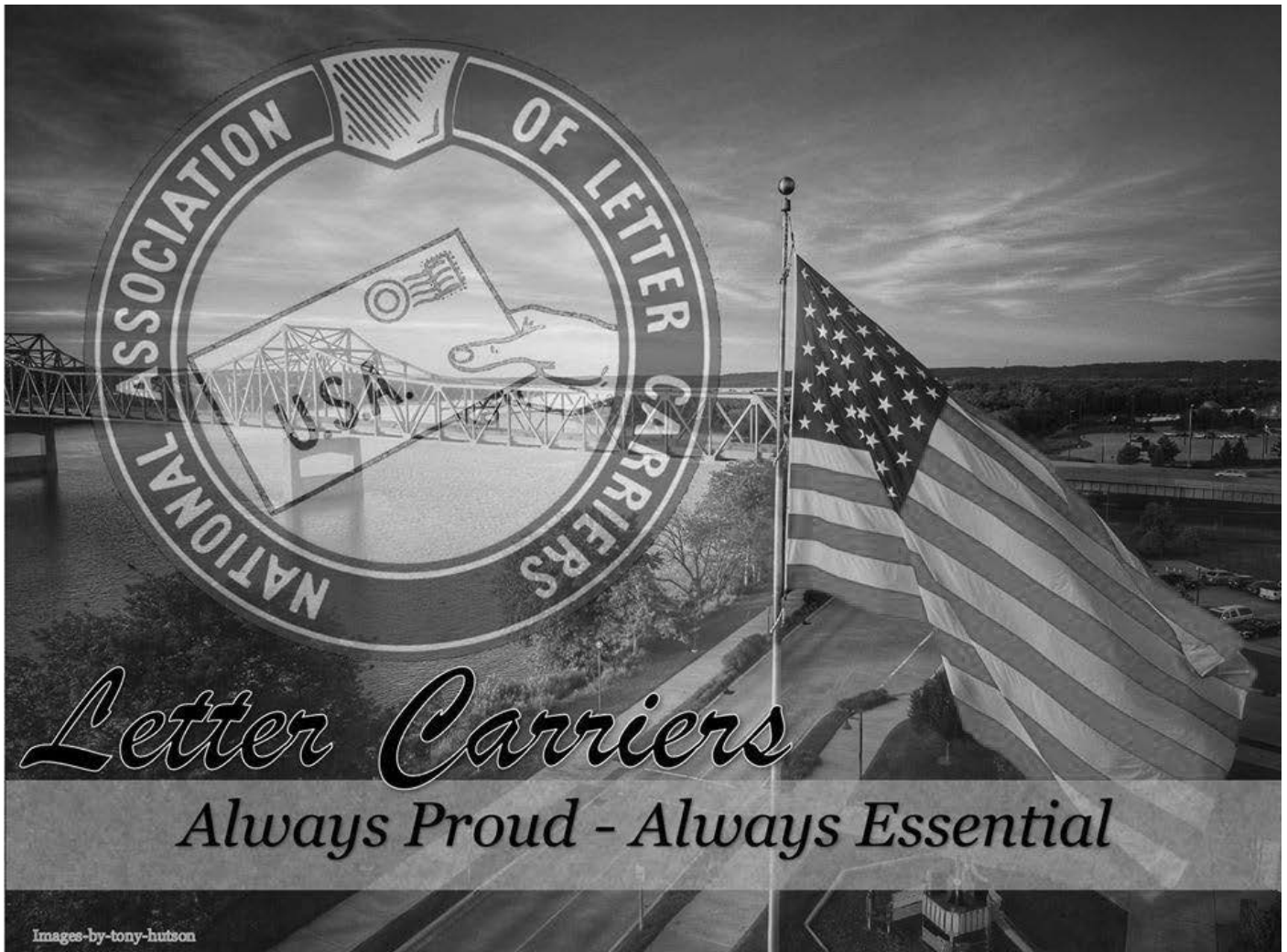




News 56



A publication of National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 56, Grand Rapids MI



Important Notice

Throughout the legislative response to the COVID-19 virus, NALC has sought to support the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) through talks and engagement with Congressional leadership. USPS is uniquely vulnerable to what is both a public health and economic crisis yet critical to our country's ability to weather and recover from it. To that end, NALC has called on congress repeatedly to address the immediate and long-term needs of the Postal Service through the series of emergency stimulus packages it has put forward.

