



Mr. Gus Baffa
President
National Rural Letter
Carriers' Association
1630 Duke Street, 4th Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314-3465

Dear Gus:

This letter will confirm our mutual understanding regarding the intent of management's obligation to send a copy of each notice of 7- or 14-day paper suspension issued to a rural carrier to the appropriate state steward.

The parties agreed that management would provide a copy of each notice to the state steward at the time of issuance to inform the state steward that the rural carrier is receiving serious disciplinary action. In turn, the steward can help impress upon the rural carrier the seriousness of paper suspensions, which could ultimately lead to discharge.

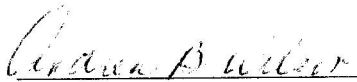
The parties agree that if management fails to provide a copy of a paper suspension notice to the state steward, but the steward becomes aware of the paper suspension through other means, such as a grievance being filed, the steward can nonetheless provide guidance to the rural carrier, if necessary. In this situation, such failure on the part of management to provide a copy of the paper suspension notice will not be considered a denial of due process or be considered a procedural or substantive defense in grievances on the paper suspensions or subsequent discharge.

However, there may be situations where the Postal Service may be considered procedurally defective when management fails to provide a copy of the paper suspension notice to the state steward. This exists when a grievance was not filed concerning the suspension or the steward is unaware of the paper suspension, and the rural carrier is subsequently removed. In this situation, if management considers the paper suspension in the subsequent removal action, and the state steward was not aware of the previous paper suspension, the steward obviously could not impress upon the carrier the seriousness of paper suspensions.

Finally, the parties agree that this mutual understanding applies to paper suspensions issued to bargaining unit rural carriers and is strictly limited to the fact circumstances and issue herein. Furthermore, the parties agree that this mutual understanding shall not be cited or otherwise relied upon for any reason in any dispute between the parties other than management's obligation to provide a copy of paper suspensions to the state steward.


Should there be any questions regarding the foregoing, please contact Bill Daigneault at (202) 268-5125.

Sincerely,


Andrea B. Wilson, Manager
Contract Administration
(NRLCA/NPMHU)

Date: April 30, 2003

Concurrence:


Gus Baffa, President
National Rural Letter
Carriers' Association

Date: 4-30-03