Nolan selected as neutral arbitrator

Arbitrator Dennis R. Nolan has accepted appointment as the neutral chair of the three-person arbitration board that will be responsible for resolving the current bargaining impasse between NALC and the Postal Service. Under the law, both NALC and postal management are each required to name one arbitrator and select a third neutral arbitrator to serve as the chair of the interest arbitration board. NALC’s general counsel, Bruce Simon, will serve as NALC’s party arbitrator. Attorney Dukuf Welde will represent the Postal Service on the arbitration board. Nolan has previously served as a neutral arbitrator under the NALC-USPS National Agreement. Hearings in the interest arbitration are expected to begin in the spring.

House votes to repeal pre-funding mandate

On Feb. 5, the House passed the USPS Fairness Act (H.R. 2382). The bipartisan bill seeks to repeal the mandate that the Postal Service pre-fund retiree health care advances in advance. The vote was 309 to 106, with 22 Demo- crats and 94 Republicans voting to repeal the mandate and with 209 Republicans and Rep. Justin Amash (MI-3) opposed. Only 13 members did not vote (13 of them were co-sponsors of the bill). Passage of H.R. 2382 is a tremendous achievement for letter carriers and the broader postal community. This is the first major piece of legislation tackling postal issues that has passed the House since the 2016 passage of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006. The hard work of letter carriers across the country made passage possible.

“Letter carriers should be proud of their hard work to educate members of Congress and gain their support on this very important issue,” NALC President Fredric Rolands said. “House passage is a major victory in the battle to address the pre-funding mandate, but our work is not done. We must now turn our attention to the Senate.”

If you have not yet done so, please consider reaching out to your member of Congress, if they voted for H.R. 2382, to thank them for their support. The more that letter carriers can emphasize how important this vote to repeal the pre-funding mandate was and how much we appreciate our allies in Congress, the better off we will be should future legislative efforts arise down the road. We also encourage your representative voted on this bill, you can check the NALC Legislative Action Center, accessible via nalc.org.

It is now up to the Senate to take action on S. 2965, the bipartisan companion bill. Letter carriers should carry this momentum through the Senate and be ready to engage and educate their senators and House members should the need arise to repeal the pre-funding mandate. Fact sheets and talking points are available on the NALC Legislative Action Center.

White House releases FY 2021 budget proposal

The Trump Administration released its $4.8 trillion Fiscal Year 2021 budget proposal on Feb. 10. With regard to the U.S. Postal Service, as in previous budget requests the White House proposes...

NALC Veterans Guide is available online

Almost a quarter of the active and retired members of the National Association of Letter Carriers are veterans. The NALC Veterans Group was created in 2015 to provide access to information and tools specific to veterans’ rights and benefits within the Postal Service. It seeks to provide all NALC military veterans—active as well as retired letter carriers—with resources, information and a sense of camaraderie.

As part of that goal, NALC also developed this new Veterans Guide as a quick reference for valuable information relating to military service and the Postal Service. This guide contains various topics of interest to veterans, including the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), Wounded Warriors Leave (WWL), the Veterans’ Preference Act of 1944 and retirement credit for military service. The guide also discusses several National Agreement provisions and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) that apply specifically to military veterans.

The NALC Veterans Guide is now available electronically on nalc.org. The online version contains links throughout the guide which will connect you directly to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for more information.

Search for a new PMG continues

Postmaster General Megan Brennan, who had announced her intent to retire effective Jan. 31, agreed to delay that retirement as the search for the U.S. Postal Board of Governors (BOG) for her successor continues.

“We are grateful to the postmaster general for her continued commitment to the Postal Service, and share her confidence in the Postal Service’s strong leadership team members who will ensure that we continue to deliver for the American people,” BOG Chairman Robert Duncan said.

Potential nominee for USPS BOG

On Jan. 6, the president nominated William Zollars of Kansas to be a member of the USPS BOG for the remainder of a seven-year term that expires on Dec. 8, 2022. Zollars previously was president and CEO of PRC Worldwide, Inc., a U.S. holding company of freight forwarding firms. Prior to that, he was owner of a fast-growing non-union and supply chain management company. His name has been sent to the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee.
The Coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) is a disease that was first identified in Wuhan, China but has since spread to locations throughout the world. Make sure you do your part to limit the spread of COVID-19 by understanding precautions you can take. This information is based on guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

If any of the below is not being provided or completed, please contact your branch officer or national business agent.

Coronavirus precautions

Mandatory stand-up talks and posters
The Postal Service has issued mandatory stand-up talks based on information from the CDC. These stand-up talks help disseminate vital information to employees to prevent or mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. Posters from the CDC should also be posted around the facility. These posters cover different topics, such as stopping the spread of germs, symptoms of the coronavirus, and what to do if you are sick with the coronavirus.

What can I do to prevent the spread?
- 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 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

Cleaning on a daily basis
The Postal Service should be following MMD-035-20, Influenza and Coronavirus Cleaning Contingency on a daily basis due to flu season.
- Surfaces that are frequently touched should be cleaned at least daily during disease outbreaks.
- Postal Service procedures for cleaning common areas will be updated to include use of an approved (registered) antimicrobial product.
- Employee and custodial procedures for cleaning their workspaces and surfaces will be updated to include use of a registered antimicrobial product.

