “We focus on shirts and shorts, initially,” Branch 860 President **Howard Komine** said. “We really don’t have a serious winter or rainy season. So no winter clothing. Maybe a rain coat on the second or third allowance.

“That’s the price we pay for living in the Aloha State,” he joked.

As for footwear, everyone offers the same advice—find a shoe or boot with comfort and durability. In rainy climates, galoshes may be purchased to keep feet dry while walking. Some carriers use new, lightweight overshoes that are more breathable and still waterproof.

We also put the question on our Facebook page, and got some interesting responses:

Jeffrey Babey: “Pants, shorts, shirts, bomber jacket, pith helmet, rain coat and some anti-blister socks.”

Marylou Furbush LaRose: “Shoes are most important wherever you are. Next, weather gear. I started in CT. The parka is a must for New England winters. Now I’m in SE Iowa and rain gear pants and jacket are essential. Best item right now is the floppy Indiana Jones blue hat. Terrific for sun, rain and wind.”

You can see more responses and join the conversation on NALC’s Facebook page at facebook.com/nalc.national.

The best advice is to ask your fellow letter carriers in your station and branch how to spend your first uniform allowance most wisely. Veteran letter carriers are almost always ready and willing to offer helpful advice, and maybe an extra shirt or two.

Note: *Shortly after we interviewed the branch presidents for this article, we were shocked and saddened to learn that Branch 916 President Tom Gates had passed away. “Tom was a tremendous asset to Eugene carriers, the Oregon State Association, as well as to the union as a whole,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Tom lived and breathed NALC, and will be sorely missed.” PR*

a copy of the invoice to the CCA, and sends the original invoice for payment to the local manager identified on the Letter of Authorization. Upon receipt, the local manager certifies the invoice and pays the vendor using the office Smartpay card.

53. If a CCA does not use the full allowance before his/her appointment ends, does the allowance carry-over into the next appointment when the appointment begins before the next uniform anniversary date?

Yes, however, the CCA cannot purchase uniform items during his/her five calendar day break between appointments. If the full annual uniform allowance is not used before the next anniversary date, the remaining balance for that year is forfeited.

54. Does the annual uniform anniversary date change when a CCA is separated for lack of work and then rehired as a CCA after his/her anniversary date has passed?

Yes, in this situation a new anniversary date is established on the date of reappointment and the CCA is provided a full annual uniform allowance within 14 days of the new anniversary date.

55. What happens to the annual uniform allowance for a CCA that has an anniversary date, is separated for lack of work, and then rehired as a CCA before their next uniform anniversary date?

A CCA that is separated under this circumstance retains his/her anniversary date. If there is no uniform allowance balance remaining at the

point of separation, the matter will be considered closed. If the CCA had any part of the annual uniform allowance available at the point of separation, the remaining balance will be redetermined upon reappointment as follows: If the period of separation exceeded 89 calendar days, the remaining balance will be reduced by 10 percent of the annual uniform allowance for the first 90 calendar days and then by 10 percent for each full 30 calendar days thereafter. In no event will such redetermination result in a negative balance for the employee.

56. Will CCAs receive the additional credit authorized under Article 26.2.B with their first uniform allowance following conversion to career status?

Yes.

Practical advice for on-the-job injuries

The work that letter carriers do is dangerous. Driving and delivery duties can result in accidents that cause traumatic injuries such as muscle and tendon sprains, broken bones, torn ligaments and worse. Repetitive tasks performed over extended periods of time can cause occupational injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis, “tennis elbow” and similar overuse syndromes.

“We’ve seen that on-the-job injury rates for letter carriers are high relative to other professions and especially compared to other federal employment,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “They also show that letter carrier injuries occur at disproportionately high rates during the first three years of employment. So knowing what to do if you get injured is important for all carriers.”

Fortunately, a law exists that protects postal employees who suffer on-the-job injuries by providing certain benefits to them. The law applies to all postal employees, career and non-career, permanent and temporary—including city carrier assistants (CCAs).

