



National Postal Mail Handlers Union

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August 8, 2015

TO: All Local Union Presidents
National/Regional CAD

FROM: Paul V. Hogrogian, National President *PM*
T.J. Branch, Manager, CAD *JTB*

RE: Postal Service Reneges on SPSS Craft Determination

In a stunning move that defies the tripartite RI-399 Dispute Resolution Procedures, the requirements of RI-399, Article 1.5 of the National Agreement, and any concept of good faith bargaining, yesterday afternoon the Postal Service formally notified the NPMHU of its decision to reverse the June 1, 2015 jurisdictional craft determination that previously identified the mail handler craft as the primary craft for all duties associated with the operation of the Small Parcel Sorter System (SPSS). Instead, the Postal Service has announced "that the hands-on induction, including the singulating/separating and facing of individual packages, on the five induction stations of the SPSS is similar to the induction stations on both the Small Parcel Bundle Sorter (SPBS) and the Automated Package Processing System (APBS), which are staffed with mail processing clerk craft employees." The Postal Service's August 7, 2015 announcement further determines that clerks assigned to the induction system should be rotated to sweeping duties in the "minimum number required."

The Postal Service issued its reversal of position by email to the NPMHU National Office at 3:30 p.m. on Friday afternoon. This is nothing less than a cowardly act of disrespect to the NPMHU and all mail handlers. A National-level jurisdictional determination for new equipment is made within the Dispute Resolution Process only after following a specific protocol: the unions

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are notified about the new equipment, including meetings with postal officials in charge of deploying and operating the equipment; the three parties participate in site visits to observe the new equipment and new jobs resulting from it; each union has the opportunity to submit its written position on the jurisdictional assignment; and then the management representatives appointed to the National Dispute Resolution Procedure apply the principles of RI-399 to issue the Postal Service's jurisdictional determination, with either union having the right to appeal that determination to National arbitration. In this case, the contractually binding procedure was fully and properly implemented, resulting in the June 1, 2015 determination. The American Postal Workers Union did not file an appeal by the required deadline, meaning that the Postal Service's June 1, 2015 determination has been final and binding and fully controlling for some time. Under RI-399, moreover, the June 1, 2015 determination may be changed only upon new work, new or consolidated facilities, or an operational change. In the absence of such circumstances, the June 1, 2015 determination is final and binding, and any attempt to reverse that determination is null and void.

But now that contractually binding process has been hijacked, apparently by a higher level of USPS management. The Postal Service's unprecedented and untimely reversal of its prior written jurisdictional determination casts a heavy shadow of doubt on every signed management document and every signed labor-management agreement. Such contempt for our mutual obligation to bargain in good faith, and our mutual commitment to settle or resolve matters at the lowest possible level within the agreed procedures, will resonate throughout the Postal Service. With this action, USPS Labor Relations has sent a clear message to the NPMHU – that a written position is not worth the paper on which it is written.

In addition, based on the June 1, 2015 determination, many mail handler bids involving the SPSS have been posted and/or awarded in accordance with the National Agreement, and others are scheduled for the coming weeks. There is absolutely no basis for disrupting the work lives of these hundreds of mail handlers who are likely to be adversely impacted by this improper and unlawful reversal of position.

The NPMHU will do everything within its authority to find out why this craft determination was reversed, and to challenge this reversal in every permissible arena with every resource at our disposal.

Additional information will be distributed as it becomes available. The National Office appreciates, in advance, the assistance of the Local Unions when called upon for information, documentation, and testimony.