

January 2, 1974

APWU POSITION ON LIUNA MAIL HANDLERS MEMORANDUM

During the past year the Clerk Craft of the APWU has been subjected to extensive raiding of Clerk positions by the Mail Handlers division of LIUNA. The Mail Handlers have released an instruction manual which has probably misled many postmasters and local management officials. This manual can be construed to represent total Labor-Management agreement on the interpretation of MH 5 or Article XLIII, Section 12 which appears on page 122 of the National Agreement.

Some Mail Handler representatives have approached postmasters insisting that they comply with the provisions of the Mail Handler manual or be in violation of the Agreement. Postmasters were urged to make an immediate survey of the office to establish Mail Handler positions and revert Clerk positions. Whether or not this occurred in your office, many clerical positions have been changed to Mail Handler positions nationwide.

This document is intended to provide suggestions for APWU officials to protect their craft positions and to combat such actions on the part of the Mail Handlers. We will also provide instructions on filing contract violations where such actions have already been successful.

The Mail Handler manual implies that all non-scheme distribution is a Mail Handler duty. This was one of the Mail Handler proposals during negotiations but it was never agreed to by the APWU or the USPS. It is obvious that the Mail Handlers wish to acquire all parcel post distribution. The K.P. 8, Level 4 Mail Handler position description includes only occasional simple distribution of parcel post. This K.P. 8 position description appears

on page 3 of their manual. Our first enclosure will provide you with the contract language of the actual agreement which was reached.

The Mail Handler interpretations tended not only to mislead management at the local level but also to mislead some local APWU officials into acceptance of the manual as an official document. Beyond the first sentence at the top of page 4 there is nothing official about the document.

We will attempt to show specifically what has and has not been agreed to, and what is merely Mail Handler propaganda by contrasting facts with their interpretations.

Section 12, A of Article XLIII states that the position of employees other than Mail Handlers who are performing full-time Mail Handler duties on a regularly scheduled basis should be converted to the Mail Handler craft. For example, a clerk merely loading and unloading sacks 8 hours a day, 5 days a week should have his position converted to Mail Handler craft. The APWU is not in disagreement with this. However, if the clerk were assigned to help load a truck for a half hour on an emergent basis at intermittent times, there is certainly no requirement that the position be converted.

We must insist on consistency at the local level. If a Clerk position is to be converted to the Mail Handler craft, insist on the same criteria used in Article VII, Section 3 regarding conversion from part-time to full-time positions. It should be clearly demonstrated that Mail Handler duties are being performed on a regularly scheduled basis, 8 hours within 10, the same 5 days each week for a six month period.

Their instructions state that, prior to the November 16th supplement to the Memorandum of Understanding, work which appeared in the job descriptions of the two crafts could be assigned to employees of either craft. Their interpretation states "but now that all of the duties in KP-8 have been defined as 'all Mail Handler duties', the Postal Service can no longer normally combine Mail Handler duties with work in other crafts." The term "all Mail Handler duties" is ambiguous. We could also state that the same principle applies to the Clerical craft, meaning that all the duties mentioned in KP-12 are all Clerk duties.

Section B of the Mail Handlers Memorandum of Understanding stipulates that an employee shall work the duty assignment for which he has been designated and the successful bidder should not be displaced from his duty assignment by an employee from his or another craft.

Let us proceed further with the KP-8 description and analyze the Mail Handler duties and responsibilities (page 3).

(D) States that Mail Handlers may cancel stamps on parcel post but no reference is made to any other class of mail.

(F) The statement "in addition, may perform any of the following duties" certainly defines these duties as supplemental rather than primary in nature as alleged in their instruction manual on page 8, Section i.

(F) (ii) "Makes occasional simple distribution of parcel post requiring no scheme knowledge." Again, a supplemental rather than a primary duty, certainly not intended to authorize scheduled parcel post distribution by Mail Handlers by zip code, label or otherwise. All parcel post distribution, whether by scheme or

not, is a Clerk craft duty, and it does not belong to the Mail Handler craft.

(F) (iv) "Rewrap soiled or broken parcels." No reference is made to first class, or any other class of mail which is a duty of the Nixie or dead letter section and is traditionally a clerk duty under the position description of Level 6, Special Clerk, SP-156. In some Post Offices Mail Handlers are being placed in these positions and Level 6 Special Clerk positions are being reverted. This is in violation of the National Agreement and should be grieved whenever it occurs.