Unfortunately, the most recent legislative package passed into law, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act, [H.R. 748](#)) did not offer the same kind of support for the Postal Service that it did for airlines (\$61 billion), private cargo shippers (\$17 billion) and other corporations (\$425 billion). It provided \$10 billion in new debt authority, subject to control by the Treasury Department's Federal Finance Bank (FFB). This legislation was wholly inadequate, as outlined in NALC's recent white paper and letters sent to Democratic and Republican leadership earlier this week.

In it, NALC explains why \$10 billion in new debt authority will not help USPS weather this storm and lays out the necessary provisions that must be included the next stimulus bill. These measures should:

1. Make a direct "public service" appropriation of at least \$25 billion to the Postal Service to help it weather the pandemic and the deep recession it is causing. Although the Postal Service has not received taxpayer appropriations (other than for military/overseas voting and free mail for the blind) since the early 1980s, the present crisis warrants such appropriations now.
2. Authorize an emergency "public service" appropriation for the duration of the crisis, distributed quarterly, starting in Fiscal Year 2021 (which begins in just six months) to cover the difference between postage revenues and total USPS expenses. This would signal to the American people and the business community that the Postal Service will be there to: battle the pandemic (with the delivery of tests and public health information, etc.); deliver online purchases and prescription drugs; support the economic recovery; and facilitate absentee voting as well as other vital civic functions.
3. Provide a mechanism to reimburse the Postal Service for the cost of the COVID-19-related leave (both sick leave and family medical leave) provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127).
4. Ensure equal treatment for postal employees in any legislation that authorizes, and funds hazard pay for other front-line workers exposed to health risks related to the Covid-19 virus. Such legislation should cover postal workers, who face heightened exposure risks to the virus on a daily basis.
5. Remove the Federal Finance Bank's discretion to impose operational changes and policy conditions on any of the Postal Service's existing borrowing authorities – changes and policies that should properly be set by the Postal Service Board of Governors and the Congress, not the Treasury Department – and eliminate any annual limit on these authorities. (These authorities are provided by Section 2005 of Title 39 and Section 6001 of the CARES Act of 2020.)

Support USPS in next emergency stimulus

As letter carriers on the front lines of serving 160 million Americans and businesses every day, you know that the COVID-19 pandemic is something we have never experienced before. While our letter carriers show their resilience, strength, and continued service to the public every day, the Postal Service looms closer to shuttering due to the staggering loss in mail volume and revenue during this crisis. It's a desperate situation that only Congress and the Administration can help solve.

We cannot allow the USPS to fail.

Unfortunately, instead of providing much needed immediate financial assistance urged by NALC and stakeholders ([viewable here](#)), the last stimulus gave the Postal Service a slap in the face by giving it access to a conditional line of credit. Those conditions aren't new to letter carriers – as they seek to destroy the network and attack letter carriers at the behest of private shippers. This is not a solution. It is a way to weaken the Postal Service by riddling it with more debt to the point where opponents of the constitutionally mandated service will destroy it.

While it's been 40 years since we have needed taxpayer funding, we need financial relief to continue to serve this country through this crisis – and we need it now. Please take a minute to send a letter by clicking the button below to your members of Congress and tell them that we need: an immediate and significant injection of money – and secure, regular appropriations for the Postal Service until this crisis is over.

NALC CALL TO ACTION SUPPORT THE USPS

**THE NALC MAKES IT EASY
FROM THE NALC APP – GO TO NOTIFICATIONS (TOP RIGHT CORNER)
TAP THE “ACTION NEEDED” NOTICE
AFTER READING – SCROLL TO THE BOTTOM AND ENTER
YOUR NAME AND ZIP CODE AS PROMPTED
YOU CHOOSE HOW TO SEND IT**

**YOU MAY ALSO GO TO NALC.ORG ON YOUR CELL PHONE
USE THE DROPDOWN MENU AND CHOOSE
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
SCROLL DOWN TO NALC LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES
TAP ON “CLICK HERE” (IN RED)
SCROLL DOWN TO LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER AND
TAP THE RED DROP-DOWN MENU – CLICK “TAKE ACTION”
SCROLL TO THE BOTTOM AND ENTER YOUR NAME AND
ZIP CODE AS PROMPTED**

**(ON THE COMPUTER GO TO GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS,
LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER)**

WE RECOMMEND EMAIL AND CALLING

Times are Changing....

This year's winter has been the craziest that most of us have witnessed in a long time. I think I used my snow blower a total of two times and one was to make sure it started. Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining one bit! I think most of us were eagerly anticipating spring and getting out of the house and some fresh air. We still have leaves blowing all around the neighborhood because they fell so late in the year. We got some really nice above avg. weather and then we moved into the pandemic of the century with COVID19. I'm not going to use this article to get into all the ins and outs and political opinions about COVID19 but I would like to address a few things in regards to what many of the carriers are going through at work.



