

2021-2024 NRLCA-USPS Agreement

Questions and Answers: Sorted By Topic

COMPENSATION:

- ❖ 17. Are the COLAS rolled into our salary or are they back-pay only?
- ❖ 23. How do you figure out what the COLA will be for steps 1-14 on table 2?
- ❖ 34. Is there anything in the new contract about allowing regular rural carriers to cash out annual leave?
- ❖ 46. If I was off work completely on LWOP with an OWCP claim during the period covered by retroactive wage increases, will I receive retroactive pay?
- ❖ 62. I am a regular carrier. I am somewhat confused as I haven't received a pay raise since November 21, 2021.
- ❖ 63. When will we be able to “buy back” our time as RCAs for retirement calculation purposes?
- ❖ 68. Will the retroactive salary increases be applied to the calculation of my “high three” for retirement?
- ❖ 71. I was recently informed that the APWU has negotiated for their employer contribution to health insurance to be 95%. Why isn't our union pursuing a better rate for our rural letter carrier members?
- ❖ 77. The new contract says rural carriers will be getting 1.3% general wage increase for each year of the agreement. How is this true if all 3 years you want to give us

\$792 each year?

- ❖ 79. Did the Union propose Thrift Savings Plan participation for RCAs with matching funds from USPS?
- ❖ 81. When a PTF position is posted district-wide, are regular carriers within the district eligible to bid?
- ❖ 96. How do you know what percentage of COLA I will get if I am on Table 2?
- ❖ 106. In regard to the timing of paying back pay and question 91, what is the status of the Step 4 grievance regarding how long it took to be paid back pay from the last contract?
- ❖ 107. Will we get the 5.9% COLA social security got and if so, when?
- ❖ 109. I'm curious since contracts are give and take what are we giving up on this contract? I know you've highlighted what we are gaining but there has to be some things that you agreed to give up.
- ❖ 110. Can you please give the effective date and the actual amount of the first COLA under the tentative Agreement?
- ❖ 113. "If the evaluation of the route is reduced to less than 40 standard hours per week as a result of a mail count, the carrier is still entitled to the guaranteed annual wage of 40 hours "additional compensation" through the end of the guarantee period." Is this statement still valid?
- ❖ 117. Do PTFs get the same retroactive COLA and 1.3% General Wage Increases?
- ❖ 120. Will I still be able to get compensated at 150% if I work my regular day off?
- ❖ 121. Am I to infer from the response to question number 68 that the "high 3" calculation for retirement is maintained in this contract and not changed to "high 5" as management wants?
- ❖ 129. Can you explain why the Jan. 2022 Cola is based on the July 2021 CPI-W (1967-100) of 797.661, instead of the Jan. 2021 CPI-W (1967-100) of 706.447 that was indicated as the "Base Index" in the contract?

FORMULA OFFICE:

- ❖ 49. If management cannot produce the required documentation needed to justify being a formula office, will they still be able to change relief days?
- ❖ 59. Is the proposed language regarding requirements for implementation of the formula in Article 9.2.C.5.b, in addition to the current language such as the Williamstown Step 4 or in place of the existing language?
- ❖ 88. Is there any language that indicates when an office goes OFF the formula?
- ❖ 101. I work in a small office with two K routes and one J route. The office is a

formula Office. Is there any requirement to create a PTF position under the proposed language?

- ❖ 108. Our office has posted for auxiliary route to have an RCA multiple times. Will this count towards the 4 postings? We are short no RCAs, just have never hired one for the small auxiliary route.
- ❖ 135. It states that when management has determined the need, and can meet the requirements, that the office will go Formula. Is there any circumstance that the office would be FORCED to go formula even if the postmaster/ management doesn't want to?
- ❖ 139. The job posting requirements to create a formula office, does this new language take away the whole idea that management needs to make every effort to hire relief carrier's i.e. advertising, sending out flyers etc.?

HIGHER LEVEL ASSIGNMENTS:

- ❖ 5. I am working a higher-level position as a 204-B. Will I have to return to my route as soon as the contract is signed?
- ❖ 26. Will the 180-Day limit on higher-level assignments apply to a regular carrier who serves as a 204-B for 1-2 days per week?
- ❖ 27. How does the union keep track of who is on a higher-level assignment?

HOLIDAYS:

- ❖ 40. Will a new DACA Code be established for a regular carrier who chooses to have annual leave credited instead of holiday pay for working a holiday?
- ❖ 42. When a carrier works their holiday and chooses to have their annual leave credited, can this leave be used during the guarantee period? (For example, X days earned cannot be used during guarantee period)
- ❖ 61. Since Juneteenth became a National Holiday last year and we had to work, will we be compensated for working that day?
- ❖ 93. Holidays Reference Article 11 Section 2 F. If a junior carrier is not on the Relief Day Work List and is forced to work the holiday under option 3, will they be credited an extra vacation day to use at their request?

LEAVE REQUEST/APPROVAL:

- ❖ 112. The 60-day window for submitting leave requests is totally unacceptable. Why would we ever agree to something like that?
- ❖ 3. Will sick leave be affected by the new language on leave submission?
- ❖ 6. When does the three-day time limit for management to approve or disapprove

leave requests begin?

- ❖ 7. Who determines if a leave request meets the criteria for an “exceptional circumstance”?
- ❖ 8. What if I am submitting a leave request for a date that is coming up sooner than 3 days, such as for tomorrow or the next day?
- ❖ 9. What is considered Close of Business for leave requests?
- ❖ 10. Will rural carriers be able to submit leave requests on LiteBlue through eLRA?
- ❖ 11. When submitting a leave request for more than one day in a row, such as a weeks’ vacation, do I now have to submit a separate 3971 for each day, 60 days from the day requested?
- ❖ 12. Will previously approved leave requests be honored?
- ❖ 14. Will the new language on leave requests apply to leave for Union Conventions?
- ❖ 24. When using LiteBlue to request leave how will we know when a supervisor has “signed “it?
- ❖ 28. Will there be anything to clarify what qualifies as exceptional circumstance for leave submission?
- ❖ 29. If the RCA submits leave for 1 hour and is approved, is that RCA considered unavailable for the entire day?
- ❖ 30. Does submitting a leave request when having a leave balance in excess of the maximum annual carryover limit qualify as an "exceptional circumstance"?
- ❖ 31. How will regular carrier seniority be determined when it comes to considering leave requests submitted on the same day?
- ❖ 44. When requesting leave more than 60 days out, is the leave approved if management fails to return the 3971 within the 3-day timeline?
- ❖ 65. Could my RCA be granted annual leave and I be required to work my relief day to cover it?
- ❖ 67. If one carrier submits their 3971 at 8:00 AM and another submits at 1:00 PM on the same day, who gets priority?
- ❖ 69. How would we prove that management did not return a leave slip within the three-day limitation in the Tentative Agreement?
- ❖ 70. With the 60 days for putting in leave request, is the day you want your leave to start day 60? Or is the day before that day 60?
- ❖ 76. Article 10.2 - Leave replacements are unavailable to cover leave requests if during their first 2 pay periods in the office. Is this saying that a newly appointed RCA on their sub of record route will lose those hours to another RCA until the 2 pay periods have been completed?