Social distancing
To reduce exposure you should practice social distancing. The following are recommendations by the CDC and the Postal Service:
- Maintaining a 6-foot to 10-foot separation between employees and between employees and customers, to the extent feasible.
- Maintaining a 3-yard distance between carriers and carriers, to the extent feasible. Remain courteous; remember that accepting mail or parcels does not pose a substantial risk of transmission.
- Reducing face-to-face encounters for employees, to avoid holding meetings in rooms where social distancing is not feasible.
- Consider avoiding travel and large gatherings where social distancing is not feasible.
- Avoiding handshakes and other physical contact, including novel (new) coronavirus.

What can I do to prevent the spread?
- The risk from handling mail
- Exposure during delivery
- The symptoms of COVID-19
- These guidelines are intended to keep you safe, but the risk of infection is never completely eliminated.

The risk from handling mail
The CDC states that there is very low risk of transmission of coronavirus on imported goods or mail due to its poor survivability on such surfaces. The CDC has further stated that, currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods, and there have not been any reported cases of COVID-19 in the United States associated with imported goods.

If you are sick
Stay home if you are sick, even if you do not have COVID-19 symptoms. Stay home if you are sick and have COVID-19 symptoms. Either way, get plenty of rest and consult your health care provider. Follow normal procedures to report you are sick. COVID-19 symptoms include the following:
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

The CDC states that you should not go to work if you are sick. This has been reinforced by Postal Service Pandemic Influenza Plan as well as Mandatory Stand-Up Talk February 11, 2020. Health Tips:
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. If you do handshake or interact by touching, then do not touch your mouth, nose or eyes until you wash your hands as soon as possible afterwards.

Avoiding hand shaking with business partners or among friends. If you do handshake or interact by touch- ing, then do not touch your mouth, nose or eyes until you wash your hands as soon as possible afterwards.

Postal Service procedures for cleaning common areas will be updated to include use of an approved (registered) antimicrobial product.

The symptoms of COVID-19
Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and/or shortness of breath.

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The symptoms of COVID-19
Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and/or short-

Exposure during delivery
If there is a delivery location that you feel exposes you to an increased risk, immediately report the delivery point to your supervisor, shop steward and/or branch officer.

If any of the above is not being provided or completed, please contact your branch officer or national business agent.

Personal protective equipment
The CDC does not recommend that people who are well should wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A face mask should be used by people who are showing symptoms of COVID-19. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected. The use of face masks is also crucial for health workers and other people who are taking care of someone infected with COVID-19 in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

Note: Surveillance and case investigation are important parts of control of an outbreak. Surveillance involves identifying people who have the disease (cases) and investigating their illness and exposures. The CDC has developed a list of questions that healthcare providers should consider when caring for people with COVID-19 to help determine if they are infectious and if additional precautions are needed.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and/or short-
Temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing

NALC and the Postal Service agreed to implement temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing among city letter carriers (M-01955). The agreement commits the parties to limiting individuals to working only in groups of 10 or less; the manner in which stand-up talks are given, as well as break locations and times; and other initiatives to promote social distancing.

The three types of leave and two new MOUs to help with COVID-19 related absences

Effective April 1, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides employees with two additional types of leave. First, employees with a qualifying condition as defined by the act can be eligible for up to 12 weeks of paid emergency sick leave, in addition to their sick leave balance. Second, employees who have a minor child whose school or place of care is closed will be eligible for up to 12 weeks under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the majority of which is additional paid leave. These provisions will apply from April 1 through Dec. 31, and are in addition to any personal annual and/or sick leave balances that you have.

An employee is entitled to use the additional 10 hours of paid emergency sick leave for absences related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to telework, because the employee:

1. Is subject to a government-mandated quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19.

2. Has been advised by a healthcare provider to self-quarantine for a reason related to COVID-19.

3. Is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis.


5. Is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed, or the childcare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 related reasons.

6. Is experiencing any other substantially similar conditions specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

With regard to qualifying reason 1, in many cities and states, government authorities have issued a quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19. Some local and state governments have also identified groups of people that should self-quarantine, such as individuals over a certain age. While the Postal Service is considered a non-essential sector and not subject to state and local directives, employees who choose to self-quarantine in these circumstances may be eligible to use up to 10 hours of emergency sick leave to cover their absence.

All career and non-career employees, regardless of tenure, are immediately eligible for up to two weeks of fully paid sick emergency leave. Full-time career employees can receive up to 10 hours of paid emergency sick leave. Part-time career employees can receive emergency sick leave up to the number of hours equal to their average work hours during a two-week period or the hours they would have worked had they not been absent. Part-time non-career employees can receive emergency sick leave up to the number of hours that they would have worked during a two-week period had they not been absent.

