

SPEAKING WITH THE MEDIA

An Employee's Guide to NOT getting in trouble while causing Good Trouble

Working for the USPS has a lot of perks, but it also has a lot of rules. When speaking to the Media on ANYTHING Union related, Postal related, PBOG related, or PMG related, there are a few things you MUST remember and adhere to in order to come out squeaky clean while getting your hands dirty in the trenches.

To quote APWU's Industrial Relations Director, Charlie Cash, "Just to be clear, union leaders, union members, and postal employees can talk to the press- they just cannot convey, IN ANY WAY, that they are speaking on behalf of the Postal Service or that they are giving an official position of the Postal Service. Rather, they should make sure that their comments are coming from a union leader, union member, or member of the community being affected." I would even go so far as making sure they know you do NOT represent the APWU as a whole, or even the AFL-CIO. But we'll get there.

Here are your guidelines to successfully communicating:

1. Be sure to rehearse what it is that you're going to say. Have a speech written so that you can stay on track. If your speeches have a tendency to wander, bullet points are fantastic ways to keep you on the straight and narrow.
Think less 'Ummmm's and more thoughts.
2. **DO NOT DO AN INTERVIEW IN YOUR UNIFORM!!!**
3. You are allowed to say that you work for the USPS, though it's frowned upon, but you must **CLEARLY STATE** that you **DO NOT** represent the USPS in any way. Be sure that the individual interviewing is aware that they **MUST** post that you **DO NOT** represent the USPS. Jobs are on the line.
4. You can say, "My name is ----- and I am a member of the American Postal Workers Union (or NPMHU, NALC, NRLCA, etc.), not a representative of the USPS, and a member of a community who is being negatively affected by"
5. If you represent a Local as an Officer or a Steward, make sure that you give your Title and your Local. Remember that while you represent your Local, you don't necessarily represent the APWU, NPMHU, NALC, NRLCA, AFL-CIO as a whole.
6. If you are contacted to give an 'Official Statement,' remind them that you are not a representative of the USPS, and therefore will not be giving an 'Official Statement,' but rather a statement from a member of the Union, and a community that has been impacted by
7. **DO NOT DO AN INTERVIEW IN YOUR UNIFORM! No Postal Service Logos, No name tags, No USPS hats, shirts, pins, etc.** Union, YES, USPS, NO!

8. **Be off the clock.** Do not engage with the media while on the clock, working at the window, etc. Be sure to notify your supervisor of the requests IMMEDIATELY.
9. **DO NOT USE LWOP OR SICK LEAVE TO GO TO RALLIES AND PUBLIC APPEARANCES!** It says it on the Leave Slips that LWOP is NOT to be used for these activities. If you must put in for leave, use Annual Leave, or do a schedule change.
10. Learn how to recognize the Media. Most Reporters are easy to spot. They are supposed to disclose which publication they work for, or if they are freelance. BE WARY OF FREELANCE! They can sell their articles to any publication. Try to only speak with sources you know and trust.
11. **REMEMBER!!** “My name is ----- and I am a (Union Leader, Union Member, Postal Employee, Member of the Community) and I am NOT a representative of the USPS.”
12. Print out a copy of these rules and keep them with your speech. It’s good to have a reminder to keep yourself from straying into dangerous territory.
13. **PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!** Work on speaking in front of a mirror. Call a friend or colleague. If you feel that something you might say would be detrimental to the cause you’re speaking for, contact a Union Leader, Officer, or Steward, or the Movement Leaders, and run it by them first. We’re all in this together, and it never hurts to get that 2nd Opinion.
14. **DO NOT USE SPECIFIC NAMES!** Slander Laws are a very real thing. If I were to say “Supervisor Dudley Cantfigureitout is a (insert expletive here)” that could have negative impacts on their personal and professional lives. Use caution when calling people out, and maybe leave their names out of the conversation.
15. **NO SWEARING! DO NOT DROP THE F BOMB, DO NOT USE EXPLETIVES WHILE TALKING ABOUT INDIVIDUALS!** We all have things we want to call certain Officials, Supervisors, PMGs, etc. But calling someone a Dumba**, Pile of s***, Piece of s***, (You get the idea), no matter how accurate or true, is **NOT OKAY!** Use your words, and maybe a Thesaurus.
16. And finally, if you’re not comfortable speaking to the Media, don’t. Just say, “No comment.” Direct them to someone who is okay with speaking publicly, or to someone identified as the Speaker or Leader of your group. There’s nothing wrong with staying in your comfort zone, and no one should be pressuring you to do something you’re not ready for. If you want to speak, GREAT, if not, that’s fine too. Silent Warriors are just as lethal and useful as the loud ones.

Keep to these simple rules, and you can avoid a whole mess of USPS Legal trouble. **Good Luck! Stay SAFE! Stay STRONG! And always KEEP FIGHTING! Let’s go make some Good Trouble!**