When the pandemic first started, everyone had questions and not a whole lot of answers. Someone would make a comment on the workroom floor and it would cause an uneasy almost panic atmosphere. Some carriers are wearing masks and gloves while others are not. I met with the Postmaster and spoke with the District Manager frequently during the first week trying to formulate a plan that would keep our carriers safe and still be able to successfully do our duties while remaining safe. (Safety is paramount) Management in GR did pre-plan and had supplies on hand to include everything the CDC had published. The supplies will eventually run out but they have also placed numerous orders with items being back ordered. The Postmaster did assign a supervisor the duty of running supplies out to each station that was running low in an effort to keep carriers safe. The GRCA unit has a sanitizing station for the LLVs that can be used to clean the inside of the LLV as carriers depart for the street. One of the biggest issues I have seen and heard complaints is from the lack of cleaning and sanitizing of the actual Post Offices. Grand Rapids is short staffed on custodians to complete these tasks of cleaning, so carriers have been cleaning a lot of the items they touch by themselves. Each individual makes the decision if they feel it is necessary to wipe a tray off and sanitize it to continue to work and remain safe in doing so.

A series of agreed MOUs were published mid-March to run for 60 days to help our carriers dealing with issues the NALC believed to be hot topic items. The postal service was directed to be more liberal about granting leave in regards to COVID19. Our CCAs would be granted the use of 80 hours of SL if linked to COVID19. (CCAs contractually do not receive SL) Sick Leave Dependent Care was to be utilized for daycare issues for parents having issues with the school and daycare closings. I suggest placing COVID19 in the remark's column on a PS-3971 when you believe the reason for your calling-in was related to COVID19. (Make a copy and keep) The lost but not forgotten 7.01 rule was agreed it could be used again. There are some instances that the rule could be used effectively and be beneficial to the carrier on a limited basis. The MOU also stated management could assign you work to complete your 8-hour day. Almost like a catch "22". The post office has also agreed to expand what you can purchase with the Voyager Gas card to include hand sanitizer. I would caution any carrier purchasing sanitizer (if you can find it) to get a detailed receipt stating sanitizer and turn the receipt in to avoid any hassle later down the road.

I had to make the decision to cancel Steward training in March, General Meeting in April, Executive Board meeting in April, and the Annual Retiree Dinner in May. VP Don Karl has a record of everyone that has sent in money for a guest and we will apply it to the rescheduled event or the 2020 dinner if we can't find another date in 2019. National has cancelled numerous trainings they had scheduled as well. We just received word the Annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive in May will be postponed till later in 2020 (No new date). It is still up in the air about the National Convention being postponed or cancelled as well. The branch has registered all 33

delegates (plus 3 alternates) and booked all flights and hotel rooms for the delegates. Currently the branch is planning on bringing 22 paid delegates to the Convention if it is not cancelled or rescheduled.

Even with all the things involved with this pandemic, your shop stewards are still defending the National Agreement on a daily basis. They continue to file grievances when warranted and we as a branch have sent more grievances to the Step B team this year already, than we did the entire year 2019.

Congratulations to Darcie Yonkman (NW) and Kristen Collings (Rockford) who successfully completed School of Stewards in early March. We have had a few CCA conversions to Full-time City Carrier in 2020 and they are: Josh Rode, Andrea Ruhlman, Devin Martin and Danielle Adamson. We also accepted a transfer from the Clerk Craft who completed the CCA Academy and is now a Full-time City Carrier: Dylan Bender. We had some conversions late in 2019 that we may have missed and they are: Sheyenne Stephan, Jacob Buttermore, Amber Boulanger, Adrien Loisselle, Samuel Dock, Jacob Smith and Antonio Johnson. Also, a congratulations goes out to Kristen Collings for being converted to PTF status on March 14th. I would also like to wish Adrien Loisselle a safe return from his deployment with the Michigan National Guard. It's been a wild 2020 for Adrien as he converted, got married and started a 13-month military deployment. We still do not have any word from the arbitrators' decision on consolidated casing or the National contract. We are expecting the arbitrators' decision on consolidated casing sometime in April. (fingers crossed) We did RESOLVE a grievance for management performing craft work for putting the labels on the consolidated cases and got each caser paid for this violation. I have not heard anything about if the arbitrators have even met to discuss our issues.