- ❖ 80. I'm in a small office (2 routes). What if the OIC is unavailable or on leave during the time I wish to submit a leave request? She has said before that the clerk in charge is not authorized to accept or sign off on leave requests in her absence. Is this correct?
- ❖ 85. Will there be a minimum number of days/hours prior to the date of absence that you may request leave, even if the schedule has already been made?
- ❖ 87. I work in a RMPO and we send leave slips to management via US mail or with the truck driver, they send them back the same way. Sometimes it takes 2-3 days to get to them or back to us from when they send them out. How does the three-day leave approval work for us?
- ❖ 90. Can you give an example, with a calendar, of this 60-day rule for leave requests?
- ❖ 92. If I request annual leave 60 days out and it's approved right away, and I decide 2 weeks before the start of my leave that I want to cancel it am I allowed to do this?
- ❖ 99. If a junior carrier puts in a vacation request, and 3 days later a more senior carrier puts in a request for the same days, which request would have priority?
- ❖ 104. Now that RCA'S are going to get leave. If a regular carrier is asking for the same days who has priority?
- ❖ 105. The language for granting leave to regular carriers and leave replacements is different. Can you please explain?
- ❖ 118. Will RCA employees be allowed to use their accumulated annual leave to take off Sundays/Holiday's that they may be scheduled to work?
- ❖ 125. Can I still submit a leave request for an "extenuating circumstance" more than 60 days out if I don't have a receipt to show it is a prepaid vacation?
- ❖ 126. Regarding 60-day leave submittal: Some of the wording to other questions/answers makes it sound like management won't even accept a leave slip if it is over 60 days from the date requested. If I am submitting a leave slip and I believe it is an "extenuating circumstance", should that be notated on the remarks section of the leave slip so management can approve/deny it more than 60 days out?
- ❖ 138. For an extenuating circumstances or pre-paid vacation. Would a gas card be sufficient?

MAIL COUNT/RRECS:

- ❖ 1. If this Tentative Agreement is not ratified, will RRECS still be implemented?
- ❖ 2. If this Tentative Agreement is not ratified, will there be an opportunity to renegotiate the standards and procedures in RRECS?

- ❖ 136. What language is being deleted under Article 9.2 C. Evaluated Compensation?

MOUs:

- ❖ 37. Who is going to be in the Rural delivery Task Force?
- ❖ 132. Will the soon to be created "RCAM" be available on the website for all members to access it?

PTFs:

- ❖ 15. Will a PTF position be required in offices with less than 5 k routes?
- ❖ 16. Will current PTF positions be eliminated?
- ❖ 18. Will creation of a PTF position be required in an office that is currently a formula office, with no PTF position?
- ❖ 21. I have been working as an RCA on an auxiliary route 6 days a week for 3 years. Will I be able to be converted to a PTF?
- ❖ 33. What is the difference between an RCA and PTF?
- ❖ 56. Will PTF's be required to work in other offices, if not scheduled/no work in their home office?
- ❖ 72. Proposed Article 30 sub section "f" states that RCAs (with one year of continuous service as an RCA) with longest period of continuous service as an RCA will/should be awarded the PTF assignment. Does this mean that if an RCA transfers to a different office which subsequently led them to lose seniority can still be considered for the PTF position over the current RCAs in the current office if he/she has more continuous years of service than the present RCAs in front of him/her?
- ❖ 75. Article 30.2.A - If there are no RCAs in the office who are willing to convert to PTF, and management fills the position with a district-wide posting, who has the seniority in the office?
- ❖ 81. When a PTF position is posted district-wide, are regular carriers within the district eligible to bid?
- ❖ 103. If an RCA doesn't bid on the PTF position in their office, will they drop in seniority when a full-time spot comes up for bid?
- ❖ 131. What happens to a newly appointed PTF if the formula office goes off the formula once RCAs are hired?
- ❖ 133. Under the tentative agreement a formula office with, (for example) 24 K Routes would be required to create two PTF positions within 60 days of ratification. If any time after those 60 days a new K Route was created increasing the total number of K Routes to 25, in what time frame would management then be

required to create a third PTF position?

- ❖ 134. We deliver Amazon on Sundays at our office. Do PTF's still work on the rotating list for this?
- ❖ 140. Would it be possible to change the definition and require a PTF to only be assigned to one K route?

RATIFICATION PROCESS:

- ❖ 32. What happens if this Tentative Agreement is not ratified by the membership?
- ❖ 36. When does this Tentative Agreement go into effect?
- ❖ 38. If I am not available when my state ratification meeting is being held, can I attend another session?
- ❖ 39. When do the ballots come out and when do they have to be received by?
- ❖ 55. What is the cut-off date for someone to become a member of the NRLCA and be sent a ratification ballot?
- ❖ 60. Why are there no Ratification Meetings scheduled to be held within each state?
- ❖ 66. Can we vote by mail?
- ❖ 73. I have never done ZOOM. How do I log on for my ratification meeting?
- ❖ 74. In reading the response to question 137, I believe that binding resolution failed. You have it marked in red as if it passed but when you go to page 493 of the magazine top left and read it, it failed.
- ❖ 78. Will the USPS Supervisors have knowledge of the New Tentative Agreement?
- ❖ 83. I have a Little League board meeting during the time for my state's Ratification Meeting. Is it just a vote like sign on and say yes or no or is it more and if it is more can I join a later meeting?
- ❖ 100. When are we voting on the new contract?
- ❖ 114. Is there a protocol and deadline to contact the NRLCA if a member did not receive a ballot in order to receive another?
- ❖ 115. On the envelope to return the ballot, it says State Affiliation-_____. What goes in this blank?
- ❖ 116. There are rumors that with the ratification of this contract that all routes will be cut to 8 hours per day. I am not finding this anywhere. Can you dispel this rumor?

RCAM:

- ❖ 4. The "RCAM" is mentioned several times. What is that?

RCA LEAVE:

- ❖ 13. If an RCA works only 19 hours in a pay period, are those hours carried over to the next period for the purpose of crediting annual leave?
- ❖ 19. Will the leave earned by RCAs be retroactive to May 2021?
- ❖ 20. What happens to the RCA's annual leave when they make regular carrier?
- ❖ 41. Will RCAs earn annual leave based on actual work hours or evaluated hours?
- ❖ 50. If an RCA can use leave in one-hour increments and if they earned the maximum 13 days a year (104 hours), is it correct that they could take up to 104 days off by only using 1 hour of leave per day?
- ❖ 51. If an RCA chose to use only one hour of leave, would the remaining hours off that day count as LWOP and would that affect how much leave they earn?
- ❖ 52. Since RCAs will be in a leave earning status, will RCAs now be required to use their accumulated annual leave upon calling in for an unscheduled absence?
- ❖ 54. Do Aux Carriers only build leave hours from the hours worked on their Aux route?
- ❖ 64. If RCAs work in another craft (city route or clerk work) do those hours count toward leave accumulation?
- ❖ 89. Why would an RCA not be able to carry leave over on conversion to career status, as they currently are able to do?
- ❖ 102. For RCA's is there a maximum number of hours they can earn per pay period. Let's say they work 60 hours each week. Are they credited 6 hours of annual for that paycheck?
- ❖ 122. Since we all know RCAs work in other crafts to supplement their hours, will they be earning leave for such work?
- ❖ 127. Will all rural carriers be allowed to hire a driver if they get a DUI and lose their driving privileges since all RCAs will be in leave earning status if the new contract is ratified?
- ❖ 128. Will RCAs be required to use part/all of their accrued leave in order to be granted their leave request?

RCA TRAINING:

- ❖ 25. Is the additional pay still available in first 5 pay periods for new hires?
- ❖ 43. If an RCA is trained 3 days and then scheduled to work my relief day, and I take no time off after training, are they only to be scheduled 1 day per week (my relief day) for their first two pay periods in the office?
- ❖ 48. With Article 10.2.A stating that an RCA in the first 2 pay periods is unavailable to cover leave requests, does that mean they cannot cover leave requests on their

primary route assignment during that period?