Reasons 2, 3, 4, and 5, the emergency sick leave is 100 percent of the letter carrier's pay, but capped at $511 per day and $5,110 total. For qualifying reasons 4, 5 and 6, the emergency sick leave will be no less than two-thirds of the letter carrier’s pay, but capped at $347 per day and $3,470 total. For qualifying reasons 4, 5, and 6, the emergency sick leave is available for up to two weeks.

With regard to the other type of additional leave, the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion, an employee is entitled to take leave related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to telework, because the employee is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed or the childcare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 related reasons. This qualifying reason is the same as qualifying reason 3 for emergency leave.

All employees who have been employed for 30 or more days are eligible for this benefit if they meet the qualifying reason. This new qualifying reason does not add to the 12 weeks of paid emergency sick leave already provided for in the law. The new leave will begin on the first full day following the employee’s eligibility. If the employee has not yet used their 12 weeks of emergency sick leave, including saving this new qualifying reason, the first full day of the 12-week FMLA coverage will be used. To receive pay for the first day, an employee can use the credit they have on their own emergency sick leave account as long as the leave is not already saved for another reason.

Qualifying reasons 2, 3, 4, and 5 are included in the 12-week FMLA coverage. The remaining 8 weeks of FMLA leave for this qualifying reason will be paid leave. This leave is required to be paid out in no less than two-thirds of the letter carrier’s pay, but capped at $347 per day and $3,470 total.

Again, the new two types of leave identified above are in addition to the contractual benefits to which USPS employees are entitled under other benefits recently agreed upon in two memorandums of understanding (MOUs). In those MOUs, NALC and the Postal Service agreed to address obvious concerns as children and schools and daycares that have had to close due to COVID-19. The new MOUs specifically address the need for carrier assistants to have additional paid leave to use during this unprecedented crisis.

M-01945 allows for at least two-thirds of the emergency sick leave to be used for the care of an individual who tests positive for COVID-19, the minor child of an individual who is currently hospitalized due to COVID-19, or the minor child or care for the child of a caregiver who is caring for a family member. M-01946 allows for at least two-thirds of the emergency sick leave to be used for the care of an individual who was exposed to COVID-19, the minor child of an individual who was exposed to COVID-19, or the minor child or care for the child of an individual who was caring for a family member.

The guidelines issued by the Postal Service have been given to supervisors and managers, so they know what to do in these unprecedented circumstances. This includes consulting with local occupational health nurses to determine if an employee can return to work.

NALC has met with the Postal Service to determine if an extension is appropriate.

Make sure you have the safety supplies you need

NALC and the letter carriers’ union negotiate that NALC branch officers contact local health authorities, aged if they see problems in their office with lack of cleaning, shortage of sanitizing supplies, standing talks not being conducted, social distancing not being practiced, quarantine protocols not being followed or any instruction that conflicts with the guidance being provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The union has been successful in getting most of these issues resolved, but needs to know where the problems are so it can get them fixed.

"We communicate daily with President Fredric Rolando, and we are committed to doing our part to correct each issue as it arises." USP has committed to provide daily supplies necessary for postal employees to clean frequently-touched items in the office, as well as provide necessary supplies for letter carriers to use to clean steering wheels and other frequently-touched surfaces in postal vehicles. They have also committed to provide supplies for use while on the streets, as well as hand sanitizing supplies for use on surfaces to maintain vehicles and on other surfaces we encounter on the street. Letter carriers should have sufficient hand sanitizer to keep their hands clean. Employees are requested to wash their hands as soon as they touch the many surfaces on your route. They have also committed to provide masks and nitrile gloves for any employee that requests them. "We understand that the Postal Service has received a large shipment of supplies at their central distribution warehouse in Topeka, KS, that are now being received in delivery units throughout the country," Rolando said. "If you need sanitizing supplies or nitrile gloves, please contact your local union representative, branch president or NALC immediately."

In a March 25 statement found on the COVID-19 page on the NALC website, Rolando discussed what letter carriers should do locally regarding suchrade conditions. Please refer to that statement for an in-depth explanation of how to report such conditions, as well as management’s responsibility to correct them. If you are told by your supervisor to work in an unsafe environment, either in the office, in the vehicle or on the street, please inform your local union representative, branch president or NALC immediately.

Get the answers to USPS-related COVID-19 questions

In addition to contacting your shop steward, branch officer or national business agent (NBA), NALC has a new resource for members to ask questions about the COVID-19 pandemic: COVID19@usps.gov. Many NALC members have used this new resource.

If you do not have the supplies you need to keep yourself safe, please contact a branch officer or your NALC to let them know, but you can also use this new email address to raise your concerns. In addition to using this new resource, if you need additional leave to deal with COVID-19 or your health insurance questions, please give us a call. Our Health Team will be happy to help you.

If you do not have the supplies you need to keep yourself safe, please contact a branch officer or your NALC to let them know, but you can also use this new email address to raise your concerns. In addition to using this new resource, if you need additional leave to deal with COVID-19 or your health insurance questions, please give us a call. Our Health Team will be happy to help you.
Mandatory stand-up talk to be given when a co-worker tests positive for COVID-19

Last month, the Postal Service developed and distributed a mandatory stand-up talk that must be given in every facility where an employee is on duty in the event of a workplace exposure due to the purpose of that stand-up talk is to make other employees aware that one of their co-workers tested positive for the virus. Under the Rehabilitation Act and the Privacy Act, specific employee medical information must be kept confidential and may only be shared in very limited circumstances. Therefore, the Postal Service cannot share the name of the employee who tested positive for COVID-19 or their medical condition.

