

Safety rules are a carrier's best tools

Federal law and the National Agreement mandate that the Postal Service provide safe working conditions for letter carriers and other postal employees. Ensuring that safe working conditions are maintained is a cooperative effort between management and employees. Safety in the workplace is always important and carriers should insist on having a workplace that is as safe as possible.

New city carriers might not know how they fit into the overall workplace safety picture. This article will briefly describe the National Agreement requirements, the Postal Service's responsibilities, and how carriers can address unsafe working conditions.

The Postal Service is subject to the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

This law empowers the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) division to enforce the Act's standards and regulations. The Postal Service is required to investigate accidents and to maintain records on occupational injuries and illnesses.

In addition to its requirements under federal law, Article 14 of the National Agreement obligates the Postal Service "to provide safe working conditions" in postal facilities and "develop a safe work force." Additionally, Article 14 affirms that NALC will cooperate with and assist management to live up to this responsibility.

Article 14 states in part:

Section 1. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installations and to develop a safe working force. The Union will cooperate with and assist management to live up to this responsibility.

Section 2. Cooperation

The Employer and the Union insist on the observance of safe rules and safe procedures by employees and insist on correction of unsafe conditions. Mechanization, vehicles and vehicle equipment, and the workplace must be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition, including adequate occupational health and environmental conditions. The Employer shall make available at each installation forms to be used by employees in reporting unsafe and unhealthy conditions. If an employee believes he/she is being required to work under unsafe conditions, such employee may:

- (a) notify such employee's supervisor who will immediately investigate the condition and take corrective action if necessary;
- (b) notify such employee's steward, if available, who may discuss the alleged unsafe condition with such employee's supervisor;

(c) file a grievance at Formal Step A of the grievance procedure within fourteen (14) days of notifying such employee's supervisor if no corrective action is taken during the employee's tour; and/or;

(d) make a written report to the Union representative from the local Safety and Health Committee who may discuss the report with such employee's supervisor.

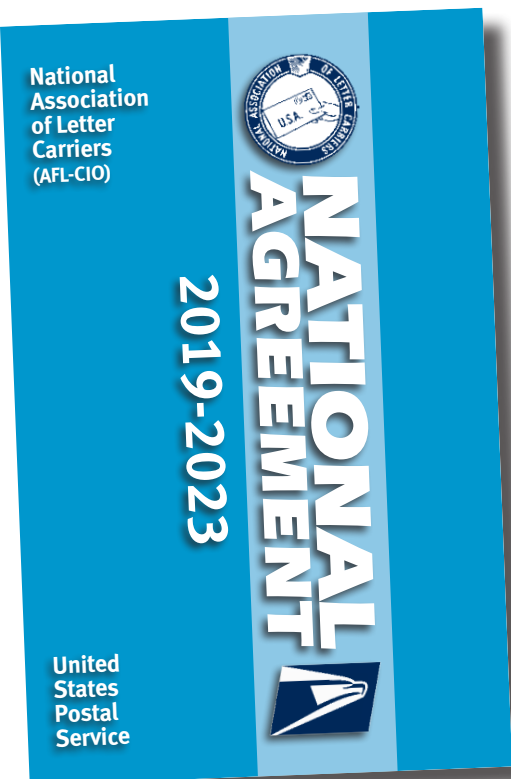
The National Agreement provides that employees have the obligation to observe safety rules and procedures, and that management correct unsafe conditions and equipment and also ensure that the workplace is safe and sanitary. In fulfilling its responsibilities, management must make available at the workplace PS Form 1767, Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice that carriers and other employees can use to report unsafe and unhealthy conditions.

Section 824 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)* outlines the procedures for employees to report hazards and unsafe conditions or practices to their supervisors. PS Form 1767, Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice (on opposite page) should be used by any employee, or their union representative, who believes that an unsafe or unhealthy condition exists in the workplace.

From the *ELM*:

824.6 Investigating Employee Reports of Hazard, Unsafe Condition, or Practice

PS Form 1767 is designed to encourage employee participation in the Postal Service safety and health program and to provide prompt action when employees report a hazard. This form provides a channel of communication between employees and management that promotes a prompt analysis and response with corrective action to reports of al-



leged hazards, unsafe conditions, or unsafe practices.

The *ELM* directs supervisors to ensure that an adequate supply of PS Form 1767 is readily available for employees to report when unsafe conditions exist. It also requires that employees be able to obtain and/or submit the form anonymously:

824.62 Availability of Form

Supervisors must maintain a supply of PS Forms 1767 in the workplace in a manner that provides employees with both easy and (if desired) anonymous access.