Less happily, the law comes with an associated bureaucracy and complex system of regulations that can be frustratingly difficult to navigate, particularly when the injury is hard to diagnose, has long-term effects, or causes significant disability from work.

However, that difficulty can be reduced by a basic understanding of the law and with help from NALC. NALC helps members file on-the-job injury claims, deal with the complexities that often arise, and appeal adverse decisions when necessary.

That assistance is one of the benefits of membership in the NALC.

FECA

The law that protects carriers is the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act (FECA). It has been in effect since 1916 and provides benefits such as full payment of medical expenses, travel expenses to medical appointments, partial payment of lost wages, and compensation for permanent impairments to certain body parts and functions. It authorizes the Department of Labor (DOL) to establish regulations and administer the law. DOL created a sub-department—the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP)—to administer the program and decide all issues regarding on-the-job injury claims.

This is a key point to understand in the event you suffer an on-the-job injury—OWCP has sole authority to decide all questions regarding the claimed injury. **OWCP decides** whether an injury is work-related, whether wage-loss compensation is payable, whether surgery is authorized, and all related issues.

The Postal Service has **no authority** to decide whether an injury is job-related, what benefits are payable, or any other adjudication-related issue. Instead, the role of the Postal Service is largely limited to completing and forwarding injury claim forms to OWCP and, ultimately, paying for the benefits that OWCP awards.

This presents a second key point to understand if you have an on-the-job injury—Postal Service errors and delays in forwarding claim forms to OWCP can result in serious problems, including claim denials and non-payment of compensation. Since OWCP bills the Postal Service for all of the money OWCP spends paying medical bills, on wage-loss compensation, etc., the Postal Service has



an institutional interest in minimizing the number of claims that are accepted by OWCP as work-related, and in minimizing the payments that are made when claims are accepted. That institutional interest sometimes results in a lack of training for supervisors about OWCP requirements, low prioritization of processing OWCP claim forms, and similar manifestations.

Consider the following scenario for an example of how Postal Service delays or errors can result in serious problems for an injured worker.

When an injury is accepted by OWCP as work-related and the employee is disabled from work, the employee may be entitled to wage-loss compensation (which is paid by OWCP at 2/3 or 3/4 of salary).

OWCP regulations require that the injured worker claim wage-loss compensation by submitting OWCP Form CA-7 through the employing agency—in this case, the Postal Service. The regulations require the Postal Service to certify the correct pay rate and then forward the CA-7 to OWCP within five working days of receipt from the employee. If the Postal Service loses or misplaces the CA-7 and the employee does nothing, OWCP will not pay wage-loss compensation because it will not be aware that the employee is claiming wage-loss compensation. If the Postal Service delays forwarding the CA-7 to OWCP, payment to the employee also will be delayed because OWCP cannot process wage-loss compensation until after it receives a CA-7.

Because OWCP has complex regulations and sole authority to decide all on-the-job injury claim issues, and USPS errors can cause problems, it is vital that NALC members who suffer an on-the-job injury have a basic understanding of OWCP rules, and they should seek assistance from the NALC to monitor the progress of the claim.



OWCP basics

One bedrock OWCP principle is that claimants have the burden of proof. That means the injured carrier must prove all elements of a claim: that a diagnosed condition exists, that work factors caused the condition, that the identified work factors actually took place, and so on.

To meet the burden of proof that a diagnosed condition exists, OWCP requires that a claimant provide a written report from a physician that states a diagnosis. OWCP does not recognize physician's assistants (PA), nurse practitioners (NP), and similar professionals as physicians. Therefore, written diagnoses that are not signed by a recognized physician will not meet a claimant's burden of proof. Many claims are denied because the only report of diagnosis is signed by a PA or NP.

To meet the burden of proof that work factors caused the condition, OWCP requires that a claimant provide a written report from a physician that provides an opinion that specifically identified work factors caused the diagnosed injury, and provides a detailed explanation of why the physician holds that opinion.