- ❖ 53. Under the Tentative Agreement, can newly hired RCA's train on their secondary or other routes within the office during their first two pay periods after completing academy?
- ❖ 76. Article 10.2 - Leave replacements are unavailable to cover leave requests if during their first 2 pay periods in the office. Is this saying that a newly appointed RCA on their sub of record route will lose those hours to another RCA until the 2 pay periods have been completed?

RCA WORK IN OTHER OFFICES:

- ❖ 22. Will RCAs only be required to work other offices to cover a relief day?
- ❖ 35. Will RCAs be required to work in other offices to provide auxiliary assistance when there is no contractual work for them in their home office?
- ❖ 45. What is the definition of Local Commuting Distance for requiring RCAs to report to another office?
- ❖ 47. How far in advance can an RCA be scheduled to work in another office and be considered unavailable in their home office?
- ❖ 56. Will PTF's be required to work in other offices, if not scheduled/no work in their home office?
- ❖ 57. Regarding leave replacements from other offices being able to work in my office before carriers on the RDWL: Will regular carriers from other offices on the RDWL be asked to work so that their leave replacements can work in mine?
- ❖ 58. If an RCA is already scheduled to work a regular route in another office, are they considered unavailable for their assigned office?
- ❖ 82. The Tentative Agreement says if a leave replacement is scheduled to case and carry a regular rural route in their assigned office, they are considered unavailable to work in another office. Is that leave replacement required to report to another office upon completion of their assigned route in the same day?
- ❖ 84. Does the new language on RCAs being sent to other offices settle the pending Step 4 on that subject, or is the Step 4 still on the table?
- ❖ 86. Will RCAs have the option to volunteer to work in another office after completing a regular route in their assigned office so long as they do not exceed 12 hours in a day?
- ❖ 94. After a leave replacement cases and carries a regular rural route can they be forced to give assistance on routes in a different branch of the same office?
- ❖ 95. How will it be determined which leave replacement carrier within a 50-mile

radius of an office with an open route is to be selected?

- ❖ 97. When leave replacements are mandated to work an open route in another office will there be a list, so they are rotated similar to the Sunday/Holiday work list?
- ❖ 98. Will management be required to ask the regular carrier if they want leave for the day prior to their assigned relief carrier being scheduled to another office for the same day?
- ❖ 111. In regard to RCA mileage for travel to another office. Are we supposed to subtract home to office and office to home, for your home office when traveling to other offices when assigned?
- ❖ 119. Can an RCA assigned to an auxiliary route be required to go to other offices after their auxiliary route is completed now or in the new potential agreement?
- ❖ 123. If an RCA has learned 3 routes in their home office (according to article 30.2.C.2), can they be required to learn/carry a route in a nearby neighboring office to cover a relief day if the RCA doesn't want to carry in that neighboring office?
- ❖ 124. If an RCA knows 3 routes in their home office (according to Article 30.2.C.2), and they ALSO know a route in a nearby neighboring office, can they be required to cover that routes' relief day if the RCA doesn't want to work in that neighboring office?
- ❖ 130. In regard to Question #123, am I wrong or isn't there a step 4 settlement that says RCAs cannot be required to be trained or utilized on more than 3 routes? (G95R-4G-C 97105440)
- ❖ 137. Does the term available relief carrier mean a carrier that has received training or been utilized as defined in Article 30.2.D.3.

1. If this Tentative Agreement is not ratified, will RRECS still be implemented?

A. Yes, both parties were mandated by the 2012 Clarke Interest Arbitration Award to implement this system.

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2. If this Tentative Agreement is not ratified, will there be an opportunity to renegotiate the standards and procedures in RRECS?

A. Absolutely not. The standards imposed by the Engineering Panel are not negotiable. The parties are bound by the Interest Arbitration Decision of Arbitrator Clarke in 2012.

RRECS will be implemented whether the contract is ratified or not.

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3. Will sick leave be affected by the new language on leave submission?

A. Sick leave will continue to be granted in accordance with ELM 513.

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4. The “RCAM” is mentioned several times. What is that?

A. The Rural Contract Administration Manual (RCAM) has been under development for some time. It will mirror the manual used by the other crafts and offer detailed, joint explanations of contract language based on previous Step 4 Settlements, Arbitrations, and interpretations of the parties. As soon as new changes are added to include this Tentative Agreement, the manual will be published for carriers, stewards, and managers to use in settling disputes at the lowest level. This manual will replace our current “Analysis of Changes” documents.

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5. I am working a higher-level position as a 204-B. Will I have to return to my route as soon as the contract is signed?

A. No. The 180-day limit established in the Agreement will begin upon signing of the Agreement after ratification.

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6. When does the three-day time limit for management to approve or disapprove leave requests begin?

A. The time begins on the day you submit the 3971 and receive a signed copy back from management indicating they have received the request. The time expires at the close of business on day three afterward. The day the 3971 is submitted does not count towards the 3 days. The next day is day one. If day three is a Sunday or the carrier is not scheduled on that day, the time limit is extended until the carrier reports on their next

scheduled day. EXAMPLE: 3971 submitted on Tuesday and carrier gets the receipt copy. Answer must be received in writing by COB on Friday. EXAMPLE: 3971 submitted on Thursday with receipt, answer must be received when carrier reports on Monday. Relief days or Holidays would be applied the same as Sunday.

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7. Who determines if a leave request meets the criteria for an “exceptional circumstance”?

A. Ultimately, it is management’s decision to approve or deny leave. That decision is always subject to a grievance. The parties will clarify in the Rural Contract Administration Manual (RCAM) some of the events or situations that would qualify.

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8. What if I am submitting a leave request for a date that is coming up sooner than 3 days, such as for tomorrow or the next day?

A. This is unchanged. For short notice leave requests, management will need to provide an approval or denial before the time of the leave requested.

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9. What is considered Close of Business for leave requests?

A. 5:00 PM local time.

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10. Will rural carriers be able to submit leave requests on LiteBlue through eLRA?

A. Yes, nothing has changed with this submission method. Leave requests submitted on eLRA after Close of Business, Monday through Friday will be considered submitted the next day. Requests submitted after Close of Business on Saturday or on Sunday will be considered submitted on Monday.

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11. When submitting a leave request for more than one day in a row, such as a weeks' vacation, do I now have to submit a separate 3971 for each day, 60 days from the day requested?

A. No, leave may be submitted 60 days from the date or service week requested. When requesting a week, you would submit 60 days from the beginning the period of leave and include all of the dates requested, including relief days, just like we do now.

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12. Will previously approved leave requests be honored?

A. Yes, Article 10.2.C is unchanged.

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13. If an RCA works only 19 hours in a pay period, are those hours carried over to the next period for the purpose of crediting annual leave?

A. Yes, this has always been the case for RCAs in a leave earning status. See ELM 512.312 (https://about.usps.com/manuals/elm/html/elmc5_002.htm).

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14. Will the new language on leave requests apply to leave for Union Conventions?

A. Article 24.2 is unchanged. Leave for Union Conventions should be submitted to management as soon as practicable.

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15. Will a PTF position be required in offices with less than 5 k routes?

A. The new language requires the creation of PTF positions equal to 10% of the number of K routes in the office. The calculation is rounded upward. This only applies to offices in which management has implemented the formula. Management would also be required to meet the provisions of Article 9.2.C.5 regarding the documentation of hiring efforts before implementing the formula. IF the formula was implemented in an office

with fewer than 5 routes, no, a PTF position would not be required to be created. It would be up to management's discretion whether to create one or not.

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16. Will current PTF positions be eliminated?

A. No.

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17. Are the COLAS rolled into our salary or are they back-pay only?

A. All COLAs become part of our permanent salary going forward.

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18. Will creation of a PTF position be required in an office that is currently a formula office, with no PTF position?