Next you must review the really damaging list of supposed Mail Handler duties which some Mail Handler representatives may have used in an effort to convince local management personnel that this manual is an official list agreed to by the USPS. It is not an official list and never has been. We have made an analysis of each of these duties. If they are applicable to your office and if Mail Handlers are performing these duties, you should file a grievance as a violation of Article VII.

The following are our comments on the listed Mail Handler duties which begin on page 4 of their instruction manual. Comments are by item numbers as listed. We are not in disagreement with any item for which no comment is given.

1. Acceptance of Mail (Platform and Dock)

- a. Only under Clerical guidance - Mail Handlers are not qualified to separate mixed loads of permit mail, second class, etc. and to make classifications for rating purposes.
- c. Canceling is okay but this does not include rating, handling of C.O.D.'s etc.

- d. Okay, unless platform dispatch (tailgate transfer) is required - such tailgate transfer requires scheme knowledge in many cases.
 - e. Same as (a) - not if mixed categories of permit mail are involved. Mail Handlers can unload but are not qualified to make rate separations to determine postage charges.
 - f. Canceling but not rating.
 - g. Rough culling but not separation of categories and subsequent rating.
2. Dispatch of Mail (Platform and Dock)
- a, b, and c. Okay, if dispatch knowledge is not required.
 - d. Not if scheme dispatch knowledge is required, or if separations by scheme must be made for loading diagram. This should then be under the guidance of a mail expediter.
 - e. Not if scheme knowledge is required. The physical work can be done by Mail Handlers under the guidance of a mail expediter.
 - g. Under mail expediter guidance if scheme knowledge is required. We must emphasize that many zip code separations receive different routings during a 24 hour period at major facilities.
 - i. Same as g.
3. (Page 5) Sections a, b, and c
- All okay unless scheme knowledge is required to make separation or dispatch.
4. Dumping, Culling, Facing and Canceling
- e. Okay, if we are talking about machineable and non-machineable, and the separation of local mail from outgoing.

5. Outgoing Manual Primary

- a. Not if this is incidental to Clerk work - in smaller offices it would be ridiculous to have Mail Handlers stand around to load an occasional tray of mail on a case ledge.
- b. Same as a. However, absolutely not in mechanized offices. Assembly of mail from back of machines is a Clerk job used to rotate Clerks from key board.
- c. Perhaps a full tie out of a case after all distribution is completed and there is no dispatch urgency or separation required. This is virtually impossible with area mail processing as it is known today since some 60 or more per cent of first class mail is now machine distributed. Could be okay for Mail Handler to loose pack first class but not first class or air mail for LSM distribution. This is a rotation assignment for Clerks to give them relief from keyboard fatigue. We should also object to Mail Handlers being used in offices where the loose pack operation is combined (LSM with manually distributed mail), if there is any LSM mail included in the loose pack operation, the whole loose pack operation is Clerical work.
- d. Okay if we are just pulling air mail and special delivery holdouts at regular intervals to get these classes of mail into the proper distribution system.

6. Mechanized Letter Primary (LSM)

- a. Should be done by Clerk rotating from keyboard, as he knows what is machineable.
- b. Absolutely not - this is a Clerk job to provide relief

from machine fatigue. This is being done by Mail Handlers at many offices so the Postmaster can charge time to other than machine distribution and make his office look good.

7. (Page 6)

a. Okay, but this is usually incidental Clerk work - there is no need for a Mail Handler to be standing by for an occasional tray of mail in the average office.

c. Only in the rarest cases.

8. Pouching Operations (Incoming and Outgoing)

c. If under the guidance of a mail expediter.

9. Parcel Post (Manual) or Third Class Distribution Racks

c. Only when beyond the workload capacity of the Clerks making distribution during very high volume periods.

d. Same as c

e. Same as c.

g. Absolutely not - there is nothing in KP-8 that authorizes any distribution other than occasional parcel post. We must get this occasional distribution of parcel post clearly defined. It is intended only as a filler assignment if there is no other Mail Handler work available, never as a regular advance assignment, even for 10 minutes a day.

10. Parcel Post Secondary (Outgoing and Incoming)

a. Okay, if a Clerk cannot do as incidental work.

b. Same as a.

c. Same as a and b.

d. Absolutely not except as stated in # 9, g. above.