OWCP differentiates between traumatic and occupational injuries, based on the duration of the causing factors. When an injury is caused by work factors that occur at one point in time (for instance, a fall down stairs) or during the course of one workday or shift, it is a traumatic injury, and a CA-1 is used to report it. When an injury is caused by work factors that occur over a course of time more than one workday or shift (for instance, carpal tunnel syndrome and other repetitive-use syndromes), it is an occupational injury (or illness) and a CA-2 is used to report it.

To meet the burden of proof that work factors actually took place, OWCP requirements generally differ depending on whether the injury was traumatic or occupational. In traumatic injuries (CA-1), evidence that work factors actually took place is often readily apparent. For instance, if a traumatic injury is caused in a vehicle accident, then police reports or Postal Service forms will show that the incident took place. If a traumatic injury is caused by a slip and fall, there often are direct witnesses. Even when there are no witnesses, traumatic injury claims in most cases do not present problems regarding the burden to prove that work factors actually existed.

Things to do when you suffer an on-the-job injury

1. Report the injury to your supervisor as soon as you can.
2. Tell your local NALC representative about the injury right away.
3. Complete Form CA-1 or CA-2 and submit it to your supervisor.
4. When you submit a CA-1 or CA-2, ask the supervisor to sign the receipt portion of the CA-1 or CA-2 and give it to you.
5. Ask the supervisor to give you a completed copy of the CA-1 or CA-2 after the Postal Service completes its part of the form.
6. Go to your doctor for treatment.
7. Request assistance from your local branch or your national business agent's office.
8. Make and keep your own copies of all claim-related documents that you provide to OWCP and/or to USPS.
9. When submitting documents to OWCP, always put the OWCP claim number at the top right-hand corner of each page.
10. If OWCP requests information, scrupulously comply with the request, including the time limit (usually 30 days).

On the other hand, occupational injuries (CA-2) always require a specific procedure to meet the burden to prove that work factors actually took place. In every claim of occupational injury, the injured worker must write a description of the work duties he or she believes caused the injury. The written description must then be provided to the attending physician and to the worker's supervisor. The attending physician must read the description and then write a report stating that he or she has read the description and providing an opinion about whether those identified work factors caused the injury. The supervisor must advise OWCP whether the Postal Service agrees that the identified work factors actually took place.

The description of work factors written by the injured employee is a critical element in every occupational injury (CA-2) claim. The written description should be factual and concise. It should avoid the use of postal terms that non-postal personnel may be unfamiliar with. Estimations of weights, repetitions, durations, etc., should never be exaggerated. The written description of work factors in occupational injury claims will constitute one of the foundations of the claim, and it is important that it be done correctly. It is

generally a good idea to seek assistance from your branch OWCP specialist or national business agent's office in writing the description of work factors required in every occupational injury claim.

A second important OWCP principle is that adverse decisions by OWCP can be challenged only through OWCP's own internal appeals procedures. When OWCP denies a claim, it is required to provide a formal written decision explaining the reason for the denial and providing notice of appeal rights. OWCP has three avenues of appeal when it denies a claim. Only one appeal route can be pursued at a time. The time limits, as well as the rules regarding evidence and related matters, differ for each of the appeal routes. The choice of which appeal route to pursue will depend on the specific facts of the case, and the reasons that OWCP gave when it denied the claim. Successfully navigating the OWCP appeal procedures can be challenging. NALC members who receive formal denials of OWCP claims should also seek assistance from their branch OWCP specialist or national business agent's office.

While it is important to understand that **OWCP decisions** may be challenged only through the OWCP internal appeals procedures, it is just as important to understand

that **Postal Service errors** relating to on-the-job injury claims may be challenged through the NALC-USPS grievance procedure. The FECA places the burden of proof on the injured worker, but it also places a number of requirements on the employing agencies, including the Postal Service. For instance, when an employee submits a CA-1 or CA-2 to a supervisor, the FECA requires that the supervisor sign the receipt portion of the form and provide it to the employee. It then requires the employer to complete the agency portion and provide a complete copy of all pages of the form to the employee and submit the completed form to OWCP within 10 working days.