So far, the active letter carriers have been amazing and have overcome every obstacle presented to them. This pandemic is new and is changing not only the way carriers do their jobs but also how Americans interact with each other daily. Please adhere to the social distancing of 6' even on the workroom floor. Avoid gathering around each other and stay out of each other's cases when the need arises to talk. Respect each other's space. If a carrier asks you to place more distance between you and them, then respect their request and back-up. There's no reason to let a simple request escalate to an argument between our fellow co-workers. We as letter carriers overall, are in a better place than many Americans who are struggling to stay afloat during these trying times. Please remain calm and work safely. If you feel stressed out and overwhelmed with anxiety, I would encourage each and every one of you to reach out to EAP. EAP is more than just the last question management asks you during a pre-discipline investigation. It actually exists and can be very beneficial in many cases.

EAP can help you and your family members cope with stresses related to the COVID-19 pandemic — whether they are due to changes at work, health concerns, or financial pressures.

EAP is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is voluntary, confidential, and free. Services include:

- Face-to-face counseling, where available.
- Telephone counseling. Employees can speak with a counselor by calling 800-327-4968. The TTY number is 877-492-7341.
- Video, text, and online therapy.

EAP4YOU.com has more information. Additional information is also available on the Employee Assistance Program page on LiteBlue ([Liteblue.usps.gov](https://liteblue.usps.gov)).

It is difficult to get the word out to every single active carrier and even more difficult to retired carriers who do not stay active or socialize a lot with those that do. One way to stay on top of all

the changes is to join our "Grand Rapids Letter Carriers" Closed Group on Facebook. You do not need to be an active participant but we do post things as soon as we get updates. You can also go to www.nalc56.org and it contains a link to the group. I would recommend you also go to the following sites for accurate up to date information on COVID19: www.cdc.org and www.who.int

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change" (Charles Darwin).

Until next time,

Darrell Helsley

President NALC Branch 56

616-328-9750

Attention Retirees

The retiree dinner scheduled for May 5th has been canceled.

DON KARL

Vice President

989-205-9887

I deleted my prepared article due to a teleconference I had with headquarters representatives a few days ago. Sarah Lower-Marlatte is our Letter Carrier Congressional Liaison and she was also on the call.

As long as I have worked for the Post Office, I have heard the Henny Penny the ‘sky is falling’, whether its 5-day delivery, privatization, or whatever other issue pops up. It has become a cliché. I believe most if not all of these were real threats to our way of life and we were able to fend them off. Whether the sky was falling in the past or not, hell, who knows. I must tell you, People are worried. People who never seem to agree on anything. The Postal Board of Governors, USPS headquarters and the NALC Headquarters all agree this a real risk for us

If the USPS does not get congressional support, we may have to close our doors by the end of the year. That was the message on our telecon with the NALC. That is the message coming from the agencies tasked with representing the USPS and its employees. So, what do we do?

The Post office is on pace for a 50% revenue loss for 2020. \$35 billion loss by September.

The last stimulus package originally allotted \$25 billion for the USPS and it was later removed. They authorized us \$10 billion in possible loans instead. Fortunately, they have been in discussions for another stimulus package. People I respect and trust have made it clear to me that without some major support from our congressional representatives we are at real risk of closing our doors.

This is not a partisan issue.

Both democrats and republicans benefit from the USPS services. Both democrats and republicans work for the USPS. Both democrats and republicans belong to the NALC. That is a strength of ours.

There is a reason I placed the notices on the second and third page of this newsletter. Please take some time and contact your representatives.

Mindy Dekker Recording Secretary

Hello fellow carriers

As I am writing this article, we are in a situation that we haven't experienced in recent times. The Coronavirus has turned the world upside down and anxiety is at an all-time high.

This got me to thinking about how the past is so much different than the present. I remember the days when my parents would turn on the tv to find out what was going on in our community, the country and around the world. The news came on just after supper and would be on for about 1/2 hour to an hour. If you were not able to sit down to watch at that time, well, you were just out of luck. (unless you subscribed to the daily newspaper, which by the time you read it, was probably old news by then)



I can remember, if the content of the news on any day was very disturbing, or graphic, my parents would distract me away from the tv to spare me the anxiety of something I had no control of. So, by doing that, they had much better control of the information available to me. Back then, even as adults, there was much less time to ruminate over what was going on in the world. Every day adults went to work, came home to do their chores, and kids went to school. All of them without phones.

They lived their lives as it came within the moment. They watched the news in the evening to be informed, and when it was over, they continued on with their lives. Technology, in my opinion, has been a blessing and a curse. So much information, whether it be beneficial, or harmful, is a touch away, anywhere, anytime. Is it possible that Information, coming from so many directions at one time, is creating much of the anxiety we are feeling?

Many find blame in "the media". I say it's much broader than that. It's the times we are living in, and it's not going away anytime soon. So how can we cope? Seeing that our phones are now basically computers, access to information, useful or not is 24/7, 365 days a year.