11. Mechanized Parcel Post

- f. Level 5 only.

12. Opening Units

- f. There are no cases in an opening unit.
- g. Same as f, there is no loose packing in an opening unit.
- i. KP-8 does not include simple distribution of anything except parcel post on an occasional basis.

13. Incoming Manual Primary (Letter or Flats)

- a. Only if not incidental duty of Clerks.
- b. Same as a.
- c. When this is done by Mail Handlers a lot of mail is missent. Clerks should do this and check bundle to be sure mail is going to proper station. This requires scheme knowledge.

14. Incoming Secondary (Letters or Flats)

- a. Only if Clerk cannot perform as an incidental duty.
- b. Same as a.

15. Additional Duties in Selected Offices

- c. Only to load and unload heavy boxes or sacks.
- d. Same as c.

16. Stations

- c. Okay, if we are talking about carrier labeled tie's or trays.
- d. Would require a very large station or Mail Handlers would be loafing half the time.
- e. Mail Handlers cannot accept permit mail.
- f. Cancellations are okay. No rating, separation of city and home state would be okay.

- i. Loading and unloading heavy boxes or sacks only. Supplies should be handled by Clerk who makes requisitions.

17. Air Mail Fields

- a. Okay, except for objections already stated for operations at main office.

Still more damaging material begins on page 11 of the Mail Handlers instruction manual. The "Definition of Terms in Memorandum of Understanding" is nothing more than a Mail Handler, LIUNA interpretation but it may be given to local management officials as an official document. It is not an official document, it does not represent anything official in the way of an agreement with the Postal Service.

The statement that full-time or part-time employees (fixed schedule - not flexible) who have regularly scheduled duties which are comprised of all Mail Handler duties will be delegated to the Mail Handler craft is true. However, this does not include part-time flexies, postal assistants or any public policy employees which are included on page 12.

On page 12 under "Duty Assignments" it is stated that a non Mail Handler having any assignment within his working day which includes what have now been described as "all Mail Handler duties" must be delegated to the Mail Handler craft. THIS IS ONLY A MAIL HANDLER INTERPRETATION WHICH CAN MISLEAD LOCAL MANAGEMENT. IT IS NOT CORRECT. THE REQUIREMENT IS STILL FULL-TIME AND NOT PART-TIME PERFORMANCE.

The statement that "regular basis" means any degree of recurring frequency is without substantiation. This is only a Mail Handler opinion.

Item number 6, "All Mail Handler Duties", on page 12 is the most gross misinterpretation of them all. No where is it stated that while certain duties may appear in position descriptions for other crafts if they appear in the Mail Handler job description they must be delegated to the Mail Handler craft in accordance with Article VII, Section 2. AGAIN, THIS IS STRICTLY AN INTERPRETATION DEVELOPED BY THE MAIL HANDLERS DIVISION, LIUNA.

On page 13 it is stated that a position with Mail Handler duties can no longer be combined with a position in another craft to create one job. This applies only to new positions as provided in Article IV, it does not apply to present or existing positions unless full-time in the craft. The last sentence on page 13 which continues on to page 14 is ridiculous in its statement that a new position must be created. Using the Mail Handlers projection, one would assume that only Mail Handler positions will be created in the future.

Their statement at the bottom of page 14 is erroneous in that the survey applies only to full-time duties. It is not intended to delegate all assignments to the Mail Handlers.

The bar graph mentioned on page 16 is merely a clever LIUNA creation designed to substantiate their instructions and make it look like an official USPS instruction which it is not.

At the top of page 18 they describe incoming parcel post distribution as a typical Mail Handler duty. That is not true, it is Clerk craft work.

On page 18 they suggest that Mail Handler representatives show management personnel how they can economize and perform more effectively. Of course, this is accomplished by downgrading positions

and delegating them to the Mail Handler craft.

You can see that this manual has been very cleverly prepared and so far has provided LIUNA with an effective tool. Some management officials have been misled, especially those eager beavers who feel that they are going to cut costs and make budgets by downgrading positions as proposed by the Mail Handlers.

It is absolutely necessary that these instructions be carefully studied so that APWU leaders will be in a position to protect APWU craft positions. This regrettable but very real attack on us by a brother AFL-CIO Union makes it imperative that our local union officers stay on top of this problem.