A. Yes. Current formula offices will have 60 days from the signing of the Agreement to comply with the requirement to have PTF positions equal to 10% of the K routes in the office. If the current formula office already has more than this number, no action would be required.

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19. Will the leave earned by RCAs be retroactive to May 2021?

A. No. RCAs will begin earning leave according to new Article 10.5.B. Their leave will accumulate from that point forward.

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20. What happens to the RCA's annual leave when they make regular carrier?

A. At the time of conversion to regular carrier, all accumulated annual leave will be paid out.

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21. I have been working as an RCA on an auxiliary route 6 days a week for 3 years. Will I be able to be converted to a PTF?

A. PTF positions will only be created in offices where the formula has been implemented. There is no automatic conversion of RCAs based on years of service. However, the new language will result in the creation of approximately 1900 new PTF positions in current formula offices. Those new positions will be posted for bid first in the local office for RCAs with at least one year of service as an RCA. Any unfilled PTF positions will then be posted district-wide for all PTFs and RCAs with one year of service as an RCA. We anticipate there will be opportunities for more-senior RCAs to be awarded these new PTF positions.

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22. Will RCAs only be required to work other offices to cover a relief day?

A. Not necessarily. The new language establishes that an RCA who is scheduled to case and carry a regular route is not available to be assigned to another office. An RCA may be required to work in another office if all other contractual provisions are followed.

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23. How do you figure out what the COLA will be for steps 1-14 on table 2?

A. COLA for those Steps 1-14 are proportional to the COLA received by Step 15. The simple math is to divide the appropriate Step (1-14) by the salary in Step 15 and multiply by the Step 15 COLA.

EXAMPLE: 40 Hour route, Step 7, Table 2 current salary is \$50,762

40 Hour route, Step 15 current salary is \$63,096

$50,762 \text{ divided by } 63,096 = .80$

$.80 \times (\text{Calculated Step 15 COLA}) = \text{COLA for Step 7}$

Of course, this math varies depending on what Step you calculate.

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24. When using LiteBlue to request leave how will we know when a supervisor has “signed “it?

A. The confirmation you receive from eLRA will show the date and time accepted. See question 10 above.

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25. Is the additional pay still available in first 5 pay periods for new hires?

A. Yes, Article 9.2.M is unchanged except the addition of the new language.

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26. Will the 180-Day limit on higher-level assignments apply to a regular carrier who serves as a 204-B for 1-2 days per week?

A. No, the limit will apply to those carriers assigned to a higher level via Form 50 or those who **should** have a Form 50 issued for placement in a higher level after 30 days in the position. Neither party will tolerate game playing with the assignment/reassignment issues.

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27. How does the union keep track of who is on a higher-level assignment?

A. Article 25.3 requires the District Representative to be notified.

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28. Will there be anything to clarify what qualifies as exceptional circumstance for leave submission?

A. Special circumstances would be any that require approval further in advance than 60 days. Most things are obvious, such as weddings, graduations, pre-paid vacations, travel tickets, etc. There is no complete list.

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29. If the RCA submits leave for 1 hour and is approved, is that RCA considered unavailable for the entire day?

A. Yes. This is no different than it has been for RCAs in a leave earning status for the last several decades. RCAs have always been allowed to use leave in one-hour increments.

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30. Does submitting a leave request when having a leave balance in excess of the maximum annual carryover limit qualify as an "exceptional circumstance"?

A. No. Article 10.2.B would still be applicable.

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31. How will regular carrier seniority be determined when it comes to considering leave requests submitted on the same day?

A. In-office seniority will apply. Article 12.2.A and B will apply. A current seniority list should be posted on the bulletin board and provided to the Union as per Article 12.2.A.2.

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32. What happens if this Tentative Agreement is not ratified by the membership?

A. The parties would return to collective bargaining. If unsuccessful, mediation and/or interest arbitration would follow.

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33. What is the difference between an RCA and PTF?

A. A PTF rural carrier enjoys all the benefits of a regular carrier including full retirement credit under the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS), Federal Employees Health Benefits Plans, Thrift Saving Plan (TSP) with matching contributions from USPS up to 5% of gross salary, Step Increases, Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI), and Flexible Spending Accounts. PTFs are also considered before RCAs in the awarding of regular routes in the office.

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34. Is there anything in the new contract about allowing regular rural carriers to cash out annual leave?

A. No.

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35. Will RCAs be required to work in other offices to provide auxiliary assistance when there is no contractual work for them in their home office?

A. Yes, if not scheduled to case and carry a regular route, RCAs may be required to work in other offices within the local commuting distance.

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36. When does this Tentative Agreement go into effect?

A. The contract is not effective until ratified by the membership and signed by the parties. The current timeline would put signing sometime in mid-March.

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37. Who is going to be in the Rural delivery Task Force?

A. NRLCA members of that Task Force will be appointed by the National Board. There is no limitation on who the Board may appoint.

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38. If I am not available when my state ratification meeting is being held, can I attend another session?

A. Yes, but please be respectful of the fact that the times were set aside for the members of a particular state. If at all possible, please try to log in during the timeframe allotted for your state.

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39. When do the ballots come out and when do they have to be received by?

A. Ballots will be mailed via First Class Mail February 7-9, 2022. Deadline for receipt of completed ballot is noon eastern time on March 11, 2022.

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40. Will a new DACA Code be established for a regular carrier who chooses to have annual leave credited instead of holiday pay for working a holiday?

A. Yes, that is the main reason for the implementation delay until Presidents' Day 2023.

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41. Will RCAs earn annual leave based on actual work hours or evaluated hours?

A. RCAs earn leave based on hours actually worked, up to 40 per week.

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42. When a carrier works their holiday and chooses to have their annual leave credited, can this leave be used during the guarantee period? (For example, X days earned cannot be used during guarantee period)

A. Yes. From the Tentative Agreement: "Deferred holiday leave credited in accordance with Section 2.B. or 2.C., above, will be subject to all applicable rules for requesting and scheduling annual leave and shall be combined with annual leave and counted as annual for the purposes of annual leave carryover." It will be treated like any other earned annual leave. No limitation during the guarantee period.

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43. If an RCA is trained 3 days and then scheduled to work my relief day, and I take no time off after training, are they only to be scheduled 1 day per week (my relief day) for their first two pay periods in the office?

A. Yes. However, they could still be utilized to carry parcels on any other routes on Sundays and holidays.

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44. When requesting leave more than 60 days out, is the leave approved if management fails to return the 3971 within the 3-day timeline?

A. Only if the leave request fell into the category of special circumstances which require advanced approval. If not a special circumstance request, management should not accept the request.

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45. What is the definition of Local Commuting Distance for requiring RCAs to report to another office?

A. There is no change to current language: Local Travel is defined as travel to a temporary duty station within a 50-mile radius of your permanent duty station. When leave replacements are required to travel to a temporary duty station that is within local travel distance of their permanent duty station, there is an entitlement to mileage reimbursement. In accordance with Handbook F-15, section 7-1.1.1, the mileage will be reimbursed for any mileage that exceeds the distance between home and the permanent duty station. If the mileage is less than that between home and the permanent duty station, mileage reimbursement cannot be claimed.

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46. If I was off work completely on LWOP with an OWCP claim during the period covered by retroactive wage increases, will I receive retroactive pay?

A. No, if you are unable to work at all, due to an on-the-job injury, your compensation is frozen as of the date of injury.

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47. How far in advance can an RCA be scheduled to work in another office and be

considered unavailable in their home office?

A. First, work in another office is always secondary to work in the assigned office. Second, an RCA should not be assigned to another office if they are contractually entitled and/or scheduled to case and carry a regular route in their own office. Finally, all the contractual provisions of Article 30.2.D. would need to be followed in both the assigned office and the other office before an RCA can be scheduled or mandated to work in another office.