I myself, am doing the best I can to limit how many times I surf the news throughout the day. Thankfully, I'm not on any social media platforms. That's one less anxiety inducing, time sucking, habit forming behavior to cut down on. Being on the phone becomes a habit without even being aware of it. So, let's all put our phones away for a while, take a deep breath and collect our thoughts. Enjoy the simple pleasures that life has to offer. Let's be in the moment as it comes. We will get through these tough times and maybe learn some beneficial things along the way.

Thanks for taking the time to read my article.

Dignity and Respect:

Bob Pearson Northwest Station

At about the same time that I realized the powerful role dignity played in resolving conflict, I also became aware of something else. Few people understand the true meaning of dignity, and even fewer realize the extraordinary impact it has on our lives and relationships. That's not to say that people don't react when the word "dignity." Is referred to. There is always an immediate recognition to the word and its importance. Everyone says they know what it looks like to have their dignity honored. The most common response people offer is that dignity is about respect. To the contrary, dignity is not the same as respect. Dignity is our inherent value and worth as human beings; everyone is born with it. Respect, on the other hand, is earned through one's actions. After people learn about dignity, a remarkable thing happens. Everyone recognizes that we all have a deep, human desire to be treated as something of value. This shared desire for dignity transcends all of our differences, putting our common human above all else.

While our uniqueness is important, history has shown us that if we don't



take the next step toward recognizing our shared identity, conflicts in our workplace, our personal lives, and between nations will continue to abound. The glue that holds all of our relationships together is the mutual recognition of the desire to be seen, heard, listened to, and treated fairly. We ALL want to be recognized, understood, and to feel safe in the world. When our identity is accepted and we feel included, we are granted a sense of freedom and independence and a life filled with hope and possibility. When we are given an apology, when someone does us harm, we recognize that even when we fall short of being our best selves, there is always a way to reconnect. We all know the gut feeling that results from being mistreated or neglected – it's up to you to honor other peoples' dignity. In the process, you'll strengthen your own identity above all else. While our uniqueness is important, history has shown us that if we don't take the next step toward recognizing our shared identity, conflicts in our workplace, our personal lives, and between nations will continue to abound. The glue that holds all of our relationships together is the mutual recognition of the desire to be seen, heard, listened to, and treated fairly. We ALL want to be recognized, understood, and to feel safe in the world. When our identity is accepted and we feel included, we are granted a sense of freedom

and independence and a life filled with hope and possibility. When we are given an apology, when someone does us harm, we recognize that even when we fall short of being our best selves, there is always a way to reconnect. We all know the gut feeling that results from being mistreated or neglected – it's up to you to honor other peoples' dignity. In the process, you'll strengthen your own.



The Postal Service logo is a well-known American symbol, but it hasn't always looked the way it does today. Here's how the postal insignia has evolved over time.

1. **Mercury.** In 1782, then-Postmaster General Ebenezer Hazard used an image of Mercury, the winged-messenger of the Roman gods, in his official postal seal.
2. **Post rider.** Seeking a modern representation of the mail in motion, an image of a horse carrying a rider and a mailbag was chosen in 1837 for the Post Office Department seal.
3. **The eagle.** When the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act transformed the Post Office Department into USPS, officials unveiled a new seal created by the firm of famed industrial designer Raymond Loewy with an eagle poised for flight.
4. **4. The current logo.** In 1993, USPS adopted its current logo, which features a “sonic” blue eagle looking forward to symbolize the organization's future.

The Hatch Act — Permitted and Prohibited Activities for Employees

The Hatch Act is a federal law that restricts the political activity of federal and Postal Service employees while on duty, on government property, wearing an official uniform, or using a government vehicle. It also prohibits candidates campaigning for election to public office on leased or owned postal property.

Under the Hatch Act, Postal Service employees **may**:

- Be candidates for public office in nonpartisan elections.
- Register and vote as they choose.
- Assist in voter registration drives.
- Express opinions about candidates and issues.
- Contribute money to political organizations.
- Attend political fundraising functions.
- Attend and be active at political rallies and meetings.
- Join and be an active member of a political party or club.
- Sign nominating petitions.
- Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, and municipal ordinances.
- Campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections.
- Make speeches for candidates in partisan elections.
- Distribute campaign literature in partisan elections.
- Hold office in political clubs or parties.



at www.osc.gov/hatchact.htm.

