



Statement of NALC President Brian L. Renfroe on the hazard of excessive heat

America's letter carriers often work in dangerous environments. There are numerous factors that pose threats to our safety and health on the job. Recently, violent crime has increased and resulted in injuries to letter carriers and, unfortunately, even loss of life. As we continue to use every possible avenue to stop this violence against our members, we are continuously reminded of another dangerous threat to the safety and health of most letter carriers—excessive heat.

Unmitigated excessive heat can cause heat stress, often resulting in serious illness or death. Unfortunately, we have seen far too many examples of this over the last several years, including in 2023. This hazard becomes a greater threat every year, as science shows that temperature and heat indices are steadily increasing.

Over the last decade, NALC has fought fiercely in a number of forums to protect letter carriers by insisting that the Postal Service create and enforce a comprehensive heat illness prevention program (HIPP) that protects our members by mitigating the hazard posed by excessive heat. We have participated in extensive litigation with the Postal Service and the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), as well as engaged the Postal Service directly to create and implement a HIPP that helps protect our members. The current USPS HIPP is available at nalc.org/workplace-issues/safety-and-health/body/PS-FY-22-HIPP.pdf.

In 2023, all letter carriers and supervisors were required to be trained on the current HIPP by April. If any letter carrier has not received this training, please contact your shop steward, branch officer or national business agent as soon as possible so the matter may be investigated and a grievance filed if necessary.

The most important and immediate step that can be taken to protect anyone from the hazard of excessive heat is to learn as much as possible about this potentially life-threatening hazard, particularly the warning signs of heat illness. NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. has compiled a plethora of useful information on the NALC website regarding heat safety, including the warning signs of heat stress, available at nalc.org/workplace-issues/safety-and-health/extreme-weather. I encourage every letter carrier to familiarize themselves with this information. Not knowing these warning signs could result in heat illness or another tragedy.

The 285,000 active and retired members of the NALC mourn the brothers and sisters who we have lost to heat illness. Their loved ones, friends and co-workers remain in our thoughts and prayers. We also hope for a speedy recovery for all of our brothers and sisters currently suffering from heat illness.

The safety and health of our members is, and always will be, the top priority of all the members of the NALC. Together, we will continue our fight to make our jobs safer and protect our members from the ever-increasing hazard of excessive heat.

FAMILY Act introduced in Congress

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) introduced an updated version of the Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act (H.R. 3481/S. 1714) on May 17. The FAMILY Act would provide 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for all workers, including postal employees.

The updated bill expands the types of caregiving relationships that would be covered. Workers could use this leave for personal illness as well as caring for a spouse, registered domestic partner, parent, child, parent-in-law, child-in-law, grandparent, step-relatives and more. Additionally, the bill would allow workers to use the leave for non-medical safety needs relating to sexual or domestic violence.

The FAMILY Act would use a progressive wage replacement rate for benefits that would supply 85 percent on the first \$1,257 of monthly wages, 69 percent of monthly wages from \$1,258 to \$3,500, and 50 percent of monthly wages from \$3,501 to \$6,200.

Currently, federal employees, including postal employees, are entitled to 12 weeks of medical and family leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act, but it is not guaranteed paid leave.

A version of the FAMILY Act has been introduced in every Congress since 2013. NALC will update letter carriers on any future action by lawmakers.

Branch Officers Training set for San Antonio, Pittsburgh

NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine has announced that two Branch Officers Training seminars will be held later this year.

Branch Officers Training sessions consist of three and a half days of educational seminars tailored to assist branch presidents, vice presidents, treasurers, recording secretaries, financial secretaries and trustees in the performance of their duties.

Branch Officers Training covers the basics for financial officers: taxes; accounting systems and maintenance of proper controls; reporting to the Department of Labor; fiduciary duties under the Landrum-Griffin Act; bonding of branch officers and IRS reporting requirements.

