Remembering Leo

On March 6, 2014, Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 letter carrier Leo Sucharski slipped and fell in his post office’s parking lot after exiting his vehicle. Upon falling to the ground, he hit the back of his head, was seriously injured and was hospitalized until he passed away three days later.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a citation to the post office, finding that it had violated 29 CFR Section 1910.22(a)(1): All places of employment, passageways, store-rooms or service rooms were not kept clean and orderly or in a sanitary condition. The finding determined that: “The pavement of parking lot was not kept clean and orderly...resulted in ’slip and fall’ of [Leo Sucharski].”

It is our understanding that the USPS employs a contractor to clean up the parking lot after a snowfall. It also was reported that the contractor did not have all the vehicles moved, thereby leading to snow melt and ice-up, which in turn became the hazard that resulted in the loss of Brother Sucharski.

As shop stewards, safety captains and letter carriers who care about the safety of your work environment, I urge you to challenge any unsafe conditions in your workplace. If our newer employees do not yet have the necessary safety gear, we need to force management to do its job and provide the tools necessary.

The next four years

As I write this month’s column, we are preparing for the swearing-in of NALC national officers. The last four years flew by at a pace that I would not have imagined. I want to thank President Rolando and you all for the opportunity I have been given to serve the membership here in DC.

The next four years will be challenging for many reasons, not the least of which is the loss of control in the U.S. Senate. Keep an eye on how the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives are unfriendly toward federal employees, toward the Post Office and toward working men and women. If possible, begin now to prepare yourself for the 2016 elections. Keep track of the debates on the Hill. Keep track of the legislation that comes our way. Keep track so that we can share this information with those in our membership who doubt our concern. We need to vote with our paycheck, our benefits and our job security in mind.

Are you keeping an eye on each other?

Last month I wrote about the winter we are entering and I asked you to especially keep an eye on our newer employees, as they may not have the cold-weather gear necessary to safely make their rounds. You need to make sure that management protects all of our employees, and especially our newer brothers and sisters, from the elements. If our newer employees do not yet have the necessary safety gear, we need to force management to do its job and provide the tools necessary.