



## Grievance time limits

**T**ime limits are critical to the proper functioning of the grievance arbitration procedure. This is why we should follow the time lines in the contract to ensure that successful grievance processing takes place. This will lead to a timely outcome.

A problem sometimes occurs when the shop steward is not receiving time for either investigating a potential grievance, talking with a member or witness, or filing a grievance. The contract is quite clear and has specific language that provides for time frames to meet or process the grievance. What is the shop steward to do? Article 17, Section 3, Rights of Stewards, states:

The steward shall request permission from the immediate supervisor and such request shall not be unreasonably denied.

This provision gives the steward the ability to request time to investigate or process a grievance.

One issue that has been coming up is that a steward orally requests time from a supervisor and the time requested is denied. This is where the steward needs to reflect back to Article 15, Section 2, Grievance Procedure—Steps, Informal Step A, which states:

(a) Any employee who feels aggrieved must discuss the grievance with the employee's immediate supervisor within fourteen (14) days of the date on which the employee or the Union first learned or may reasonably have been expected to have learned of its cause. This constitutes the Informal Step A filing date.


This is the beginning of the grievance procedure; following the time limits is up to you. So what does the steward need to do when the supervisor denies the oral time request? The best approach is to make an official request in writing and to be specific as to why you need time (e.g., "time needed to meet with the grievant John Jones con-

cerning a letter of warning on an alleged safety violation"). Putting your request in writing, in duplicate, is important because it is your documented proof that a request was made. Get supervisors to initial and date it as proof they received it. The supervisor will have to make a decision of either approval or disapproval. Be sure to maintain your copy for the grievance file.

If denials continue, you will have the supporting documentation for your local branch officers or NBA that will show you requested the time and the disposition made by your supervisor. Don't get frustrated if denials continue; keep giving written notice of your request and each day add the specifics of why you are requesting time. Also, enter in Item 15 of the PS Form 8190, "issue statement," and in Item 17, "union contentions," that you made repeated attempts to meet with management concerning the grievance. Include the dates and times and the responses of the supervisor. Or you could decide to file an additional separate grievance based on the denials. Just be patient and continue to do what is right.

There are numerous settlements that can be referenced on steward's time. They can be found in the Material Reference System (MRS). A few settlements that might be of assistance are M-00127, M-01001 and M-01144. You can download "M" documents from the NALC website, [nalc.org](http://nalc.org). Don't let repeated oral denials stop the process. Insist on the meeting and moving the case as expeditiously as possible.

### USPS results in 2010

The chart below indicates the 2010 USPS results of work hours for each operation. As you can see, the work hours in each of the areas have been reduced. This can be attributed to the overall loss of volume. 

#### USPS work hours in each operation

Work hours	Actual	Plan	SPLY	Plan Var.	% Plan Var.	SPLY Var.	% SPLY Var.
City delivery	408,488	398,150	424,683	10,338	2.6%	(16,195)	-3.8%
Mail processing	224,465	211,149	251,200	13,316	6.3%	(26,735)	-10.6%
Customer services	160,621	154,342	178,715	6,279	4.1%	(18,094)	-10.1%
Rural delivery	177,152	181,479	181,090	(4,327)	-2.4%	(3,938)	-2.2%
Other	212,041	219,904	222,337	(7,863)	-3.6%	(10,296)	-4.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,182,947</b>	<b>1,165,025</b>	<b>1,258,025</b>	<b>17,922</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>(75,078)</b>	<b>-6.0%</b>

Note: The numbers in this chart may not add up due to rounding.