

Fire and ice



Manuel L. Peralta Jr.

In the January issue of *The Postal Record*, our Contract Talk article addressed vehicle fires. It gave a road map to follow to troubleshoot any issues with your vehicle, what forms are needed to document defects and when further action is required, such as, but not limited to, filing a grievance.

The article provides a ready reference to much of what we have on our nalc.org safety pages. I want to take this opportunity to thank Michelle McQuality, assistant to the president for city delivery, for her commendable work in putting together that comprehensive guide. As Smokey Bear used to say, "Only you can prevent forest fires." We all need to step up and breathe life into

the contract language, print out and use the information that is referenced and file the necessary grievances when our employer fails to do its part.

Keep that Contract Talk in your toolkit to enforce management's obligations on safety as often as needed until it does right on its own.

Polar vortex 2019

The cold hit hard in early February. I applaud managers at many levels who made the wise decision to keep you out of harm's way to the extent possible. On the other hand, there were many managers who treated the cold in the same manner that they treat the heat of summer.



To those of you who have suffered a cold-related injury on the job but have not filed an Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP) claim, please reach out to your union representatives to discuss your situation. Every year, we discover more and more employees who did not know that they were covered by the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) in the event of an on-duty injury.

If you are hurt in the performance of your duties, the cost of medical care should be covered by FECA, not by you or your insurance. If you are injured on duty and have to take time off to seek medical care and/or to recover, such time should not come out of your annual leave or sick leave. It should be covered by Continuation of Pay or Wage Loss Compensation. The point that I am trying to emphasize is that you should reach out to NALC for advice in these situations so that you learn your rights and file the necessary paperwork.

We also learn each year that many employees simply forgo filing OWCP claims because they did not know of this right, they do not want to go deal with confrontational managers, or they think that there is no way that their claim will be approved by OWCP.

An OWCP claim cannot be approved without first filing a claim.

If management puts you in harm's way and you are injured, you should not bear that cost. They should.

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Thank you, Frank Maresca

On a closing note, I want to thank Northeastern New York Branch 358 member Frank Maresca for serving on the national safety task force. At the end of February, Frank is retiring after more than 30 years of service in the Post Office.

I spoke with Branch 358 President Bill Cook, who shared that Frank served as a shop steward, branch secretary and executive vice president of his branch for about 20 years before stepping away from that post to make room for his branch to prepare the leadership of tomorrow.

Frank has been a safety activist at the branch level, the regional level and the national level, working with us between conventions and also during convention presentations.

Frank, may you enjoy many healthy years in retirement. I thank you for joining and helping our efforts on safety.