Conversely, with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the infected employee cannot return to work until cleared. The Postal Service should reach out to the local public health office for guidance, including any watch list status for contact tracing to be quarantined. Additionally, it has been determined that an employee tested positive for the coronavirus, the facility in which they work must be thoroughly cleaned in accordance with CDC guidelines specific to COVID-19.

Workers’ compensation for letter carriers who contract coronavirus at work

Letter carriers who develop COVID-19 while in the performance of their duties are entitled to workers’ compensation coverage pursuant to the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act (FECA). Exposure to COVID-19 alone does not constitute a work-related injury entitling an employee to medical treatment under the FECA. The employee must actually be diagnosed with COVID-19 to potentially be afforded coverage.

In addition, however, to letter carriers who have tested positive for COVID-19, letter carriers who have been working and are symptomatic for COVID-19 but have no history of exposure outside of work should register and then file a CA-8 claim in the Department of Labor’s Employees’ Compensation Operations & Management Portal (ECOMP). Carriers should also contact their installation and request a CA-8, Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment, which will pay for the first 60 days of medical bills. Letter carriers who are asymptomatic do not need to file a claim.

Given how quickly the coronavirus can develop, the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP) recommends registering in ECOMP as a good pro-employee move for all letter carriers. Employees can register in ECOMP without filing a claim at necomp.dol.gov. Instructions on how to register in ECOMP can be found on the NALC website at the “Injured on the Job” tab under “Workplace Issues.”

OWCP will pay for the COVID-19 medical costs (prior to accepting a claim) only if a claimant was exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 during the performance of duty. Otherwise, OWCP will pay for the costs if the claimant indicated, through their application, that they are asymptomatic.

If you have any questions or need assistance with a claim, please contact your NALC office as soon as possible. NALC has full-time regional workers’ compensation advisors ready to assist members with OWCP claims related to COVID-19.

USPS launches COVID-19 command center for assistance with cleaning supplies and protective equipment

The Postal Service has established a COVID-19 Supplies Command Center to support USPS facilities with ordering and delivery of necessary supplies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect employees. In addition to facilities continuing to order supplies following standard procedures and using local buying where available, the command center is working closely with supply management and district supply coordinators to centrally fulfill orders for masks, gloves, hand sanitizers, cleaning products and other items directly from the USPS Material Distribution Center in Toeppke, KS.

Letter carriers and employees can contact the center for help tracking orders and for when they need assistance in locating and ordering supplies. Additionally, the center will monitor field inventories daily to assist districts in identifying facilities that are low on items needed to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Employees can call the COVID-19 Supplies Command Center at 844-723-1594, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern Time.

Keeping the U.S. Postal Service afloat through the financial effects of COVID-19

In addition to our priority commitment to protecting the safety and health of letter carriers, NALC is working to ensure that the Postal Service has the resources necessary to continue operations. We remain very involved with our partners and corporate representatives to influence and protect government policies and initiatives to ensure that our members are not subsumed by the pandemic. In addition to facilities continuing to order supplies following standard procedures and using local buying where available, the command center is working closely with supply management and district supply coordinators to centrally fulfill orders for masks, gloves, hand sanitizers, cleaning products and other items directly from the USPS Material Distribution Center in Topeka, KS.

NALC is building a lobbying plan and a grassroots campaign to advance these legislative goals. A recent bipartisan plan being considered by Congress would authorize and fund emergency compensation for workers whose health is at risk due to exposure to COVID-19.

NALC recently reached an agreement with the Postal Service to waive all late fees and interest for the current quarter on deferred First-Class Mail Postage, Quarter-Fixed Service, Postage Due and Priority Mail services.

NALC has also delivered a letter to Congress urging them to enact the Heroes Act, which includes: a. 1) Authorizing 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 revenue and the Postal Service’s expenses, as authorized by Congress in the CARES Act; b) $1.4 trillion in emergency aid to states, local governments and hospitals and other federal entities; and c) an additional $500 billion for small businesses and other recipients.

NALC has sent a letter to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee urging them to ensure that federal disaster relief funds help the Postal Service stay operational.

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Pandemic forces cancellation of the NALC National Convention

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the cancellation of the NALC’s 72nd National Convention. At the direction of the NALC Executive Council, Headquarters has notified the convention center, convention hotels and various convention vendors of its decision to cancel the convention, which was to be held Aug. 17-21 in Honolulu, HI. The Council made the unprecedented decision after it became clear that the state government of Hawaii could not approve a plan that gatherings with the size that would be allowed in August. Nor could it be assured that travel to Honolulu would be permitted under the state’s strict quarantine law, which currently requires all travelers to self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival in the islands.