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48. With Article 10.2.A stating that an RCA in the first 2 pay periods is unavailable to cover leave requests, does that mean they cannot cover leave requests on their primary route assignment during that period?

A. No. The whole idea of the change is to keep a new RCA on their primary route during the first 2 pay periods in the office. They would be available and entitled to cover any leave or relief days on their primary route.

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49. If management cannot produce the required documentation needed to justify being a formula office, will they still be able to change relief days?

A. No, if management has not met the requirements in the Tentative Agreement, the formula will not be implemented. However, this has no effect on current formula offices.

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50. If an RCA can use leave in one-hour increments and if they earned the maximum 13 days a year (104 hours), is it correct that they could take up to 104 days off by only using 1 hour of leave per day?

A. No, for several reasons:

1. Annual Leave for leave replacements is nothing new. PTFs have been earning leave since the position was created. RCAs on auxiliary routes and vacant routes have been earning leave for decades. The use of leave in one-hour increments for leave

replacements has always been in effect.

2. RCAs and PTFs only earn leave for hours worked as they work the hours. It is not advanced at the beginning of the year like regular carriers.
3. RCAs and PTFs do not earn leave when on leave. Leave is only credited based on actual work hours.
4. An RCA or PTF who takes off 104 days of the year would most likely not have worked enough to earn 104 hours of leave.
5. RCAs and PTFs submit a request for the day(s) off and the number of hours of leave requested.
6. All RCA and PTF leave is subject to management approval based on sufficient coverage in the office. If their services are required, the leave will not be approved.
7. All RCA leave requests would be considered after requests submitted by regular carriers and PTFs on the same day.

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51. If an RCA chose to use only one hour of leave, would the remaining hours off that day count as LWOP and would that affect how much leave they earn?

A. No, there is no such thing as LWOP for RCAs. They are either scheduled and working or not. RCAs only earn leave for the hours they work. They are not advanced leave at the beginning of the year like regular carriers, so there is never any leave to “take back” as when a regular carrier uses a pay period worth of LWOP, and USPS takes back the leave that was advanced for that pay period.

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52. Since RCA's will be in a leave earning status, will RCAs now be required to use their accumulated annual leave upon calling in for an unscheduled absence?

A. No. Nothing has changed with regard to how RCAs use leave. As always, management may consider this an incident of unavailability, but the RCA is not required to use leave.

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53. Under the Tentative Agreement, can newly hired RCA's train on their secondary or other routes within the office during their first two pay periods after completing

academy?

A. No. The whole idea of the change is to limit new RCAs to their assigned route during the first two pay period in the office.

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54. Do Aux Carriers only build leave hours from the hours worked on their Aux route?

A. "Aux Carriers" are RCAs (Designation 79). Under the Tentative Agreement, ALL RCAs will earn **annual** leave for all hours worked. RCAs serving vacant routes, routes on which the regular carrier is on extended leave, and auxiliary routes (Designation 74 and 79) will also continue to earn **sick** leave under the same formula for all hours worked on their **assigned regular or auxiliary route**. There is no change to the way Des 79 aux carriers earn AL/SL leave while serving the assigned aux route under the tentative agreement. They will additionally earn annual leave for all hours worked on other routes.

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55. What is the cut-off date for someone to become a member of the NRLCA and be sent a ratification ballot?

A. To be eligible to vote in the ratification process you must be a member in good standing by Tuesday February 1, 2022, 12:00 midnight EST.

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56. Will PTF's be required to work in other offices, if not scheduled/no work in their home office?

A. Yes, they could be. PTFs are considered leave replacements under Article 30.2.D.

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57. Regarding leave replacements from other offices being able to work in my office before carriers on the RDWL: Will regular carriers from other offices on the RDWL be asked to work so that their leave replacements can work in mine?

A. No. There is no disagreement between the parties on this issue. That would be a violation under both the current language **and** the proposed language. The RCA is entitled to work the relief day of their assigned route. If the regular carrier works the relief day as per Article 8.5, the RCA should be scheduled on another route **in the delivery unit**.

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58. If an RCA is already scheduled to work a regular route in another office, are they considered unavailable for their assigned office?

A. Yes. If all contractual provisions have been followed and the RCA is scheduled to carry a regular route in another office, they are considered unavailable for their own office that day.

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59. Is the proposed language regarding requirements for implementation of the formula in Article 9.2.C.5.b, in addition to the current language such as the Williamstown Step 4 or in place of the existing language?

A. The proposed language would be the only prerequisite for implementation of the formula. Management will have to document a minimum of four (4) hiring lists within the last six (6) months **before** changing relief days. They would also be required to create PTF positions equal to 10% of the number of K routes in the office.

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60. Why are there no Ratification Meetings scheduled to be held within each state?

A. There is a ratification meeting scheduled to be held in each state, the specific dates and times can be found in the special edition magazine and on the NRLCA website. Binding Resolution Number 1, passed at the 2019 National Convention, directed the National Board to seek new technologies for interacting with the membership to save on transportation and other costs and specifically mentioned Ratification Meetings. That direction, along with widespread concerns about the current pandemic and the travel and venue issues associated with it, led the Board to choose the ZOOM platform to reach

as many members as possible. The meetings will all be interactive.

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61. Since Juneteenth became a National Holiday last year and we had to work, will we be compensated for working that day?

A. Although Juneteenth was declared a National Holiday in 2021, the Postal Service did not observe the day, stating that the declaration came too late for them to make changes to operations. The Holiday was not part of any Postal Unions' collective bargaining agreement at the time, so we will not be compensated for that holiday. Juneteenth is part of this Tentative Agreement.

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62. I am a regular carrier. I am somewhat confused as I haven't received a pay raise since November 21, 2021.

A. Actually, regular rural carrier salaries have not changed since February 27, 2021, when we received the last COLA from the 2018-2021 Contract. **If** this Tentative Agreement is ratified, we will receive a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) increase in annual salary of \$1935 effective August 28, 2021, an additional 1.3% increase in salary effective November 20, 2021, and another COLA effective after release of the January 2022 CPI-W.

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63. When will we be able to “buy back” our time as RCAs for retirement calculation purposes?

A. That issue is not contractual and not open to negotiations between the Union and USPS. It will literally take an Act of Congress to change the law to allow Federal Employees to buy back their part-time (non-career) service. Please contact your congressman and ask them to co-sponsor House Resolution 4268 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/4268>). Further information and a sample letter are available at www.nrlca.org (<https://www.nrlca.org/>) under the Legislative (<https://www.nrlca.org/Content/RecentArticles>) tab.

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64. If RCAs work in another craft (city route or clerk work) do those hours count toward leave accumulation?

A. Yes. All work hours paid to RCAs will count toward leave accumulation.

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65. Could my RCA be granted annual leave and I be required to work my relief day to cover it?

A. Management has never been obligated to pay overtime in order to cover annual leave. The leave request would likely be denied, unless you agreed to work according to the language in Article 9.2.C.5.j. This section allows a regular carrier to agree to work the relief day in place of the assigned RCA and be compensated with an X Day scheduled by mutual agreement with management.

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66. Can we vote by mail?

A. That is the only way you can vote. From the NRLCA Constitution, Article XI: Section 2. Ratification Vote. *A ballot vote of the Bargaining Unit Members of the Association shall determine the ratification of the proposed National Agreement. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall mail a ballot by First Class mail to Bargaining Unit Members. The ballot shall clearly define a YES vote as "in favor of" ratification and a NO vote as "opposed to" ratification. The ballot shall also clearly indicate a deadline for receipt in the National Office, as determined by the National Board.*

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67. If one carrier submits their 3971 at 8:00 AM and another submits at 1:00 PM on the same day, who gets priority?

