

Challenging management's commitment to safety



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A few years ago, the USPS created the HERO system. It's easy to find by logging in to LiteBlue. Once in, click the HERO login icon in the Human Resources section, and you will find the HERO main page.

To the right of the page you will find a section titled "Your Actions," which should note the number of training courses assigned to you. Click on that icon and you should land on the page that identifies the training assigned to you, the due date and the actions available, which you will find on the right. On the left side under your name, you will find the courses you have taken, which you can find when clicking on the completions icon.

Once there, it takes you to your active training page. You can filter the information by training status. Change the filter to "completed" to learn how many courses HERO has tracked as having been taken by you. This HERO system was designed to easily find what training is assigned and to easily track who has gone through each piece of training.

But...

This system has been misused by many managers who want to put a checkmark by your name, to show that you were given specific training, when you in fact were not. In the past I have written about this as an ongoing problem.

On July 18 of this year I sent out a memo to the national business agents (NBAs) requesting their assistance in acquiring information related to the question of the accuracy/honesty of the information management has in the HERO system.

My inquiry through your NBAs includes the following request:

If the employee asserts that they had not taken the training as claimed by the employer in their HERO training/tracking system, then please have them provide a statement, indicating that they had not taken the training, yet their name is listed as having done so. Have the statement identify the date of the training in dispute, along with their employee ID number, their name and the name of the training course in dispute.

I am looking for evidence, directly from you, to determine who in management is claiming that you were provided specific training when such a claim is not true.

You can do your part to help by assisting your union in doing what is requested in my July 18 memo. If the request comes from the NBA's office, please provide your information through them. If not, then send your statements and supporting documents to my attention at NALC Headquarters.

I am seeking this information because of concerns about management's honesty on its training claims. When I approached management to discuss this issue, they indicated that they needed specifics to address.

If an employee is issued discipline in a case where management claims the grievant was instructed through a stand-up talk of a HERO training, then it may be necessary to thoroughly investigate to confirm that the stand-up talk actually occurred.

If you are a shop steward, you should be reviewing Article 16 of the *Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)* as a refresher before you begin your investigation of whether or not discipline was justly issued to one of your employees. One of the principles requires that there is a "rule" and that the employee was aware of the rule.

The principles of just cause are discussed beginning on page 16-1 of the *JCAM*, which provides as follows:

Is there a rule? If so, was the employee aware of the rule? Was the employee forewarned of the disciplinary consequences for failure to follow the rule? It is not enough to say, "Well, everybody knows that rule," or "We posted that rule ten years ago." You may have to prove that the employee should have known of the rule...

Management is required to hold safety stand-up talks on a weekly basis. Sometimes those stand-up talks are not logged into the HERO system, as they were not assigned as a requirement from upper management at the district, area or headquarters level.

In that case, there should be a stand-up talk log book, clipboard or other method used at your office. This is useful for an investigating steward to review the material that management claims was given to our employees. Ask the grievant and others if they recall the stand-up. If they don't, you need to investigate this matter through management.

The point of this month's column is to remind you to question management's commitment to safety. Did managers really train us through properly given HERO courses at work? Did they actually hold a stand-up talk and provide us information that instructs us about what is expected of us in different situations? Or, are managers fudging the truth by making false claims and placing checkmarks by our names so they get a pat on their heads? They should be training you on how to safely do your job and they should stand behind safe decision making.