



THE POSTMASTER GENERAL
Washington, DC 20260

April 6, 1979

MEMORANDUM TO: Regional Postmasters General
District Managers
Management Sectional Center Managers
Bulk Mail Center Managers

SUBJECT: Requests for Voluntary
Transfer/Reassignment

Since becoming Postmaster General, I have received considerable correspondence from field employees seeking assistance in obtaining transfers to other offices within the Postal Service. Some of these employees had been denied transfers for sound reasons; however, an equal number had received denials by field managers apparently only because it was not their "policy" to consider filling vacant positions by transfer.

There is much to be gained by considering the voluntary transfer of qualified, skilled and experienced Postal people in lieu of hiring new employees. The approval of transfer requests can improve morale and performance, and can be helpful in controlling the accession rate.

In light of the potential benefits that can be realized from granting transfers, short of instituting mandatory policy instructions which would impose restrictions on local hiring autonomy, I expect all managers to adhere to the basic guidelines set forth below concerning voluntary transfer requests.

I am not unaware of the impact that these basic guidelines may impose on some managers, especially in the "Sun Belt" offices which are currently receiving hundreds of transfer requests annually. I am also sensitive to field managers who are reluctant to grant reassignments because of local economic conditions, unemployment rates, and an uncertainty

concerning potential performance of transferees. Management reaction to these potential problems, however, cannot be to establish a blanket prohibition on transfers, or to implement other harsh limitations on transfers.

- A. These guidelines are to be followed within the context of any rights and obligations established by applicable collective bargaining agreements and existing regulations concerning the transfer/reassignment of non-bargaining unit employees.
- B. Installation heads may continue to fill authorized vacancies through promotion, internal reassignment and change to lower level, transfer from other agencies, etc., consistent with existing regulations.
- C. Prior to hiring from entrance registers, installation heads will afford full consideration to all transfer requests from within the Postal Service. Such requests from qualified employees will not be unreasonably denied. Sound judgment must be exercised by all employing managers. Local economic and unemployment conditions, as well as EEO factors are valid concerns, however, they must not be used merely as an excuse in denying a transfer request. When hiring from entrance registers is justified based on these local conditions, an attempt should be made to fill vacancies from both sources. Under these circumstances, if there are sufficient qualified applicants for transfer, normally at least one out of every five entry level craft vacancies should be filled by the granting of a transfer request.
- D. Responses to transfer requests such as "It is not my policy to accept transfers" are inconsistent with good employee relations and will not be acceptable. Where vacancies exist and consideration for reassignment is afforded an employee, both the gaining and losing installation head must be fair in their evaluations. A manager can only feel confident in making a reassignment decision if he or she can expect an accurate picture of an employee's work record. Evaluations must be valid and to the point, with unsatisfactory work records accurately documented. Management at the losing installation has the responsibility to deal with poor performance through normal corrective measures, including discipline where appropriate, and must not view voluntary transfers as a means for avoiding this responsibility.

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Similarly, gaining installation managers must not deny deserving and qualified employees opportunities for reassignment because of unfounded reservations concerning performance. Prior disciplinary records must be reviewed carefully and objectively, taking into account the nature, seriousness, and frequency of the offense as well as the employee's performance record subsequent to the resulting discipline, before making a reassignment decision.

- E. Responsible managers must respond timely to requests, granting the transfer where appropriate, or giving specific reasons for denial. Denials must be based on reasonable cause, such as documented poor performance, recent disciplinary action, excessive absenteeism, local employment conditions, etc. Similarly, employees must be notified promptly if no suitable vacancies exist or are expected in the near future.
 - F. Upon granting an employee's request for reassignment, the installation head will contact the employee's current installation head to arrange for mutually agreeable reassignment and reporting dates. A minimum of two weeks' notice to the losing office will normally be afforded.
 - G. For bargaining unit employees, when reassignments are granted to a position in the same grade, employees will be reassigned at the same grade and step. Step increase anniversaries will be maintained. Where voluntary reassignments are to a position at a lower level, employees will be assigned to the step in the lower grade consistent with Part 753.323 of the Postal Manual (soon to be issued as Chapter 420 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual).
- Salary adjustments for non-bargaining employees must be in accord with Chapter 410, Employee and Labor Relations Manual.
- H. Full-time regular bargaining unit employees reassigned under these guidelines are not normally reassigned to full-time positions in the new installation if career Part-Time Flexible employees are available for conversion at the new installation. In such cases reassigned employees will be reassigned as Part-Time Flexibles in the new installation.

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Full-time non-bargaining unit employees will be reassigned into full-time positions unless the reassignment is to a vacant bargaining unit position.

All employees reassigned to positions in the bargaining unit will have their seniority established in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements.

- I. Relocation expenses will not be paid by the Postal Service incident to voluntary reassignment. Such expenses, as well as any resulting interview expenses, must be borne by employees.
- J. Under no circumstances will employees be requested or required to resign, and then be reinstated in order to circumvent these pay provisions, or to provide for an additional probationary period.

Our employees are our most important resources, and deserve the utmost consideration in those areas which directly relate to their jobs and performance.

I will expect each of you to ensure that all offices afford individual and fair consideration to employees requesting reassignment, in keeping with the intent of this memorandum, and to manage reassignments in such a way as to make the Postal Service a better place to work for all of us.



William F. Bolger