Additional training topics include the NALC Constitution and branch bylaws; branch operations and identifying branch policies; maintaining accurate and complete meeting minutes; member notification requirements; record-keeping; branch elections; and branch dues and how to read a dues roster.

One session of Branch Officers Training is set for Sept. 18-21 in San Antonio. Room rate (single/double) is \$225 plus tax.

The other session will take place Oct. 30-Nov. 2 in Pittsburgh. Room rate (single/double) is \$189 plus tax.

The classes do fill up fast, so officers interested in attending should submit the registration form as soon as possible.

The registration form for both Branch Officers Trainings is below. Branches must use the registration form to register for the class. Note: **Please do not make airline reservations until you receive an acceptance letter.**

Branch Officers Training registration form

Please register me for one of the following NALC Branch Officers Training seminars:

Sept. 18-21 in San Antonio

Room rate [single/double] is \$225 plus tax.*

Oct. 30-Nov. 2 in Pittsburgh

Room rate [single/double] is \$189 plus tax.*

If your chosen seminar is already full, check here if you'd like to be registered for the other one.

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

Name _____

Branch or state position _____

Branch # _____ Branch city _____ State _____

Home address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone number (required) _____

Send to:

**Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine
National Association of Letter Carriers
100 Indiana Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144**

**Or email a copy of the form to:
BOT@nalc.org**

* Please do not make airline reservations until you receive an acceptance letter.

Dallas carrier Eugene Gates Jr. dies on the job

NALC is deeply saddened by the death of Eugene Gates Jr. Brother Gates, a member of Dallas, TX Branch 132, collapsed and died in a customer's yard on June 20.

Gates carried the mail for 36 years and was beloved by his colleagues and customers. He was an Army veteran. Gates is survived by his wife, Carla, and many other family members. He was 66.

"On behalf of NALC, I send my deepest sympathies to Brother Gates's family, friends and colleagues," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. "Eugene was a dedicated letter carrier with a long and successful Postal Service career. He will be greatly missed by everyone, particularly his fellow branch members and customers."

Food drive brings in 42 million lbs. of food, and counting

Letter carriers filled local pantry shelves during the Letter Carriers' "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive held on Saturday, May 13, continuing a proud tradition. The first annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive was held on May 15, 1993, and has continued to be held every second Saturday in May, except for the two years at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With inflation driving the cost of food higher, demand for supplies from food banks has increased. Meanwhile, emergency assistance from the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, which helped people through the pandemic, has expired. These developments made this year's food drive particularly critical.

In the 30 years since it began, the food drive has collected approximately 1.9 billion pounds of food for those in need. The food goes to local pantries to restock shelves that face depletion.

As of June 13, with about 60 percent of branches reporting, this year's nationwide total of collected food stood at 38,980,214 pounds. With an additional 500,000 pounds of food donated by Kellogg Co. and \$212,808 in cash donations, the total so far rises to 42,033,910 pounds.

Letter carriers, and the volunteers who supported their efforts to collect millions of pounds of food for local communities throughout the country in just one day, made the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive a great success once again. And the need is great, with hunger affecting 1 in 8 Americans, including millions of children, senior citizens and veterans.

The Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is held in 10,000 cities and towns across the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. It's the largest single-day food drive in the country.

The annual food drive comes at a critical time for food pantries. Donations slow down after the winter holidays, while free or reduced-cost meals at schools that many children rely on are not available during the summer months.

On May 13, letter carriers, with the help of postal employees in other crafts, managers, family, friends and volunteers, collected bags of non-perishable food placed near their mailboxes by residents.

"Thanks to our national sponsors, and the local sponsors who pitched in to pay for collection bags distributed to postal customers, letter carriers found plenty of food left by generous postal customers this year," Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson said. "And as they do each year, letter carriers went above and beyond to bring millions of pounds of donations to food banks to help people in need in their communities."



