

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

NORTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

New York, NY 10098-000

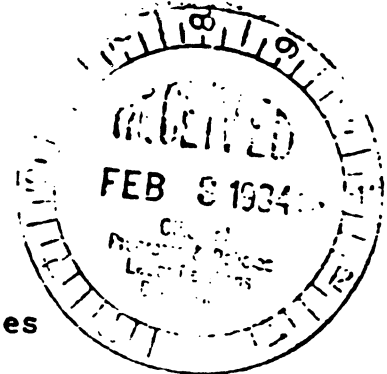
DATE: January 31, 1984

REF: NE221:PVTartaglia:ag:0221

SUBJECT: Implementation of Regional Instructions #399

TO: Mr. James C. Gildea  
Assistant Postmaster General  
Labor Relations Department  
U. S. Postal Service Headquarters  
Room 4801  
Washington, D. C. 20260-4100

Att: Mr. W. Downes  
Director, Office of Programs & Policies



Set forth below for your consideration are two (2) issues related to our on-going implementation of Regional Instructions #399. It would be appreciated if these matters were reviewed and a response provided so that the Northeast Regional position is not inconsistent with the Headquarters posture. Those matters are;

1. Application of the "Attrition Concept" (Section IID of Regional Instructions #399)

As discussed with you and LIUNA Representative, J. Amma, my finding that the throw-off on the New Haven, Ct. 185 operation was in fact distribution and therefore clerical craft work has lead to the displacement of 6 to 8 Mailhandlers over 3 tours. While initially the Mailhandlers disagreed with that conclusion, the matter has cooled down as to the merits and now is centered on how we implement the attrition factor. Some background;

- a. At New Haven as a general premise, a Full Time Regular Mailhandler bids a very broad area - Incoming, LSM Section, Paper Section, etc. (See attached Local Agreement). In some cases the bid is specific such as the Linear Sorter Section or TOW Motors.
- b. The Union in local negotiations twice attempted to get more specifically defined work areas, but were unsuccessful.

- c. In the particular case at hand, Operation 185 is part of the overall Incoming Cityside Section. There are numerous other operations (eg. - 150, 160, 170) within this overall section. Mailhandlers therefore are moved from one operation to another if necessary, although any one Mailhandler may work a full 8 hours on any one operation.
- d. Prior to the transfer to the clerk craft, Operation 185 was staffed principally on an overtime basis by beginning and ending tour overtime. Although any one Mailhandler may have worked their a full 8 hours on any one day, no Mailhandler worked there consistently on an 8 hour basis. In other words, the operation was used as a fill-in, depending upon volume in other operations - if Volume was high, overtime would be used in #185 - if volume was light, Mailhandlers from other operations would be switched in when available.
- e. As of December 1, 1983, Volume in the #185 Operation was up 15% over SPLY.

With this in mind, I determined that no Mailhandler was filling an "incumbered duty assignment" in Operation #185 and advised local management that they could go ahead immediately and replace the Mailhandlers with clerks with the proviso, that the "attrition concept" was still applicable, but instead of being strictly applicable to Operation #185, it was applicable to the overall Incoming Cityside Section. In other words, the number of Mailhandlers in the Incoming Cityside Section could not be reduced below the 6 to 8 Mailhandlers displaced by the transfer, except by attrition.

What this means is that on the day of the official transfer of the work, the Mailhandlers were guaranteed approximately 2 to 3 Mailhandlers on each Tour continuing to remain in the Cityside Section. If by chance, on any one day we wanted to reduce the number of Mailhandlers in this section and reassign them temporarily to another section, we could, but if work continued to be performed in the Incoming Cityside Section, two or three Mailhandlers had to stay behind.

I have applied this same logic to a similar situation in Boston and there was no problem. The problem is not that uncommon in that Mailhandlers as a general premise do not have specific bid assignments whereas clerks do.

Your advice is appreciated as to whether or not our approach is correct.

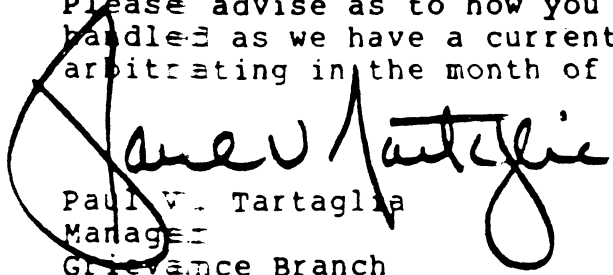
2. Use of Linear Sorter

New Haven is one of the few Post Offices as opposed to BMC's that have a Linear Sorter. The Linear Sorter is a very versatile machine and as such accommodates, but the very smallest parcels, although it is principally designed to handler outside pieces which as you know, by definition are generally large and cumbersome. The dispute with the Clerks develops when on any one day the receipt of priority mails, special delivery and special handling go beyond a certain point. The Tour Supt. gauges the volume by the hour and when it reaches this certain point, directs that a portion of these priority mails, special handling and special delivery parcels (usually the larger pieces) be rerouted to the Linear Sorter where they are processed through. (See attached letters.) The clerks contend that they only can "distribute" priority mails and that by placing some of these mails on the Linear Sorter, we are indirectly reassigning clerk work to the Mailhandlers.

same  
set  
sides

There is no dispute that such an action is an efficient and rational use of machine and manpower. While the APWU will accept such a concept in truly unusual situations (eg. - Christmas Rush from November 15 to December 15), it has a problem when we do this from week to week depending upon volume.

Please advise as to how you suggest this matter should be handled as we have a current case which we anticipate arbitrating in the month of February.

  
Paul V. Tartaglia  
Manager  
Grievance Branch

Attachments

cc: C. Scialla  
J. Merrill  
District Manager - Ct. Valley  
Postmaster/MSA Manager - New Haven, Ct.  
A. Kane