President Rolando thanked the leadership of Honolulu Branch 606 for all their hard work in preparing for the convention and expressed the NALC’s hope that it would be possible to convene in Hawaii in the future. Please see the NALC website for information regarding cancellation of hotels and travel reservations.

No route inspections until at least September

In March, as a result of the inability to social distance during route counts and inspections, USPS agreed with NALC to instruct its field representatives to temporarily halt route inspections until further notice. After continued negotiations with NALC, later in April USPS further notified the area offices that all route inspections scheduled for the rest of the spring would be canceled. This includes retraining from conducting any PS Forms 3993, PS Forms 1838C and special route inspections. Additionally, the Postal Service has now also agreed that any pending implementation of the final PS Form 3993 training should be postponed to at least June 6.

Since Handbook M-10 also states that June, July, August and December are to be excluded from any route counts and inspections, there should be no route inspections until September at soonest. Letter carriers who are subject to counts and inspections in contradiction to these policies should immediately inform their local union representa-

USPS begins testing different types and styles of face coverings

The Postal Service has begun testing the use of various types of materials and styles to be used as face coverings during the hotter months. The testing is being conducted in Fort Lauderdale and Tampa, FL; Dallas, TX; and Greenwood, SC. The styles of coverings being tested include various bandanna-type masks, neck gaiters and even cooling masks. While USPS does not have the final data from these tests, initial results indicate that letter car-

USPS being used to deliver COVID-19 sample test kits

Recently, in certain New York City, New Jersey, Maryland and Michigan ZIP codes, COVID-19 sample test kits began being mailed through the Postal Service. A mandatory stand-up talk regarding the tests should have been given in the offices where these mailings are taking place.

In New York City and New Jersey, the mailings are part of a limited research study being conducted by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York and in conjunction with Rutgers University. Other test kits are being supplied to 4,000 targeted recipients to be tested for COVID-19.

The kits are mailed daily to see to 300 target recipient volunteers from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York to volunteers then self-administer the test and return the sample through the mail to either the Icahn School of Medicine or Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ, for testing.

The test kits in Maryland and Michigan are also part of limited research studies for targeted recipients only, and in conjunction with higher education, research and diagnostic companies in those areas. Each test kit contains explicit mailing instructions for the test recipients to follow to ensure the safety of individuals handling the return samples.

Letter carriers can get more information or clarification about these mailings from their supervisors. If you are unable to obtain information or clarification from your supervisor, please contact your local union representative, your national business agent or email NALC Headquarters at COVID-19@nalc.org.

Voluntary temperature-taking being tested in select USPS sites

As the pandemic persists, NALC and the Postal Service continue to discuss potential new temporary policies and procedures to protect letter carriers, other postal employees and customers. One such policy being discussed involves taking the temperature of employees when they are reporting to work.

Beginning May 18, the Postal Service began proof-of-concept testing at a few sites. The testing is solely designed to see whether the equipment works correctly, so the parties can then discuss the feasibility of how and where such a system would be employed. NALC and USPS are in the process of discussing the relevant policies and procedures that would be followed should the system be implemented in selected sites. The test involves taking the temperatures of employees as they enter the workplace each day using either a camera, from as far as 10 feet away, or by using a handheld scanner.

There are four proof-of-concept test sites. On May 18, testing began at the Menominee, VA PAOC, Falls Church, VA Carrier Annex, and the Fairfax, VA main office. Testing will begin at the Oklahoma City, OK PAOC on May 25. The tests will run for two weeks.

It is voluntary for employees to have their temperature taken and no health data will be collected or maintained. During the two-week test, if an employee has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, they will be informed in private and then sent home and paid either emergency paid sick leave or administrative leave until the fever subsides.

Interest arbitration dates scheduled

The interest arbitration hearing dates for a new collective-bargaining agreement scheduled for May, June and July were previously postponed due to the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. New hearing dates scheduled for September through November have now been confirmed. Neutral arbitrator Dennis Nolan provided the parties sufficient hearing dates for this time period. There continue to be major issues at stake, as the parties still have many unresolved differences regarding economic, operational and workplace issues. NALC’s collective-bargaining goals have not changed. While discussions between NALC and the Postal Service continue, the union proceeds to prepare for arbitration to achieve those goals. The current collective-bargaining agreement remains in full force pending final resolution of the parties’ dispute.
COVID-19-related MOUs and USPS’s liberal leave policy expanded

Due to the ongoing effects of COVID-19, and the challenges letter carriers face while living and working through the pandemic, several previously negotiated memorandums of understanding (MOUs) have been expanded through the modified paragraph (c)(3) of the USPS national collective bargaining agreement. This includes the temporary additional paid leave for employees, the temporary expanded sick leave for dependent care, the temporary additional paid leave for family emergencies, and the temporary additional paid leave for child care.

The Postal Service negotiated with the National Association of Letter Carriers to extend the expanded leave through July 12. This will allow managers and supervisors the opportunity to develop their work schedules to minimize the temporary time limits on Stop and Abatement applications, and to approve new local policies that will allow letter carriers to continue their work safely.