These and other employer requirements are in place to protect injured workers. Postal Service failures to comply with them can result in denied and delayed OWCP claims. Therefore, it is important to let your local union representative know whenever you have an on-the-job injury, so that Postal Service compliance with its obligations can be monitored and challenged through the grievance procedure when necessary.

"The work that letter carriers do is physically demanding and objectively dangerous," Rolando said. "Sometimes they suffer on-the-job injuries. When they do, the FECA is intended to protect them from many of the adverse financial consequences. In too many cases, however, the intent of the FECA is frustrated because the letter carrier is not familiar with the rules for reporting and proving the claimed injury, or because the Postal Service fails to comply with its obligations regarding the injury. NALC members can avoid that unhappy situation by being familiar with OWCP's rules and by relying on their branch or national business agent for assistance." **PR**

City carrier assistants called on as NALC leaders

Todd Bussan is a Navy veteran, a union worker throughout his career and president of Freeport, IL Branch 223. He's also a city carrier assistant (CCA).

Before he became a CCA, Bussan began his postal career as a transitional employee (TE) in 2009. His branch first elected him as president when he was a TE, in 2011.

"I have to admit, I was nervous and had concerns at first," Bussan recalled of his first days as branch president. "I sometimes wondered if I had bitten off more than I could chew. I mean, I was a TE with little more than two years as a carrier and limited knowledge of the contract."

But he learned the job fast, and his branch re-elected him last year. Bussan's experience demonstrates that CCAs are an integral part of the NALC, and some bring the skills and dedication to step up as leaders of their union just like career employees.

After four years in the Navy, Bussan worked for Chrysler Corp. and became an active member of the United Auto Workers. When he joined the Postal Service and NALC, Bussan began speaking up at branch meetings about his concerns that branch members weren't sticking together and supporting their union's efforts as well as they could.

"As I started to express my concerns at meetings and gave my opinion on union issues, I was asked if I'd be interested in running for office—more specifically, president," he said, since the previous president was retiring. "They felt they needed young blood to become more active in the union." After the branch checked to assure that a TE could hold the office, the members elected Bussan. He has learned on the job under the tutelage of more experienced carriers, such as 16-year steward **Dan Pattat**.

"He has taken me under his wing and guided, coached, counseled and advised me every step of the way," Bussan said of Pattat. "Not only is he knowledgeable, he treats everyone fairly, from the lowest CCA to the most senior carrier."

"It's nice to see someone who has passion," Pattat said. Bussan "has brought some fresh fire. He's a really good advocate for getting people involved."

"Every emerging leader can use a mentor," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "I encourage branches to look to CCAs to serve as not only future, but current leaders at every level—branch officer, steward, volunteer or otherwise. And I encourage CCAs not to be shy about taking leadership roles. It's your union, and no one has a bigger stake in our future than you."

Olin Moore of Minneapolis Branch 9 didn't wait to become a career employee to volunteer for his union. Before joining the Postal Service, Moore worked for 12 years as a district staff member for Rep. Martin Sabo (D-MN), a U.S. House member from the Minneapolis area. Hired as a TE in 2007, Moore put his skills to use as a congressional district liaison for NALC.

Moore said he "jumped at it" when his branch approached him with the idea. "It was something I could do for the union."

Moore keeps in touch with Sabo's successor, Democrat Keith Ellison, and makes sure that Ellison and his staff know what letter carriers think about postal legislation. He became a CCA last February and was recently converted to a full-time career carrier position.

Though he worked on many issues as a staff member for Rep. Sabo,



While at the Illinois state convention in June, NALC President Fredric Rolando (r) congratulated Todd Bussan for his re-election as president of Freeport, IL Branch 223.

Moore likes focusing on supporting the Postal Service. “It’s an important cause, not only to our union members and their families, but also to our economy,” he said.

Though his congressional experience made him a natural for the CDL position, Moore said, he credits his branch leaders for asking him to take a leadership role even though he was not a regular carrier.

“None of this would have happened if union leaders hadn’t reached out and said, ‘Would you be willing to do this?’ ”

Moore likes the challenge of communicating complex postal issues to Ellison and his staff, knowing that they have many issues to track. So far, his efforts seem to be working: Ellison “has been super-supportive of postal issues,” he said.