Postal Service employees **may not**:

- Use official authority or influence to interfere with an election.
- Solicit, receive, or collect political contributions unless both individuals are members of the same federal labor organization or employee organization, and the one solicited is not a subordinate employee.
- Knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person who has business before the agency.
- Engage in political activity while on duty, wearing an official uniform, using a government vehicle, or in any government office.
- Solicit political contributions from the general public.
- Solicit or receive political contributions.
- Be candidates for public office in partisan elections.
- Wear political buttons on duty.

Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. More information on the Hatch Act can be obtained

Bits and Pieces

Sarah Lower-Marlatt Letter Carrier Congressional Liaison



Wow. What a year this month has been so far. Ha! The Covid-19 virus is a major concern for all of us, especially being out on the streets with limited resources to wash our hands. Supplies are running thin. Everything is on order. FYI if you can find it at a gas station, you can use your voyager (gas) card to purchase hand sanitizer. Just make sure you get an itemized receipt that lists what it is and the amount. If you're like me and can't find hand sanitizer or cleaning wipes to save your life, I have made my own and am including the recipes.

Hand Sanitizer

The key to an effective germ busting hand sanitizer is to stick to a 2:1 proportion of alcohol to aloe vera. This keeps the alcohol content around 60%. This is the minimum amount needed to kill most germs according to the CDC.

What you'll need:

- 3/4 cup of isopropyl or rubbing alcohol
 - 1/4 cup of aloe vera gel
 - 10 drops of essential oil, or you can use lemon juice instead.
1. Pour all ingredients into a bowl.
 2. Mix with a spoon and then beat with a whisk to turn the sanitizer into gel.
 3. Pour ingredients into an empty bottle and label "hand sanitizer."

Disinfectant Wipes

1. Cut a roll of bounty paper towel in half and remove the cardboard tube. In an airtight container (Empty baby wipe container, mason jar, coffee can or any other container you can find) add 1 ½ cups of water and ½ cup cleaner such as Mr. Clean antibacterial, Pine Sol, etc.
2. Turn upside down until all liquid is absorbed.
3. To use, pull each piece of paper towel out of the center.



On another note, I have no new information on the HR 2382 bill. It sits in the senate. I'm speculating it is on the back burner due to the covid-19 crisis. Although, a few senators and representatives did acknowledge that the Postal Service is essential and extremely important especially during times of crisis! When we are out delivering and the public sees us, they know everything will be ok. We are always voted the most trusted government agency. We are essential!



Have you ever bid on a route and wonder what group code the day off was?



COLOR	GROUP
BLUE	A
GREEN	B
BROWN	C
RED	D
BLACK	E
YELLOW	F



Fun Fact

ZIP, informally "**Zippy**", is a cartoon character used in the 1960s by the United States **Post** Office Department, and later by its successor, the United States **Postal** Service, to encourage the general public to include the **ZIP Code** in all mailings.

Who gets the work if at the same OT rate?

PTF/CCA v. ODL?	→→ Up to Supervisor
PTF/CCA v. WAL?	→→ Up to Supervisor
WAL v. ODL on WAL's route	→→ WAL
WAL Carrier tech v. ODL on route on string?	→→ WAL Carrier Tech
WAL v. WAL Carrier Tech	→→ WAL



NALC Health Benefit Plan



Hello, to all the health benefits junkies. Once again, I have put our editor in a pickle by not getting my article in on time.

I think I know what's kind of on people's minds as of late. The now famous COVID-19 (Coronavirus). The best advice that can be given is to listen to the CDC (Center for Disease Control and prevention). You can go to the CDC website at [CDC.Gov](https://www.cdc.gov). The website has a lot of good information.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen let's do our part and sing our ABC song while we wash our hands, (at least 20 seconds) use the hand sanitizer given to you, use the gloves that hopefully have been supplied to us by the USPS. If these items are not provided to you when you request them contact your steward immediately.

Now a new program for 2020 is the Real Appeal Program through Optum. It is a weight loss program that offers group and one on one personalized coaching through an online and mobile platform. The program focuses on weight loss through proper nutrition, exercise, sleep and stress management. Members will have access to a transformation coach and a whole bunch of online tools to help track your food and your activity. Members also receive a Success kit to support their weight loss journey including a food and weight loss scale, resistance band and a workout DVD and more stuff.

So, thanks again for reading my ramblings, let's stay safe out there and look out for our fellow carriers.

Your Health Benefits Rep
Mike Schregardus

WHIZ KIDS

© THEWHIZTIMES.COM



OCTOBER 15TH IS GLOBAL HANDWASHING DAY!

What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of
fever
cough
shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

Stay home when you are sick.
Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19 CS 314937-A 02/21/2020

National Association of Letter Carriers – Region 6
National Business Agent
March 2020 Report



Brothers and Sisters,

This month I would like to address two items that have been the subject of recent phone calls to our office.