The following are some of the modified paragraph (c)(3) language through July 12:
- The temporary additional paid leave for employees has been expanded through July 12.
- Managers and supervisors have the opportunity to develop an approved application for stop and abatement and allow letter carriers to continue their work safely.
- The temporary expanded sick leave for dependent care has been expanded through July 12.
- The temporary additional paid leave for family emergencies has been expanded through July 12.
- The temporary additional paid leave for child care has been expanded through July 12.

NALC has provided the national business agent offices with copies of the complete guidelines that managers and supervisors must follow to continue to make sure that our letter carriers are safe and healthy.

NALC is asking people to visit nalc.org/food to donate to a food bank in their community. On their site, they can find food banks and click to donate directly. All collections stay local to the community.

Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive to help feed communities

For the last 27 years, NALC has been proud to hold the Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive, the nation’s largest food drive conducted in the month of May. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NALC wasn’t able to conduct and distribute letters on time. However, the letter carriers are working with local food banks and other organizations to distribute food in a safe and efficient manner.

The goal of this multi-year initiative is to provide local food banks and other organizations with an affordable way to access healthy food this summer.

NALC’s Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive will be held virtually, via Zoom or Webex. Elections could be conducted by mail ballot or at designated polling places.

Alternative ways to conduct meetings

Many branches, state associations and regional offices have used various non-traditional ways to conduct meetings and communicate with members during the pandemic. Some are having meetings online while others are holding in-person meetings with social distancing.

Wearing face coverings during the heat of summer

Recently, it was reported that the Postal Service was testing the use of various materials and styles of face coverings that would be comfortable to wear during the summer months. The Postal Service is now in the process of ordering sufficient face coverings for the entire fleet for 2021. Additionally, NALC is discussing the use of face in the workplace as it relates to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations during the pandemic.

Outside Heat Injury Prevention Program

DeJoy, who took over on June 15. A confirmation vote on the two newly nominated governors is expected this week.

Two new governors have recently been nominated by the White House to serve on the USPS Board of Governors. Paul DeJoy, who took over on June 15. A confirmation vote on the two newly nominated governors is expected this week. According to Fredric Rolando, “We especially welcomed his legislative experience, as well as his expertise on promoting public service in USPS and the legislative branch of government.

On March 18, President Fredric Rolando sent a letter to all NALC branches issuing blanket dispensation for union business agents and representatives to conduct meetings and vote at scheduled branch meetings.

NALC is asking people to visit nalc.org/food to donate to a food bank in their community. On their site, they can find food banks and click to donate directly. All collections stay local to the community.

Settlement reached in national-level Consolidated Casing grievance

On June 3, NALC and USPS settled a national-level grievance involving the Postal Service’s unilateral testing of Consolidated Casing. This settlement restores S-808 in its Materials Reference System, requires that half of the 62 sites must return to their original route structure by July 31. The remaining 30 sites may continue to operate.

The joint task force established by the Memorandum of Understanding, consisting of both USPS and NALC representatives, had determined that the subject of the complaint was based on an administrative error.

Approximately 700 Sunday parcel delivery hubs being decoupled

From the beginning of this pandemic, the NALC and USPS officials, staff and representatives throughout the country have been in constant communication and negotiation with management at all levels of the organization regarding procedures, equipment and services necessary to keep our letter carriers safe and healthy while working through this pandemic.

The goal of this settlement is to encourage letter carriers to continue to vote at scheduled branch meetings. If the parties to either continue the test or not jointly conduct administrative testing in these sites, the test sites will return to their original structure by July 31.

From the beginning of this pandemic, the NALC and USPS officials, staff and representatives throughout the country have been in constant communication and negotiation with management at all levels of the organization regarding procedures, equipment and services necessary to keep our letter carriers safe and healthy while working through this pandemic.

The goal of this settlement is to encourage letter carriers to continue to vote at scheduled branch meetings.
**New stimulus package expected to be introduced soon**

There is rising support from Senate Republicans to pass another stimulus package, but it remains to be seen if any such legislation will pass. The US Postal Service (USPS) is also planning to implement a new delivery initiative test titled Expedited Street/ Late Mail (ESLM). This test is expected to begin on July 25, 2020, and will be anticipated to continue for approximately 30 to 60 days in select locations.

**Expedited Preferential Mail (EPM) program can be reduced to improve street delivery times.**

Additionally, there is a new delivery initiative test titled Expedited Street/Late Mail (ESLM) that involves casing non-preferential mail in the afternoon after completing street duties. USPS plans to test this method in order to improve delivery times and encourage earlier street delivery.

**NALC and the Postal Service also agreed to another temporary time-limit extension on Step B and arbitration agreements.**

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**COVID-19-related MOUs extended until late September**

By joint agreement (M-01926), several COVID-19-related memorandums of understanding have been further extended through Sept. 25. These memorandums include temporary expanded sick leave for dependent care (M-01915), temporary expanded family and medical leave (M-01916), temporary expanded leave for military special on-duty call (M-01915), temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing (M-01953) and temporary use of TCAs (M-01956). NALC and the Postal Service also agreed to another temporary time-limit extension on Step B and arbitration agreements (M-01954), and an agreement giving local parties the ability to develop a sign-up process for full-time employees who previously did not, or could not, place their names on either the overtime-desired list or work-assignment list (M-01953).

**Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive launched**

To help fulfill the nutritional needs of the one in eight Americans who face food insecurity, including millions of children, older people and military veterans, NALC has launched a virtual Drive to help local food banks. Stamp Out Hunger, the nationwide mail service effort, to raise funds for food banks nationwide.

**NALC MDA Donation Allocation Form**

- [ ] NALC Branch Number
- [ ] State Association
- [ ] Auxiliary
- [ ] MDA District/City
- [ ] MDA Contact/Staff
- [ ] MDA Event Name/Event Type
- [ ] MDA Event Date
- [ ] Donation Amount
- [ ] Donor Name

**NALC Branch Challenge for MDA now underway**

With the COVID-19 pandemic making it difficult for branches to hold MDA fundraisers, in support of programs such as summer camps as well as medical research, NALC Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davison issued a branch Deliver the Cure challenge in July. She asked branches to create a virtual donation page to support NALC’s 2020 campaign for MDA, and called on every letter carrier to give at least $10 to MDA through his or her branch’s donation page.

**USPS testing of temperature-measuring equipment**

The Postal Service has completed its testing of temperature-measuring equipment and has identified a company that will provide technicians to conduct the necessary tests. The USPS is also planning to implement a new delivery initiative test titled Expedited Street/Late Mail (ESLM) that involves casing non-preferential mail in the afternoon after completing street duties.

**NASL list**

The National Association of Letter Carriers is a registered 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please mail donations to:

NALC
161 N. Clark Suite 3550
Chicago, IL 60601

NALC 2020 Annual Meeting
July 24, 2020
South Bend, IN Branch 330—$210
Newport, RI Branch 57—$200
Western Wayne Co. Merged, MI Branch 2184—$280

July 16, the Postal Service informed NALC of a new delivery initiative test titled Expedited Street/Late Mail (ESLM). Rather than discuss this concept with NALC in the joint City Delivery Task Force, USPS chose to test it unilaterally without NALC participation. USPS states that the purpose of this test is to determine if the Expedited Performance Mail (EPM) program can be reduced to improve street delivery times. Further, the test is only for letter carriers by enabling them to get on the street earlier. EPM is a long program established in Handbook M-39 and Handbook M-41 that involves casing non-preferential mail in the afternoon after completing street duties. USPS believes that its new version of this program will enhance customer service by providing more consistent delivery times.

**Interest arbitration update**

Absent reaching a tentative settlement on our collective-bargaining agreement, NALC is prepared to begin interest arbitration in late September. In the meantime, negotiations continue with the Postal Service in an attempt to reach a tentative agreement for the members to consider for ratification. In the event that these continued talks fail to result in a negotiated agreement, NALC is more than ready for the interest arbitration hearings.

**Face coverings**

As previously reported, the Postal Service conducted a test regarding the use of various types of materials and styles to be used as face coverings during the hotter months. The styles tested were various bandanna-type masks, neck gaiters and even cooling masks. As a result of the input from carriers who participated in the tests, the Postal Service ordered three types of masks to be made available for purchase by local managers for letter carriers to use. The three types of masks are all washable and reusable. There is a black cross-strap style, a blue gaiter style and a grey adjustable-ear-loop style. The Postal Service has advised that the masks are available in every district, and that local managers should consult with their respective district office to order. Please contact your national business agent’s office if there are problems with such orders.

**Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive launched**

To help fulfill the nutritional needs of the one in eight Americans who face food insecurity, including millions of children, older people and military veterans, NALC has launched a virtual virtual Donor Drive to help local food banks. Stamp Out Hunger, the nationwide mail service effort, to raise funds for food banks nationwide.

**USPS leadership changes**

The Postal Service is in the midst of a massive change in leadership, consisting of a new postmaster general (PMG), a yet-to-be-appointed new deputy PMG, four relatively new governors and two brand new governors who have yet to attend their first meeting of the postal board of governors. Initially, at a minimum, NALC expects there will be thorough reviews of postal finances, operations, human resources and marketing, as well as legislative, regulatory and legal matters.

**On the operational front, NALC is aware that supervisors are conducting stand-up talks to all employees on initial table.**
NALC addresses mail service issues

Letter carriers are urged, frustrated and embarrassed by the additional work required to deal with the virus—"We take great pride in serving our customers," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "But a combination of disrupted operations, increased workload, and the extra time needed to deal with this new virus has resulted in a delayed mail and non-delivery of routes throughout the country." The Pedido Service Reconciliation (SER) process delays new operations representatives and makes it more difficult to get operations up and running. If and when letter carriers have issues with delayed mail or undelivered routes, they should inform their Branch representative or an NALC national business agent. NALC will continue communicating these issues to USPS to address as quickly as possible.