A. The **time** submitted means nothing. All leave slips submitted on the same day by close-of-business will be considered in order of seniority.

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68. Will the retroactive salary increases be applied to the calculation of my “high three” for retirement?

A. Yes.

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69. How would we prove that management did not return a leave slip within the three-day limitation in the Tentative Agreement?

A. If there is a question, it would be incumbent on management to prove they **did** return the slip to you within the time limit. Most likely, managers will start asking us to sign acknowledging return of the slip, just like we should be asking them to sign acknowledging acceptance of the slip when turned in.

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70. With the 60 days for putting in leave request, is the day you want your leave to start day 60? Or is the day before that day 60?

A. The first day of the leave requested would be day 60. So, if submitting a request for leave beginning October 1, 2022, the first day the request would be accepted is August 2, 2022.

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71. I was recently informed that the APWU has negotiated for their employer contribution to health insurance to be 95%. Why isn't our union pursuing a better rate for our rural letter carrier members?

A. **You were misinformed.** The 95% Postal Service contribution to premiums applies only to the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP). **It does not apply to any other FEHB Plans.** Reimbursement for those plans is 72%. Identical to all other Postal Unions. The APWU CDHP is a very low cost and very high deductible plan offered by APWU to its members. The cost to USPS to pay 95% of the premiums for this APWU

CDHP plan is \$495.44 per pay period for Family Coverage. The USPS pays \$574.13 per pay period (72%) toward Family Coverage under the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan and Blue Cross/Blue Shield Family Coverage. This is an additional \$2045.94 per year additional reimbursement from the USPS. 95% reimbursement for the APWU CDHP equals **less** money from USPS.

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72. Proposed Article 30 sub section “f” states that RCAs (with one year of continuous service as an RCA) with longest period of continuous service as an RCA will/should be awarded the PTF assignment. Does this mean that if an RCA transfers to a different office which subsequently led them to lose seniority can still be considered for the PTF position over the current RCAs in the current office if he/she has more continuous years of service than the present RCAs in front of him/her?

A. Sub section “f” pertains to awarding a PTF position posted District Wide (in sub-section “e”), **not** in the office. Yes, on District Wide postings, total time as an RCA is considered. This is not a change from the present language.

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73. I have never done ZOOM. How do I log on for my ratification meeting?

A. The links to the Ratification Meetings will be posted for members at www.nrlca.org (<https://www.nrlca.org/>). You will just need to click on the link provided and the ZOOM program will do the rest, or, without a computer, you can call the phone number provided and enter the meeting ID which will also be provided at the link to your state’s meeting. The link to the ZOOM meeting will also work with tablets and smart phones.

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74. In reading the response to question 60, I believe that binding resolution failed. You have it marked in red as if it passed but when you go to page 493 of the magazine top left and read it, it failed.

A. Binding Resolution Number One at the 2019 National Convention passed. See page 512 of the Convention Proceedings. Page 493, as you referenced, is the record of the

debate and vote on Constitutional Amendment Number One. These are not the same thing.

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75. Article 30.2.A - If there are no RCAS in the office who are willing to convert to PTF, and management fills the position with a district-wide posting, who has the seniority in the office?

A. PTFs are always senior to any RCAs in the office and are next in line to become regular carriers.

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76. Article 10.2 - Leave replacements are unavailable to cover leave requests if during their first 2 pay periods in the office. Is this saying that a newly appointed RCA on their sub of record route will lose those hours to another RCA until the 2 pay periods have been completed?

A. Absolutely not. They are entitled to work their assigned route only—this includes any relief days or leave days taken by their regular carrier.

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77. The new contract says rural carriers will be getting 1.3% general wage increase for each year of the agreement. How is this true if all 3 years you want to give us \$792 each year?

A. From the Tentative Agreement: Effective 11/20/21; 11/19/22; and 11/18/23, the basic annual salary for each step shall be increased by an amount equal to 1.3% of the appropriate **February 27, 2021** salary schedule. All increases are based on the same date, so all increases are equal depending on the evaluation and Step of the salary. **The example of \$792 was based on a 40-hour route at Step 7 of Table One.**

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78. Will the USPS Supervisors have knowledge of the New Tentative Agreement?

A. Not until it is ratified and signed by the parties. It is still a Tentative Agreement.

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79. Did the Union propose Thrift Savings Plan participation for RCAs with matching funds from USPS?

A. Yes, the UPSP flatly refused the proposal with or without matching funds.

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80. I'm in a small office (2 routes). What if the OIC is unavailable or on leave during the time I wish to submit a leave request? She has said before that the clerk in charge is not authorized to accept or sign off on leave requests in her absence. Is this correct?

A. No. Management will have to designate someone to accept and approve leave requests in their absence.

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81. When a PTF position is posted district-wide, are regular carriers within the district eligible to bid?

A. No. No change from the present language.

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82. The Tentative Agreement says if a leave replacement is scheduled to case and carry a regular rural route in their assigned office, they are considered unavailable to work in another office. Is that leave replacement required to report to another office upon completion of their assigned route in the same day?

A. No. The new language is very clear. The intent of the parties is to prohibit management from sending a relief carrier to another office after they have already cased and carried a regular route.

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83. I have a Little League board meeting during the time for my state's Ratification Meeting. Is it just a vote like sign on and say yes or no or is it more and if it is more can I join a later meeting?

A. **There is no vote being conducted at the Ratification Meetings.** Please see answer number 66 above.

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84. Does the new language on RCAs being sent to other offices settle the pending Step 4 on that subject, or is the Step 4 still on the table?

A. That issue is still under discussion. Many of the cases held in abeyance pending that Step 4 would be a violation with or without the new language. For instance, if An RCA was pulled off their primary route and sent to another office to work. The parties will discuss the issue in light of the new language if the Agreement is ratified.

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85. Will there be a minimum number of days/hours prior to the date of absence that you may request leave, even if the schedule has already been made?

A. No. Nothing has changed from the current language. Leave requests can be submitted right up until the day of the leave and should be approved if a leave replacement is available.

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86. Will RCAs have the option to volunteer to work in another office after completing a regular route in their assigned office so long as they do not exceed 12 hours in a day?

A. Yes, they could volunteer but cannot be required.

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87. I work in a RMPO and we send leave slips to management via US mail or with the truck driver, they send them back the same way. Sometimes it takes 2-3 days to get to

them or back to us from when they send them out. How does the three-day leave approval work for us?

A. The language will apply to all offices. Management will have to devise a method for getting the requests answered within the 3-day limit, otherwise they will be considered approved.

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88. Is there any language that indicates when an office goes OFF the formula?

A. There is no disagreement between the parties that if and when a formula office reaches 100% RCA coverage, the formula will be removed, and all routes will return to Saturday relief day.

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89. Why would an RCA not be able to carry leave over on conversion to career status, as they currently are able to do?

A. That was a term insisted upon by USPS as a condition of having RCAs accumulate leave for all hours worked.

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90. Can you give an example, with a calendar, of this 60-day rule for leave requests?

A. Please see the answer to number 70 above.

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91. When can we expect back pay if the contract is ratified?

A. The USPS will be required to calculate and pay the retroactive salaries as soon as administratively possible.

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92. If I request annual leave 60 days out and it's approved right away, and I decide 2 weeks before the start of my leave that I want to cancel it am I allowed to do this?

A. Yes. Scheduled annual leave can be canceled by the requestor.

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93. Holidays Reference Article 11 Section 2 F. If a junior carrier is not on the Relief Day Work List and is forced to work the holiday under option 3, will they be credited an extra vacation day to use at their request?

