Dallas carrier Eugene Gates Jr. dies on the job

NALC is deeply saddened by the death of Eugene Gates Jr. Brother Gate, a member of Dallas, TX Branch 152, collapsed and died of a heart attack on June 1, 2023.

Gates carried the mail for 35 years and was beloved by his colleagues and customers. He was an Army veteran.

“On behalf of NALC, I offer our deepest sympathy to Brother Gates’ family, friends, and colleagues,” NALC President Brian R. Jackson said.

In Eugene Gates’ memory, the NALC President’s Fund will be used to help defray any funeral expenses. Gates will be interred with full military ceremony.

Statement of NALC President Brian L. Renfrey on the hazard of excessive heat

America’s letter carriers often work in dangerous environments. There are numerous factors that pose threats to their safety and health on the job. The escalating, violent crime has increased and resulted in injuries to letter carriers and, unfortunately, even loss of life. As a continuous use to every possible avenue to stop this violence against our members, we are continuously rethinking of another dangerous threat to our members – the hazard of excessive heat, especially for our letter carriers — excessive heat.

Excessive heat exposure can cause heat stress, often resulting in serious illness or death. Unfortunately, we have seen too many examples of this over the last several years, including in 2015. This hazard becomes a greater threat every year, as extreme heat events and temperature records are being set. More and more letter carriers are at risk.

Over the last decade, NALC has fought fiercely in a number of forums to protect letter carriers by insisting that the Postal Service create and enforce a comprehensive heat illness prevention program (HIP) that protects our members by enacting the hazard posed by excessive heat. We have participated in extensive litigation with the Postal Service and the Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) as well as the engaged the Postal Service directly in order to ensure that a HIP that helps protect our members.

The current USPS HIP is available at: https://www.sheppard.com/health/heat.

In 2015, all letter carriers and supervisors were required to be trained on the HIP. If any letter carrier has not received this training, please contact your store manager, branch officer or national business agent as soon as possible so the matter may be investigated and a grievance filed if necessary.

The most important and immediate step that can be taken to protect anyone from the hazard of excessive heat is to learn as much as possible about this potentially life-threatening hazard, particularly the warning signs of heat illness. NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. has compiled a plethora of useful information on the NALC website regarding heat safety, including the warning signs of heat stress, available at nalc.org/workplace-safety/heat-safety.