Item One

The union is a family of sisters and brothers that have a common goal for wanting what is best for their family— great hours, wages, and working conditions for all its family members. That's what every union sister and brother should be striving for. Yes, I know its human nature to get everything you can for your immediate family, but we must understand the union is bigger than that. We must look at the bigger picture. What's good for the whole must be considered. You can't make "deals" with local management to get that "favor". Deal making that circumvents the contract not only has the potential of hurting other members, but can, and probably will, come back and hurt you – the "deal maker".

I've been around longer than I care to admit, but, in most cases, management will eventually renege on any "deal" they have made. I'm just being real here. You may say it's a past practice. However, if it's clearly defined in the National contract or your Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU), there cannot be a past practice.

Statistics show you will be calling our office when your deal with management falls through. Most of the time, we say "sorry" after hearing what the deal was you had with management. I ask everyone to get educated in the contract! It, and we, the union, have been around for a long time. We've seen a lot of games and tactics management has and will try to play. We've been representing our members since 1889!!!! There's no new spin that we haven't seen. **YOU HAVE TO TRUST YOUR REPRESENTATIVES!!!** Branch representatives have been instructed to call our office if they are not sure on how to apply the contract.

Can a local representative make a wrong decision? Of course, but that's not a reason to jump ship. We learn more from our mistakes than our successes. Bring any mistake you believe has

been made to our office's attention. Either myself, David, or Kyle will make sure we get to the bottom of it as long as you give us the complete details of the issue.

Item Two

I'm beside myself with management's abuse of applying Article 16.7! To those of you that may not be familiar with this contractual provision (Article 16.7) it states in part:

"...where the allegation involves intoxication (use of drugs or alcohol), pilferage, or failure to observe safety rules and regulations, or in cases where retaining the employee on duty may result in damage to U.S. Postal Service property, loss of mail or funds, or where the employee may be injurious to self or others..."

The Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM) goes on to state on page 16-8:

The purpose of Article 16.7 is to allow the Postal Service to act "immediately" to place an employee in an off-duty status in the specified "emergency" situations

Management takes this provision and paints with a broad brush. If they don't like you or what you say or do, they put you on Emergency Suspension. Folks, that without pay!

Why does management abuse Article 16.7 when the carrier's actions do not fall under those items listed under the contract? There's no other reason but to intimidate and punish the employee – to show whose boss. One has to question the ethical decision making of some postal managers.

Article 16.7 has been around a long time. There is a bank of arbitral decisions that can be used for guidance. So why does management apply the provisions of Article 16.7 capriciously? Intimidation. You better do as I say or you **WILL** pay!

How can we fix this as a union?

There are two avenues we can take as a union: 1) try to talk with the decision-makers, the postal managers. Pin them down as to the specifics. Did they place them off immediately? How are the grievant's actions related to Article 16.7 provisions? Show the manager there is no connection to what the grievant is accused of and the listed items in Article 16.7. In other words, try to reason with them. Unfortunately, this option has proven not to be successful. Or, 2) Grieve and send the grievance through the grievance process (Article 15) as soon as possible – NO EXTENSIONS! Nine times out of ten, management doesn't have their proof of a

legitimate Emergency Suspension at the time they send a sister or a brother out the door WITHOUT PAY! Again, that's nothing less than management trying to intimidate, not just the sister or the brother being sent out off the clock, but **all employees** that are witnessing their (management's) abuse of power. STAND TOGETHER!!! If we don't stop this abuse of power, management will see how far they can go. Using Article 16.7 as intimidation over any carrier, especially those that are doing their jobs efficiently (as 99.9 % are), is unacceptable. We, as a union, cannot allow this.

So, until we are able to negotiate either Article 16.7 out of the contract or some other mode to confront its abuse, we must exercise our main tool – the grievance process. Please, if you see management's abuse of power, stand up and make a statement. Be a union!!! Stop their (management's) abuse of the contract. If we don't, our agreement will be ineffective. Don't help throw away our predecessor's hard work!

In Solidarity,

Troy Clark

National Business Agent – Region 6

Kentucky – Indiana – Michigan (KIM)



"Good, you're home. Can we go for a walk?"

**Mike Blaze
Steward
49505/49525**

The NE station will be experiencing some changes in the near future. Mr. Dewey Wheeler, from Oklahoma, will be taking over as station manager replacing Jordan Blanchard. Mr. Wheeler is expected to arrive mid to late April but with what is happening in the country right now that will likely be pushed back. However, once he does arrive, Jordan will reassume his official post as Easttown Station Manager. It has been a pleasure working with Jordan and the NE Station we wish him Good Luck.