For CCA **Carl Pope** of Atlanta Branch 73, military experience—he served in the Army for 22 years—quickly came in handy as a union leader. Soon after he took a job as a TE six years ago, Pope approached his branch president with some concerns about his assignment, and the president gave him a field promotion.

“He stopped the conversation and appointed me on the spot as the shop steward,” Pope said. He didn’t expect the appointment, but Pope took on the job and didn’t look back. “It has turned out excellent,” he said.

Others have noticed Pope’s leadership potential. He also was named the branch’s equal employment opportunity representative (he held a similar position in the military), and his branch recently elected him as an assistant vice president. Pope believes he is being groomed to take on more leadership roles.

These aren’t the only CCAs, or career carriers who started as CCAs, who have taken leadership roles in their union. Whether as elected officers or stewards, in appointed positions, as volunteers or just by actively participating, many CCAs are pitching in to move their union forward and serve their fellow carriers.

Bussan encourages his fellow CCAs to follow this example. He may be among the first CCAs to serve his union as an officer, but “I hope I’m not the last,” he said. “CCAs should embrace the union for all it has done to promote a career path when one didn’t exist just a year ago. Being active in our union ensures that our voice is heard, that our concerns are considered and that our needs are met. Just because we are CCAs should be more reason to be active in our union.” **PR**

We all must explain the benefits of NALC to new letter carriers

The NALC's strength is its members. With the power of hundreds of thousands of letter carriers working together, the union has achieved great improvements in the workplace and in the lives of letter carriers. As thousands of new letter carriers join our ranks, the union is becoming even stronger.

Since the new National Agreement took effect this January, the Postal Service has hired nearly 30,000 letter carriers. The vast majority of these newly hired letter carriers have chosen to join NALC, and many are jumping in immediately and getting involved with the work of representing letter carriers and fighting for our future.

"These recently hired letter carriers are our union's new generation," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Every single one of them has the opportunity to have a long career as a letter carrier. To ensure that happens, we have to fight to protect the future of the Postal Service and our jobs. No one has a larger stake in this struggle than the letter carriers

carriers who choose to join and get involved is the No. 1 reason for NALC's success throughout its history.

Most letter carriers join the NALC at the very beginning of their careers, usually during orientation. An experienced NALC member holds an orientation session for new letter carriers to welcome them and educate them about the union and how it works for them. During this NALC orientation, new letter carriers are given the opportunity to join NALC if they wish, and most choose to do so on the spot because they can easily see how the union works for them.

Some of the letter carriers who conduct orientations shared what they experience when they welcome newly hired letter carriers.

Karen Lewis, president of Topeka, KS Branch 10, is able to connect quickly with new letter carriers. "I've found that when I do orientation, I can build a rapport with the carriers," she said. "I explain how the union can help with specific items." By the time she brings up joining the union, most carriers already

"No one has a larger stake in this struggle than the letter carriers hired these past few months. Joining the union and becoming active gives them a voice in their future."