Expeditied Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS) Initiative halted

In early August, NALC initiated a national-level grievance that has since been settled regarding the Postal Ser-vice’s implementation of the Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS) Initiative. The grievance initiated on the afternoon of Sept. 1, 2020, was related to the implementation of the national street delivery initiative. The grievance was filed by an NALC branch representative in the city of Little Rock, Arkansas, on behalf of a member who had been laid off from the afternoon sortation post office in that city. The ESAS initiative was intended to help USPS combat COVID-19 by providing more flexible delivery options for customers, including evening delivery of mail. The grievance alleged that the implementation of the ESAS initiative was not being done in accordance with USPS guidelines and that it was causing significant disruptions to the mail delivery system.

The grievance was filed on behalf of a NALC member who was laid off from the afternoon sortation post office in Little Rock, Arkansas, due to the implementation of the ESAS initiative. The grievance alleged that the implementation of the ESAS initiative was not being done in accordance with USPS guidelines and that it was causing significant disruptions to the mail delivery system. The grievance was settled on Aug. 18, 2020, and it is anticipated that all branches will be able to continue providing afternoon sortation services as planned. The settlement also includes provisions for the resolution of any future grievances that may arise related to the implementation of the ESAS initiative.

NALC provides daily reports from the field regarding delayed mail and undelivered routes. NALC provides this data to USPS in order to encourage them to take immediate action to correct the issues that are causing the delays and non-deliveries. If an NALC branch representative or a NALC national business agent contacts NALC about an issue, NALC will continue communicating these issues to USPS to address as quickly as possible. If the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the NALC branch representative or national business agent, NALC will take further action, including filing a grievance on behalf of the affected member.
NALC, USPS reach tentative National Agreement

Wage schedule changes
The contract provides for the addition of a new top step to Tables One and Two on Nov. 19, 2022. The new career Step P will be $444 annually greater than Step O. Carriers with at least 46 weeks in Step O on Nov. 19, 2022, will advance to Step P. Those with fewer than 46 weeks will advance to Step P upon reaching 46 weeks in Step O. Effective June 19, 2021, the CCA Step CC hourly pay rate (currently $17.29) will be eliminated, and CCA Step BB and its higher pay rate (currently $17.79) will become the new entry step for newly hired CCAs.

New 4-month automatic conversion of CCAs to career status
While the Postal Service will maintain additional CCAs afforded to it under the Sunday package formula mutually agreed to during the previous contract, all CCAs in every size office who would have otherwise continued as non-career employees after 24 months of relative standing will now be automatically converted to career status. Those CCAs who have reached 24 months of relative standing without being converted to career will be converted to part-time flexibles and placed in a new PTF Step AA in Table Two. The Step AA hourly rate will equal the Full-time Step A hourly rate, and the waiting period in PTF Step AA to PTF Step A will be 46 weeks. Upon conversion to full time, regardless of the PTF step they are currently in, PTFs will be placed in the full-time step commensurate with their number of weeks as a PTF, and retain their time credit toward the next step.

Recently retired letter carriers
Letter carriers who have retired over the last several months will receive applicable retroactive general wage increases and COLAs. The Office of Personnel Management will also make any annuity adjustments made necessary by the retroactive increases.

Health insurance
In 2020 and 2021, there is no reduction in the Postal Service’s share of premium costs for career letter carriers’ health insurance. Premium costs for self or self plus one will increase 4 percent in Plan Years 2020 and 2021, rising to 75 percent in their second year of service. However, effective in Plan Year 2022, the Postal Service will contribute 75 percent of the premiums for self only, self plus one or self plus family coverage under the USPS plan, the first-year contribution by USPS will be 65 percent in Plan Years 2020 and 2021, rising to 75 percent in their second year of service. Changes in the plan were made in order to improve the quality of available uniform items in a cost-effective manner. The no-layoff clause that protects letter carriers after six years of service as career employees is retained in the tentative agreement, as well as the prohibitions against contracting out city carrier work.

Another option for full-time letter carriers who work their holiday
Article 11, Sections 3 and 4 have been modified to now allow full-time employees who work their holiday to elect to have their annual leave balance credited with up to eight hours of annual leave in lieu of receiving holiday pay.

Other notable MOUs
The new contract, updated, revised and combined several MOUs, continued dozens of others, and added several new MOUs on a variety of topics. Among the most notable new MOUs are:

- MOU Re: Qualifying period—exception for City Carrier Assistants—CCAs with a minimum of 90 days of prior service to conversion to career status without a break in service are exempt from the Ninety-Day Qualifying Period in ELM 512-313. Previously, all newly converted employees, regardless of time in service, were required to complete 90 days of employment as a career employee prior to being allowed to take annual leave.

- MOU Re: Managed Service Point Scans—No later than June 1, 2020, the Postal Service will begin scanning all packages to Managed Service Points (MSPs) at all city delivery offices. MSPs are already in place at other delivery operations.

- MOU Re: City Delivery and Workplace Improvement Task Force—This renamed MOU modifies the MOU Re: City Delivery Task Force and expands the role of the task force for the purposes of jointly seeking methods to improve the cultural and operational environment in city delivery offices.

- MOU Re: Local Implementation—The local implementation period will be April 29, 2021, to May 28, 2021.

Look for updates on the NALC Member App and visit nalc.org for further information on the new contract and the ratification process. A more detailed summary of the contract will be provided in the December issue of The Postal Record.