A. Working a holiday and working a relief day are not the same thing. **Any** carrier that is required to work their designated holiday will have the option available in the proposed language. For example: a carrier has a Monday relief day and the official holiday falls on Monday. That carrier's designated holiday becomes Saturday. If they are required to work Saturday, they will have the option of holiday pay or an additional annual day in addition to their regular rate of pay for working the designated holiday. (1.5 times the regular rate for working Christmas)

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94. After a leave replacement cases and carries a regular rural route can they be forced to give assistance on routes in a different branch of the same office?

A. Yes. This in no different than it has always been.

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95. How will it be determined which leave replacement carrier within a 50-mile radius of an office with an open route is to be selected?

A. Management will have discretion as to which available leave replacement to assign.

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96. How do you know what percentage of COLA I will get if I am on Table 2?

A. Please see number 23 above.

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97. When leave replacements are mandated to work an open route in another office will there be a list, so they are rotated similar to the Sunday/Holiday work list?

A. No. Management may choose from available leave replacements.

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98. Will management be required to ask the regular carrier if they want leave for the day prior to their assigned relief carrier being scheduled to another office for the same day?

A. We will include language in the RCAM to mirror current language from the April 2, 1999, Letter of Mutual Understanding which says management should ask the regular carrier before scheduling their RCA in another office.

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99. If a junior carrier puts in a vacation request, and 3 days later a more senior carrier puts in a request for the same days, which request would have priority?

A. The request submitted first has priority. If the requests are submitted on the same day, seniority would prevail.

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100. When are we voting on the new contract?

A. Ballots will be mailed to bargaining unit members February 8-9, 2022. They must be received back by 12:00 noon eastern on March 11, 2022.

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101. I work in a small office with two K routes and one J route. The office is a formula Office. Is there any requirement to create a PTF position under the proposed language?

A. No.

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102. For RCA's is there a maximum number of hours they can earn per pay period. Let's say they work 60 hours each week. Are they credited 6 hours of annual for that paycheck?

A. Leave earning for RCAs is capped at 4 hours per pay period.

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103. If an RCA doesn't bid on the PTF position in their office, will they drop in seniority when a full-time spot comes up for bid?

A. PTFs are always considered before RCAs in the same office when awarding regular routes.

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104. Now that RCA'S are going to get leave. If a regular carrier is asking for the same days who has priority?

A. Leave requests will be considered in the order received. If two carriers submit their requests on the same day, seniority would prevail. Regular carriers are considered senior to leave replacements.

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105. The language for granting leave to regular carriers and leave replacements is different. Can you please explain?

A. "Rural carriers should be granted annual leave in accordance with their personal wishes, provided a leave replacement is available." There is no change to this language in Article 10.2.A. The proposed language in Article 10.5.B says, "**Rural carrier associates shall be granted annual leave in accordance with their personal wishes, provided there is sufficient leave replacement coverage in the office.**"

These are different criteria. If, at the time of proper submission, there is a leave

replacement available (not scheduled to case and carry a regular route), then annual leave for regular carriers should be granted. This has been the union's position for decades and has been affirmed in numerous arbitration awards. For RCAs, leave requests may be denied if their services are required in the office. This could be assignment to a regular route or an auxiliary route, requirement to cover a relief day, or a need provide auxiliary assistance, such as after a holiday or peak season.

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106. In regard to the timing of paying back pay and question 91, what is the status of the Step 4 grievance regarding how long it took to be paid back pay from the last contract?

A. That case is still pending at Step 4. The remedy requested is interest at the Federal Judgement rate.

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107. Will we get the 5.9% COLA social security got and if so, when?

A. Rural letter carriers are compensated according to the terms of our collective bargaining agreement with the USPS. It has nothing to do with compensation under the Social Security Act.

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108. Our office has posted for auxiliary route to have an RCA multiple times. Will this count towards the 4 postings? We are short no RCAs, just have never hired one for the small auxiliary route.

A. If the only RCA vacancy you have is for the auxiliary route, you will not be converted to the formula.

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109. I'm curious since contracts are give and take what are we giving up on this contract? I know you've highlighted what we are gaining but there has to be some things that you agreed to give up.

A. There is no hidden agenda in the contract. Everything is spelled out. Negotiations **are** a give and take process. Several proposed changes are the result of compromise between the parties. The leave request language, for example, is not what either party really wanted. The postal service is gaining some flexibility in the ability to schedule available RCAs in another office ahead of regulars on the RDWL. For the most part, though, we believe this proposed language represents real gains for this craft in terms of monetary and other compensation, and work rules changes that finally improve the “formula” office concept and protect new RCAs from abuse when they first walk in the door.

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110. Can you please give the effective date and the actual amount of the first COLA under the tentative Agreement?

A. If the contract is ratified, all regular carrier salaries will be increased retroactively to August 28, 2021, in the amounts shown below. These amounts are for a 40-hour route and are adjusted with increased evaluated hours:

TABLE ONE	\$1,935
TABLE TWO STEP 1	\$1,336
TABLE TWO STEP 2	\$1,373
TABLE TWO STEP 3	\$1,410
TABLE TWO STEP 4	\$1,447
TABLE TWO STEP 5	\$1,483
TABLE TWO STEP 6	\$1,520
TABLE TWO STEP 7	\$1,557
TABLE TWO STEP 8	\$1,593
TABLE TWO STEP 9	\$1,630
TABLE TWO STEP 10	\$1,667
TABLE TWO STEP 11	\$1,704
TABLE TWO STEP 12	\$1,740
TABLE TWO STEP 13	\$1,777
TABLE TWO STEP 14	\$1,856
TABLE TWO STEP 15	\$1,935

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111. In regard to RCA mileage for travel to another office. Are we supposed to subtract home to office and office to home, for your home office when traveling to other offices when assigned?

A. Yes. The proper mileage reimbursement for being required to report to another office is the round-trip mileage from home to the other office minus the normal round-trip mileage from home to your normal duty station. If the other office happens to be closer to your home, there is no reimbursement. If you are sent to another office after reporting to your assigned office, the proper mileage reimbursement is round-trip from assigned office to other office.

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112. The 60-day window for submitting leave requests is totally unacceptable. Why would we ever agree to something like that?

A.

1. First, let's clear up some misunderstandings. **There is absolutely no change to the way leave requests are submitted and approved within the 60-day window.** Rural carriers will continue to have the option to submit leave requests right up to and including the day of the leave. For regular carriers, as long as there is a leave replacement available, the leave should be approved. For RCAs with earned annual leave, as long as there is sufficient coverage in the office, the leave should be approved.
2. Most leave requests submitted by rural carriers are already submitted within the 60-day window (within 1-60 days of the leave day(s) requested). This is a benefit we have enjoyed over the other crafts, who are required to submit leave at the beginning of the leave year, for decades. **Consider your own personal leave requests. How many have you submitted that were actually outside of the 60-day window?**
3. Contract negotiations are just that. The original proposal presented by the Postal Service in negotiations was a "structured leave program" much like the other crafts, that would require leave requests to be prioritized by "prime times" and submitted at the beginning of the leave year. This will be the USPS position if the parties go to interest arbitration.
4. Considering leave requests submitted **outside** of the 60-day window, you must look at what happens now under our current contract language. It is not unusual for a manager to deny a leave request submitted several months to a year in advance by claiming the request is "submitted too far in advance and leave replacement availability is unknown" or "submit closer to time of leave requested." This Union has always taken the position that, if these requests involve a "life event" or require payment or reservation in advance, the leave should be approved. However, we have had nothing in writing to back up this position. Under the proposed language, these requests are specifically mentioned, and management is obligated to consider them. If a rural carrier submits leave outside the 60-day window for what they consider an exceptional circumstance, and management denies the leave, we will have language on which to base a grievance and will have time to get the leave approved in the grievance process well ahead of the scheduled leave time.
5. **In return for this language, we were able to achieve the language in proposed**

Article 10.7.2 which requires management to return leave requests within 3 days or the request is automatically approved. This is a major victory for this craft and is language that no other craft has in their National Agreement.