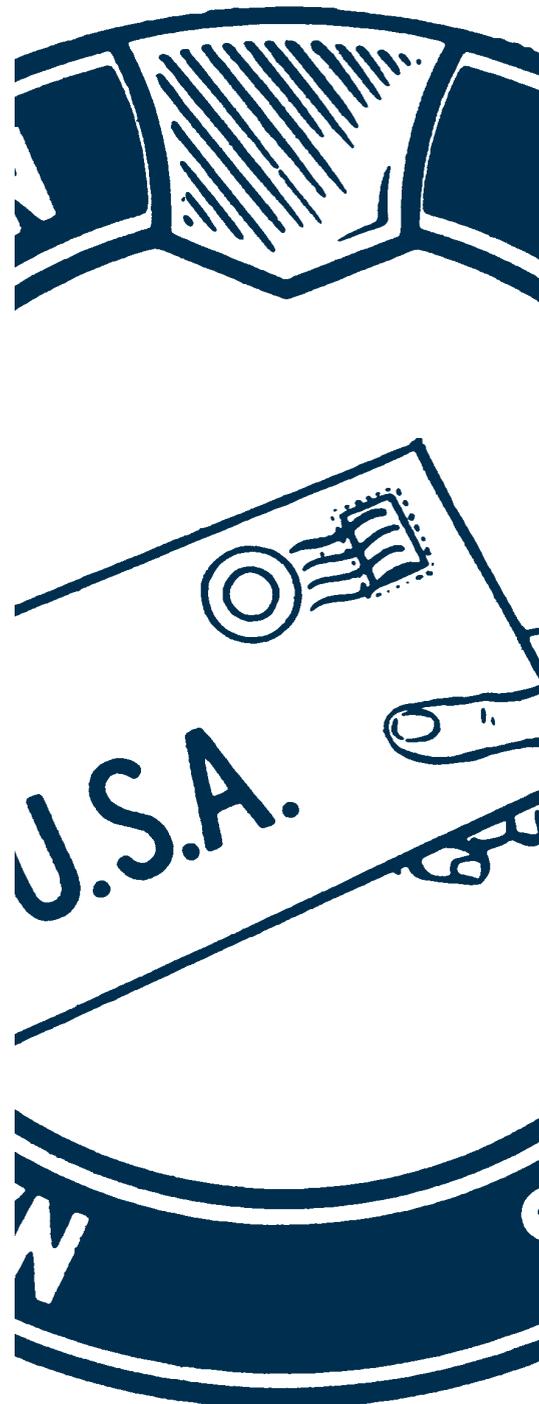
—NALC President Fredric Rolando

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Newly hired letter carriers do not automatically become members of the NALC. Joining the NALC is voluntary, yet more than 90 percent of letter carriers choose to join their union. This high percentage of letter

understand the benefits and sign up immediately.

She also stresses their easy access to branch leaders, from the stewards on the workroom floor right to the top. "I tell them I'm the branch president," Lewis said, "and you can come straight to me any time you have a question."



Veteran letter carriers play an important role in acting as mentors to new letter carriers, Lewis said. Even new carriers who do not choose to join NALC immediately usually do so after seeing union members in action on the workroom floor. “They show them what the union does every day,” she said.

Fostering the desire to become part of the NALC family is an important part of approaching new members for Boston Branch 34 Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Flaherty.

“It’s more than just a union,” he tells new carriers. “It’s a family. It’s a community.”

At his orientation presentation, Flaherty captures the attention of new hires by showing the documentary film about the Great Postal Strike of 1970 first shown at the 2010 NALC convention in Anaheim, CA.

“I explain that I feel that all letter carriers owe everything to these brave men and women,” he said. Telling the story of the 1970 strike is

Kevin Card sometimes confronts the same question in his orientation sessions. Card, who is secretary-treasurer for Portland, OR Branch 82 and president of the Oregon State Association, assures that new hires understand that the union works in cooperation with management daily.

“It’s a professional relationship,” he tells the new letter carriers. “We don’t yell and scream at each other.”

When he meets with the new carriers, Card takes the time to talk about himself and ask each new letter carrier questions. “I tell them my personal history so they know me,” he said. “I ask every person, ‘How did you find out about this job? Where did you work before?’ I try to build a relationship with everybody.”

Card and his branch are going out of their way to be sure that, as soon as they join, new letter carriers feel welcome and get support from the union. The branch surveys them about their needs and opinions. It set up a uniform locker where new letter carriers can get donated uniform items to dress professionally from Day 1 to impress their customers, fellow carriers and managers before they receive their uniform allowance.

“People love being able to come in and grab a shirt,” he said.

Card also stresses to new city carrier assistant (CCA) members that they will be full voting members of the union like any other. “I want them to know they’re not second-class citizens. You can come to our meetings and stand up and tell us what you think.”

He also reminds them that NALC does not charge an initiation fee, unlike some unions that may charge hundreds of dollars for new members to join.

Card likes to tell stories about stewards sticking up for letter carriers to illustrate what the union does for

“At the local, regional and national levels, we welcome our new members with open arms. We are excited to see many of them getting involved in their union right away. They are our future.”

