

Dignity and respect



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Over the last five years, I have addressed the manner in which letter carriers have been treated by management on the workroom floor and have offered guidance as to what we need to do to improve our work environment.

In March of 2011, my column addressed the Real Voice of the Employee, the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace (JSOV), the M-39's Mutual Respect clause and the need to put together a strong grievance to protect employees from the abuse that they suffer at the hands of management.

In August of 2011, my column addressed management's unacceptable methods in meeting their goals

and our need to keep a watchful eye on each other so that, when the need arises, we can step forward with our observations to help one another, and I continued that theme in my October 2011 column.

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In July of 2012, we began a three-part series addressing the need to pay close attention to what is happening so that we can contribute our observations to the union's grievance. In August, Part 2 addressed the need to identify the victim of inappropriate behavior, detailing how they were affected, identification of the witnesses and what they actually saw and heard, pinpointing what portion of the JSOV was violated and how, and lastly, what remedy we should seek. In October, Part 3 shared portions of the opinions of a few arbitrators showing that we can collectively make a difference when we stick together and bring the truth forward.

In January of 2014, my column again addressed our collective need to put a stop to the abusive behavior of those managers who violate your right to a safe work environment free of the abusive behavior that is in violation of the national agreement. This column went on to cite a number of provisions from our national agreement, the M-39 and the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*, which we should be citing as rules that were violated.

The preceding is a backdrop to the following.

In July, the NALC held a training session and national rap session in Houston. If you attended this training, you most likely received a copy of a special preview booklet, *2015 NALC Shop Steward's Guide to Preserving the Right of Letter Carriers to be Treated with Dignity and Respect*.

On Saturday, July 18, Region 7 National Business Agent Chris Wittenburg and St. Louis, MO Branch 343 letter carrier Richard Thurman (both members of the NALC National Safety Task Force), along with Geneva Kubal of the NALC Contract Administration Unit and I conducted two training sessions to cover the *Dignity and Respect* booklet and strategies to make our work environment better.

The booklet provides a shop steward with guidance intended to make his or her task easier to understand and accomplish. The guide takes a shop steward through the five key elements necessary for successful grievance handling. The booklet also addresses how to keep track of important events on the workroom floor so that we preserve necessary observations and records that should later be used in support of our grievances.

The booklet contains a copy of the Feb. 14, 1992, Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace and guidance relating to which sections should be cited for different types of violations.

Lastly, we explain what additional steps we should be taking to document our efforts. For example, we may want to document unsafe management behavior through the use of a Form 1767 or by bringing our concerns to a labor-management meeting, which will allow us to create a formal written record that proves we warned management of the unsafe condition and that they have failed to take appropriate and necessary action. This formal written record will then assist if we need to request the intervention process as agreed to in the Second Joint Statement.

This booklet is a tool to assist us all in changing our work environment for the better. Use this book to the fullest to make the changes you feel necessary.