Management's failure to return leave requests in a timely manner (or failure to return them at all), has been a major contention within this craft for years. **This language establishes a real time limit with a real penalty to management.** This language will not be a "given" in any arbitration proceeding.

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113. "If the evaluation of the route is reduced to less than 40 standard hours per week as a result of a mail count, the carrier is still entitled to the guaranteed annual wage of 40 hours "additional compensation" through the end of the guarantee period." Is this statement still valid?

A. Yes. This language has not changed.

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114. Is there a protocol and deadline to contact the NRLCA if a member did not receive a ballot in order to receive another?

A. Yes. If you have not yet received your ballot, please contact the NRLCA Secretary-Treasurer's office at 703-684-5545 (tel:703-684-5545).

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115. On the envelope to return the ballot, it says State Affiliation-_____. What goes in this blank?

A. The state abbreviation of the state where your route is located. (The state association to which you belong)

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116. There are rumors that with the ratification of this contract that all routes will be cut to 8 hours per day. I am not finding this anywhere. Can you dispel this rumor?

A. There is absolutely no truth to that rumor. Nothing is being changed with regard to route adjustment policies.

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117. Do PTFs get the same retroactive COLA and 1.3% General Wage Increases?

A. Yes, PTFs will receive raises totaling at least 6.44% at the signing of the tentative agreement, if ratified.

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118. Will RCA employees be allowed to use their accumulated annual leave to take off Sundays/Holiday's that they may be scheduled to work?

A. Yes, if there is sufficient leave replacement coverage in the office.

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119. Can an RCA assigned to an auxiliary route be required to go to other offices after their auxiliary route is completed now or in the new potential agreement?

A. Yes, subject to the 12-hour daily limit on work hours.

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120. Will I still be able to get compensated at 150% if I work my regular day off?

A. Yes, if you are on the RDWL. There is no change to the current language.

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121. Am I to infer from the response to question number 68 that the "high 3" calculation for retirement is maintained in this contract and not changed to "high 5" as management wants?

A. The current calculation is based on the "high 3" salary of the retiring carrier. However, this is not a contractual issue and could be changed by Congress at any time.

Retirement calculation is not a part of collective bargaining for Postal employees.

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122. Since we all know RCAs work in other crafts to supplement their hours, will they be earning leave for such work?

A. RCAs will earn annual leave for all hours actually worked up to a limit of 4 hours annual leave earned per pay period.

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123. If an RCA has learned 3 routes in their home office (according to article 30.2.C.2), can they be required to learn/carry a route in a nearby neighboring office to cover a relief day if the RCA doesn't want to carry in that neighboring office?

A. Yes, if they are available.

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124. If an RCA knows 3 routes in their home office (according to Article 30.2.C.2), and they ALSO know a route in a nearby neighboring office, can they be required to cover that routes' relief day if the RCA doesn't want to work in that neighboring office?

A. Yes, if they are available.

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125. Can I still submit a leave request for an "extenuating circumstance" more than 60 days out if I don't have a receipt to show it is a prepaid vacation?

A. Yes. Management will then approve or deny, and you can then grieve a denial based on the "extenuating circumstance" language.

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126. Regarding 60-day leave submittal: Some of the wording to other questions/answers

makes it sound like management won't even accept a leave slip if it is over 60 days from the date requested. If I am submitting a leave slip and I believe it is an “extenuating circumstance”, should that be notated on the remarks section of the leave slip so management can approve/deny it more than 60 days out?

A. Yes, that would be the best practice to indicate to management that you believe your request requires approval outside of 60 days.

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127. Will all rural carriers be allowed to hire a driver if they get a DUI and lose their driving privileges since all RCAs will be in leave earning status if the new contract is ratified?

A. Yes, that would be the Union's position.

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128. Will RCAs be required to use part/all of their accrued leave in order to be granted their leave request?

A. Not necessarily. Leave Replacements have always had a right to request to be non-scheduled on a certain day(s). As always, it would be up to management to approve or not.

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129. Can you explain why the Jan. 2022 Cola is based on the July 2021 CPI-W (1967-100) of 797.661, instead of the Jan. 2021 CPI-W (1967-100) of 706.447 that was indicated as the “Base Index” in the contract?

A. Because the difference between Jan 2021 and July 2021 was already accounted for in the COLA of \$1935 calculated on August 10, 2021, and effective August 28, 2021.

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130. In regard to Question #123, am I wrong or isn't there a step 4 settlement that says RCAs cannot be required to be trained or utilized on more than 3 routes? (G95R-4G-C

97105440)

A. The language in number 2 of that Step 4 Settlement was negated by the language that created the RDWL in 1999, which states an RCA may be required to carry any other route in the delivery unit.

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131. What happens to a newly appointed PTF if the formula office goes off the formula once RCAs are hired?

A. PTFs must be assigned to at least 2 K routes. Any remaining PTFs must have at least 2 K routes assigned until the position is eliminated through conversions to regular carrier.

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132. Will the soon to be created "RCAM" be available on the website for all members to access it?

A. Yes, like all other reference material.

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133. Under the tentative agreement a formula office with, (for example) 24 K Routes would be required to create two PTF positions within 60 days of ratification. If any time after those 60 days a new K Route was created increasing the total number of K Routes to 25, in what time frame would management then be required to create a third PTF position?

A. The Union's position would be within 30 days.

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134. We deliver Amazon on Sundays at our office. Do PTF's still work on the rotating list for this?

A. Yes, there is no change to any work rules for PTFs.

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135. It states that when management has determined the need, and can meet the requirements, that the office will go Formula. Is there any circumstance that the office would be FORCED to go formula even if the postmaster/ management doesn't want to?

A. Those decisions are sometimes made by higher level managers. The Union will ensure that the requirements are met before any new offices are placed on the formula. There is no mandate that an office go on the formula even if it meets the requirements.

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136. What language is being deleted under Article 9.2 C. Evaluated Compensation?

A. All language which refers to a Special Count or National Mail count will be eliminated. All references to mail counts or evaluations established by mail counts will be replaced by references to the Rural Route Evaluated Compensation System.

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137. Does the term available relief carrier mean a carrier that has received training or been utilized as defined in Article 30.2.D.3.

A. Not necessarily. An RCA is considered available to work in another office as long as they are not scheduled to case and carry a regular route on that day. Much the same as the definition of available under Article 10.2.A.

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138. For an extenuating circumstances or pre-paid vacation. Would a gas card be sufficient?

A. No. An extenuating circumstance should be one that requires the leave be approved for a certain date or dates. An open-ended gas card would not suffice to document an extenuating circumstance.

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139. The job posting requirements to create a formula office, does this new language take away the whole idea that management needs to make every effort to hire relief carrier's i.e. advertising, sending out flyers etc.?

A. No. It strengthens the language and requires that management produce 4 hiring worksheets with names that have been actually processed for hiring in the immediate previous six months before the formula can be implemented. Now, the Union has to wait until the formula is implemented, then file grievances with the burden of proving that management did not make the required efforts.

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140. Would it be possible to change the definition and require a PTF to only be assigned to one K route?

A. The Postal Service would not agree to give career status and benefits to an employee who is only guaranteed one day per week. The proposal was submitted and summarily dismissed.

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