



March 15, 1995

MAR 1995
Received
Office of The
Executive
Vice President

MEMORANDUM FOR: *Postmasters & Plant Managers*

SUBJECT: English "Only" Speaking Policy

Attached please find a decision from the Office of Federal Operations (OFO) pertaining to an "English Only" speaking policy involving an appeal in Su-Chin Yee v. U.S. Postal Service, Appeal No. 01942185, dated January 27, 1995. Ms. Yee had indicated her supervisor gave her instructions that she could not speak in any other language except English in the office. It has been determined by the Commission that such a "speak-English-only" rule violated Title VII, and such a rule is looked at very closely.

It is understood official instructions are to be given to our employees in the English language. However, due to the diverse cultural workforce within many of our offices, we should continue to respect the rights of our employees to converse with one another in their language of choice during their breaks, lunches, or in conversations of a personal nature.

If you have further questions regarding this decision, please contact me (805) 981-3322.

Mary Abbett
Mary Abbett
Senior Labor Relations Specialist

Attachment

cc: Managers, Post Office Operations
Manager, Human Resources
Labor Relation Specialists

	ACTION	INFO
MDO OG		
MDO INC		
MDO AUTO		
MDO BBM		
MGR IPS		
MGR T/N		
MGR QI		
MGR MAINT		
APSO		
APMHO		
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Original

Make sure all Managers & Supervisors comply.

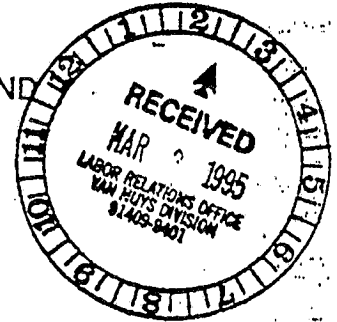


VAN NUYS
HUMAN RESOURCES
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191		Action	Info
Pers Van Nuys			
HR SB Pasa Ox			
Labor Relations			
Safety			
Injury Comp			
Training			
Read			

FEB 28 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR: MANAGERS, HUMAN RESOURCES AND
EEO PROFESSIONALS,
PACIFIC AND WESTERN AREA



SUBJECT: "English - Only" Speaking Policy

We recently received a decision from the Office of Federal Operations (OFO) regarding an "English-Only" speaking policy. Su-Chin Yee v. U.S.P.S., Appeal No. 01942185 (1/27/95).

In this case, the appellant testified that her Supervisor told her, "[t]his is an office environment and you cannot speak in any other language except English in this office." in response to this policy, OFO stated that, "The Commission has long taken the position that such a blanket requirement has a burdensome effect on the employee's terms and conditions of employment.... The Commission presumes that such a speak-English-only rule violates Title VII, and gives such a rule close scrutiny."

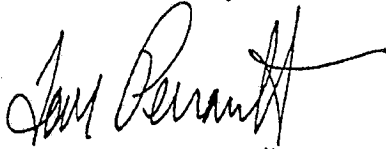
The Commission further noted that the record established that the District had issued a policy statement almost two years earlier regarding the rights of employees to speak in languages other than English. This policy held, in part:

While it is important that you insure that all official instructions are in English, the... Division does have a large multi-cultural workforce and we will continue to respect the right of our employees to converse with one another in other than the English language during breaks, lunches or in conversations of a personal nature.

Hence, the Commission found that the Supervisor's instruction was counter to the principles set out in its guidelines, and found that the impropriety of the instruction was even more glaring in view of the agency policy that had been in place for almost two years by the time of the incident.

If you are interested in reading the full decision, please contact the EEO Compliance and Appeals Section at (415) 794-6274.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Perrault", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas M. Perrault
Appeals Review Specialist
850 Cherry Avenue
San Bruno CA 94099-4402