Carriers should never feel guilty, foolish or intimidated about reporting a safety issue.

Section 824.63 of the *ELM* discusses employee responsibilities for reporting hazards. There are several ways an employee may report safety concerns:



824.631 Employee

Any employee, or the representative of any employee, who believes that an unsafe or unhealthful condition exists in the workplace may do any or all of the following:

- a. File a report of the condition on PS Form 1767 with the immediate supervisor and request an inspection of the alleged condition.
- b. If the employee desires anonymity, file PS Form 1767 directly with the installation’s safety personnel, who will immediately give the report to the employee’s supervisor for necessary action. (In such cases, safety personnel must not disclose the name of the individual making the report.)
- c. Report alleged unsafe conditions to a steward, if one is available, who may then discuss the condition with the employee’s supervisor.

Discrimination against an employee for reporting a safety and health hazard is unlawful.

Letter carriers are encouraged to contribute to a safer work environment

	Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice		Hazard Control Number (Assigned by Safety Officer) _____
I. EMPLOYEE'S ACTION			
Area (Specify Work Location)			
Describe hazard, unsafe condition or practice. Recommended corrective action.			
Employee	Print and Sign		Date and Tour
II. SUPERVISOR'S ACTION			
Recommend or describe action taken to eliminate the hazard, unsafe condition or practice. (If corrective action has been taken, indicate the date of abatement.)			
	Print and Sign		Date
III. APPROVING OFFICIAL'S ACTION (Check One and Complete)			
The following corrective action was taken to eliminate the hazard, unsafe condition or practice (Indicate date of abatement):			
A work order has been submitted to the manager, plant maintenance to effect the following change:			
There are no reasonable grounds to determine such a hazard exists. This decision is based upon:			
Approving Official	Print and Sign		Date Date Employee Notified
IV. MAINTENANCE ACTION (Complete if Necessary)			
Maintenance Supervisor	Print and Sign		Date Date Hazard Abated
PS Form 1767, March 2017 PSN 7530-01-000-9422 WHITE – Local Safety Office (After Abatement) PINK – Local Safety Official (Initial Notice) YELLOW – Approving Official BLUE – Employee			

by using this form to report hazards that they encounter. In addition, employees must report all accidents and injuries immediately.

Article 14 provides several paths for employees to pursue should they believe they are being required to work under unsafe conditions. These

The “Safety and Health” tab is located on the NALC website’s dropdown menu.



Safety rules (continued)

avenues include notification to a supervisor, notification to a supervisor through a shop steward, the filing of a PS Form 1767, and ultimately the filing of a Formal Step A grievance within 14 days of notifying management if no corrective action has been taken during the employee’s tour.

Finally, the National Agreement attempts to foster a cooperative approach to safety and health by establishing joint safety and health committees at the national, area and local levels to oversee, evaluate and improve management’s safety and

health programs.

Every postal employee, including city carriers, plays a role in making sure that the work environment is safe. City carriers should not be afraid to report safety concerns. If a carrier isn’t comfortable reporting a concern to the supervisor or postmaster, they should take their PS Form 1767 to their NALC shop steward, who can submit it.

For more information related to NALC efforts to promote safety and health, select “Safety and Health” on the “Workplace Issues” tab on the NALC website at nalc.org. **PR**

Deadlines approaching for national convention



Boston Convention and Exhibition Center

Several deadlines for the 73rd Biennial National Convention Aug. 5-9 in Boston are approaching.

Delegate eligibility lists for the convention have been mailed to all branches. The lists must be completed and returned to the office of Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine at NALC Headquarters no later than June 5 for branch

representatives to be registered as delegates to the convention.

All proposed amendments to the *NALC Constitution* to be submitted for consideration at the convention must be received by Rhine’s office by June 5 as well. That date is 60 days in advance

of the convention, as prescribed by the *NALC Constitution*. Proposed amendments will appear in July’s *Postal Record* for the membership to review.

Resolutions to be considered by delegates also must be received by the June 5 deadline to be printed in the *Resolutions and Amendments* book provided to delegates. Resolutions received after June 5 still may be considered at the convention.

Branches wishing to sell items in the designated branch sales area during the convention must contact Rhine’s office to secure guidelines and forms. The completed forms must be returned to Headquarters by June 5 as well.

Editors of branch and state association newsletters and websites who wish to enter the NALC Branch Publications Competition must submit their entries to be received by April 1. The announcement and rules for the competition were published in the January issue of *The Postal Record*, available on the NALC website.

Go to nalc.org for more convention news. **PR**