Eau Claire, WI Br. 728

House bill to allow USPS to ship alcohol reintroduced

Reps. Dan Newhouse (R-WA), Jennifer Wexton (D-VA), and eight other co-sponsors reintroduced the USPS Shipping Equity Act (H.R. 3721) on May 25. The bill, which is identical to legislation introduced last Congress, would allow the Postal Service to ship beer, wine and other alcoholic beverages directly from licensed producers and retailers to legal customers.

Current law prohibits the Postal Service from shipping alcoholic goods; making private shippers, such as FedEx and UPS, the only shipping option for wineries, breweries and other producers to have goods delivered directly to customers. This bill would allow USPS to ship these beverages and would generate an estimated \$190 million annually in new revenue for the Postal Service.

If passed into law, USPS would have two years to develop regulations ensuring that the Postal Service is prepared to safely deliver alcoholic beverages to adult consumers with appropriate identification checks. The bill also would expand access to direct-to-consumer alcoholic shipments.

Unlike private shippers, USPS delivers to every address in the nation. The current ban on the Postal Service's right to ship alcohol limits access to these products for many Americans, especially in rural areas.

"NALC applauds Reps. Newhouse and Wexton for reintroducing the USPS Shipping Equity Act," NALC Executive Vice President Paul Barner said. "The bill is an important step toward meeting the growing needs of our customers while generating revenue for the Postal Service, expanding the agency's service opportunities, and supporting small businesses nationwide."

Apply for the NALC Leadership Academy

NALC is now accepting applications for the 2024 Leadership Academy, which is open to all active NALC members.

The Leadership Academy consists of three weeklong sessions held over a five-month period at the Maritime Institute near Baltimore, MD. During the classes, students discuss effective leadership skills and the union's legislative agenda. They learn about topics such as the Dispute Resolution Process, strategic planning, branch financial responsibilities, retirement issues, route protection, workers' compensation, effective negotiation techniques, and communicating through traditional and social media.

Students are required to complete outside learning projects after returning home following Weeks 1 and 2. Upon graduation, each student will spend a fourth week working in their national business agent's office.

The Academy curriculum is designed to both develop and enhance the knowledge and skills that are essential for NALC leaders. In addition to the Leadership Academy staff, each of the resident national officers, as well as many Headquarters staff members, help teach at the Academy, providing students with NALC's top experts in each field. Currently, five resident officers, 12 national business agents, 23 regional administrative assistants, and 34 Headquarters and regional staff members, along with hundreds of state and branch representatives, are graduates of the NALC Leadership Academy.

Applications are available on nalc.org or by scanning the QR code above and will be accepted through Sept. 15.



July MDA Branch Challenge

From July 1-31, branches can join the July MDA Branch Challenge by sending in any offline income raised to MDA's Chicago office at Muscular Dystrophy Association, Attn: NALC, P.O. Box 7410354, Chicago, IL 60674-0354. Be sure to use the NALC allocation form.

Branches are already registered on the MDA/NALC website. Find your branch page at mda.donordrive.com/event/NALC2023. This will be your branch's online hub for the entire year to raise money on the web, host events, and track all offline donations/checks, too.

The 2023 July Branch Challenge will continue to fundraise during MDA Summer Camp. There has been a significant increase in the cost for MDA to send kids to camp this summer, and we still need your help to ensure that each child who wants to attend MDA Summer Camp has a spot:

- \$3,000 is the average cost for one camper to attend MDA Summer Camp.

- \$1,000 is the cost to provide durable medical equipment rentals for a camp location.

Branches that raise \$3,000 in July will be awarded prizes and recognition in email and social media.

Remember, volunteers are always needed for MDA Summer Camp. Camp can change your life just as it changes the lives of campers. MDA Summer Camp wouldn't be possible without people like you.

Connect with MDA: Please contact MDA for answers to questions, for help with fundraising, or to confirm they have contact information for your branch. You can reach them at 312-392-1100 or nalc@mdausa.org.

National Association of Letter Carriers

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