

Where is the new *JCAM*?



**Lew
Drass**

Bargaining for a new National Agreement began on June 26. The opening ceremony went on as it usually does. However, one thing is different: This is the first time I can remember since the first *Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)* was written in 2000 that we did not update the manual at least once during the life of each contract.

So, what happened?

After the current National Agreement was ratified in August 2017, we began the process of meeting with USPS and updating the 2014 *JCAM*. We had finished writing most of the new *JCAM* well over a year ago, but two issues created a roadblock that prevented us from finalizing the book.

The first issue created two national grievances. They were Q16N-4Q-C 17638188 - Promotional Pay – Hold in Place Rule and Q16N-4Q-C 18025517 - Hold in Place Rule – Pay Freeze. NALC brought these cases to the national level.

The first case concerned whether or not proposed revisions to *ELM*, Section 422.2 regarding promotional pay rules and the unilateral so-called “Hold in Place” rule (which was not part of the proposed *ELM* revisions) were fair, reasonable and equitable. The second case concerned the implementation of the unilateral so-called “Hold in Place” rule where USPS cut a PS Form 50 for 8,970 carrier technician letter carriers who received a two-step promotional pay increase, effectively freezing each of them at their current step for an additional 92 weeks.

USPS contended that those of you who were affected in this way were given a “cookie” that you were not entitled to, which justified sticking you in the pay “freezer” for an additional 92 weeks. We disagreed.

These cases were settled on July 27, 2018 (M-0193), which states, in part:

The “Hold in Place” rule will be rescinded. City letter carriers affected by this action will receive their step increases as scheduled prior to being held in place and have their pay calculated retroactive to the time they should have received their step increase(s).

The second issue involves the following Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) contained in our current *National Agreement*:

Re: Pay Schedule Consolidation

The parties hereby agree that effective November 24, 2018, all city carrier pay schedules will consolidate existing grade levels into a single grade, as follows:

Grade 1 career city carriers in RSC Q and RSC Q7 will slot to the equivalent step in Grade 2 of their respective pay schedule, and

retain time-in-step credit. The remaining grade level will be classified as “City Carrier.”

Grade 1 CCAs in RSC Q4 and RSC Q5 will slot to the equivalent step in Grade 2 of their respective pay schedule, and retain time-in-step credit. The remaining grade level will be classified as “City Carrier Assistant.”

Carrier Technician Pay

Carrier Technicians (Occupation Code 2310-2010) and CCA Carrier Technicians (Occupation Codes 2310-0047 and 2310-0048) will receive additional compensation equivalent to 2.1% of the employee’s applicable hourly rate for all paid hours. This additional compensation will be considered basic pay for all purposes of determining benefits or additional compensation, including, but not limited to, handbook and manual provisions regarding overtime and premium pay calculations, retirement benefits, life insurance benefits, rate retention, thrift savings plan contributions, back pay, leave, and injury compensation. Handbook or manual provisions which are inconsistent with the preceding sentence will be deleted or modified, as appropriate. This additional compensation will not be considered a premium for purposes of Article 8.4.F.

City Carriers temporarily assigned into Carrier Technician positions for a period of at least five workdays within seven calendar days will receive the additional Carrier Technician compensation during the assignment. Such temporary assignments will be awarded to the senior, qualified, eligible, available employee in the immediate work area in which the temporary vacancy exists.

The second issue also created a national grievance. It is Q16N-4Q-C-18427350 – Pay Schedule Consolidation. NALC brought this case to the national level. This grievance concerns whether employees from other crafts in pay grades equivalent to the former City Carrier Grade 1 are eligible for reassignment to the letter carrier craft under Article 12 of the National Agreement after Nov. 24, 2018.

NALC believes that this MOU, referenced above, upgraded all city letter carriers to the former City Carrier Grade 2, which means that all letter carriers are the equivalent of Level 7 employees in other crafts. This, in turn, means that USPS can no longer withhold city letter carrier positions for Level 6 or lower clerks and/or mail handlers after Nov. 24, 2018. USPS maintains that the MOU referenced above was not an upgrade and did not change anything regarding its ability to withhold city letter carrier positions.

This case was heard on Dec. 18, 2018. A second day of hearing was held on May 20, 2019. Briefs were due July 24, 2019. We are awaiting a decision for this case. Once we receive a decision, we can finish updating the *JCAM*. I wish I could report when this will happen, but unfortunately, I cannot at this time.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the national rap session in Denver.