The Brothers and Sisters of the NALC would also like to offer their heartfelt condolences to Marty Kerr and his family at this difficult time; may our thoughts and prayers be with you.

NE is adding Robert Meyle to the ranks of the retired, after more than 36 years of service as a City Letter Carrier. The NALC thanks you Bob for your many years of service as a letter carrier and for your commitment and sacrifice as a Sailor in the United States Navy. Unfortunately, due to circumstance Bob's retirement celebration and pudding cake have been postponed until further notice.

Keep Calm and Carrier On

For 141 years, getting a job at the U.S. postal system depended on one thing: connections. (Source: RTIMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK)

Beginning with Thomas Jefferson's presidency (1801-1809), it became a tradition—albeit an unethical one—for the winning candidate to fire a significant swath of federal employees and replace them with party loyalists. Then, when Andrew Jackson was elected to the Oval Office in 1828, he went further and tied this political perk to the postal service, which at the time accounted for 75 percent of all civilian federal employees. He made it customary for the new president to fire many of the postal workers and hand out the positions to supporters. Astonishingly, this practice continued all the way until 1969 when it was abolished by President Richard Nixon. This, at least, was one form of corruption that he could not take.

Spring is upon us.....

It is getting time to fix up our yards and landscapes for the new growing season. Last year when I worked the food drive I noticed something was being neglected at the NE station. This is not the only station that could use a green thumb.

In the fall we take time to remember our military veteran's past and present. We seemed to have missed our brothers and sisters that wear the postal blue. The NE station has a memorial for Linda Chickering. The NW station has a memorial for Jackie Jacobson. Both carriers tragically died in automobile accidents. Nothing has been done at these sites for years. The postal service has allowed us to place these memorials and others but has no obligation to maintain them.

Last fall, with the permission of the NE station manager (who didn't even know there was a memorial) I removed the dead tree and replaced it with a similar crabapple tree, then I planted a perennial flower hoping they will last a long while.

Most of Linda and Jackie's co-workers and friends have retired or moved on and are unaware of the condition of the memorials. Hopefully this article will bring back fond memories of friends taken from us too soon.

So this spring when you are working in your gardens and you find yourself with extra flowers and plants please remember there are some places that could use a little TLC.

Brian Knight



Uncharted Territory

Carriers have always been essential members of the country's existence, now the public we serve is recognizing them as such. The USPS is an essential service for the public. As Carriers, we have had to undertake an entirely new scope of policies and procedures for our safety and the well-being of our health. The delivery of the mail has not changed. The working day and standards have not changed. The Contract and the ELM have not changed. The only thing that has changed are the circumstances, we as carriers are still tasked with the mail's delivery. I see every day, carriers masked, gloved and wiping down vehicles for sterilization, all to maintain their safety and reduce the anxiety, and all to continue mail delivery. I hear them saying how they have had to ask the public to offer them "social distancing" so they can feel comfortable in the deliveries. I hear almost all of them, stating concerns regarding what changes could be next in store. Let's make things simple. Carriers are people. When a carrier has to do more than was originally declared in their job description, it takes extra effort to complete that task. That extra time for those duties is mandatory. That doesn't mean to have wasted time, but does require more allotted time to do some procedures. Delivery routes haven't changed, clocking in to work hasn't changed and getting and giving proper estimates for the days mail deliveries haven't changed. Documents requiring overtime, PS 3996's and Change of Schedules are still the same. The USPS and NALC are constantly revising some issues to allow for more liberal understanding and clarifications of current policies during this period of uncertainty. The NALC will monitor every aspect of safety and policies to provide the best support for the carriers. It is up to the carriers to follow those policies and forward concerns back to the NALC. The carriers have always been the face of the USPS and in these times are no different, but now they are recognized as one of the Essential Faces of the Government!!! Stand Tall!

Bob Pearson
Northwest Station



Quarantine pick-up lines

- The Coronavirus might have shut everything down, but I'm still open for business.
- Hey there, are you the vaccine? Because the whole world is chasing you...
- Netflix and chill (over Facetime)?
- If you need someone to self-isolate with, I make a mean Quarantini.
 - The only thing not quarantined is my heart when I look at you.
- Need a hand sanitizer massage?
- I might have a dad bod, but I've got a 6 pack of TP at home
- Since all the public libraries are closed, I'm checking you out instead!
- You can't spell quarantine without "U R A Q T"



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National Association of Letter
Carriers Brach 56
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**Branch meetings are the
first Thursday of each month**

**Branch training is last
Tuesday of each month**

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