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meant to do more than explain the benefits the strike won—it should inspire new letter carriers to want to be part of the union that, against the odds, won that historic fight and paved the way for the future.

Sometimes new letter carriers may be reluctant to join because they worry management will disapprove, Flaherty said. “I tell them management expects you to join the union,” he said. “It won’t be held against you.”

them every day. “A little light goes on: ‘So this is what they do!’”

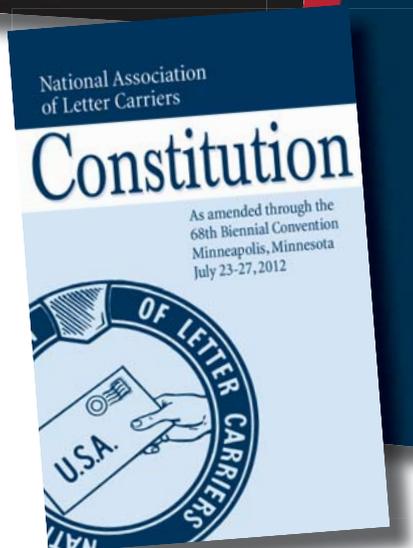
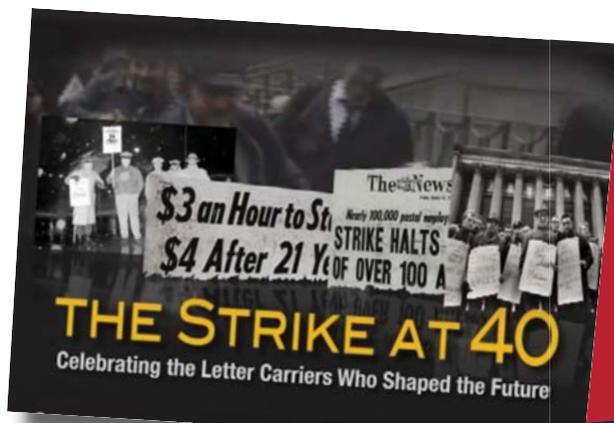
Los Angeles Branch 24 member Darryl Johnson uses past experiences to teach new letter carriers about the union during his orientation presentations as well.

Before he makes his presentation to new letter carriers, he arrives early and talks to them. He invariably finds a few with family members or friends who work for the Postal Service, or who have talked with their own letter carrier at length, and they usually have stories about how the union stepped up to help. During his presentation, he likes to start interactive discussions by calling on these letter carriers to share their stories with the whole group.

“Sometimes the letter carriers in the audience can be better teachers than you are,” he said.

Johnson always tells the story of NALC President Emeritus Vincent Sombrotto’s role in the 1970 strike, when he courageously led letter carriers to put down their satchels and take up picket signs even though he held no official union office. “It shows how important the rank-and-file members are to the NALC,” Johnson said.

Of course, NALC members get more than just representation on the workroom floor. They also receive assistance with workers’ compensation issues. The process of dealing with the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP) can be complicated and overwhelming, especially after suffering an on-the-job injury. NALC provides quality OWCP assistance and representation for NALC members.



2011-2016 National Agreement

between

the
National Association
of Letter Carriers



the
United States
Postal Service

Some of the resources members use to explain the importance of the union to non-members include “The Strike at 40” video, the *NALC Constitution* and the *National Agreement*.

A \$5,000 accidental death benefit, access to scholarships, the e-Activist Network, Union Plus benefits, and a free subscription to *The Postal Record* are some of the other benefits reserved exclusively for NALC members. But most longtime members will say that the greatest benefit of all is standing with your brother and sister letter carriers to protect our jobs and the service we provide to the American people.

“The successes we’ve had in the past can be attributed to the dedication, passion and hard work of NALC members,” President Rolando said. “At the local, regional and national levels, we welcome our new members with open arms. We are excited to see many of them getting involved in their union right away. They are our future.” **PR**



National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

100 Indiana Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144
202-393-4695 | www.nalc.org

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