

## APWU Web News Articles

### USPS Safety Ambassador Program

#### WEB NEWS ARTICLE #: 28-2018

03/16/2018 - The APWU was informed on October 26, 2017 of the Postal Service's intent to roll out a new program called the *Safety Ambassador Program*. The Postal Service intends to replace the safety captain program, and any other local safety programs, with this "standardized" and nationally controlled program. The American Postal Workers Union does not support, agree with, or endorse this program.

Using their latest catch phrase—employee engagement—the Postal Service claims that this program "will focus on employee engagement, training, communication, hazard identification/abatement, and accident reduction." Having a safe workplace is every worker's right and you must fight for that right! However, the *Safety Ambassador Program* appears to be nothing more than an end-around our currently negotiated joint union-management safety procedures.

We have multiple issues with the program including, but not limited to, the following:

- Rather than encouraging that safety hazards be reported on *PS Form 1767*, the Service encourages "verbal" reporting of hazards where there would be no record or tracking of the hazard. Written records are the basis for showing the hazard was reported.
- Ambassador selection would be at sole discretion of installation head (manager, postmaster) without any union input. Many locals have elected officers and appointed officials who are responsible for safety. We also have reports from the field that management has instructed those making selections to specifically avoid using union representatives and "agitators." It has been reported that the Postal Service is encouraging its managers to select employees who are not active in their unions as ambassadors.
- Ambassadors are supposed to be "volunteers." However, multiple reports from the field are showing that employees are being forced to become Ambassadors.
- Local Safety and Health Committees are not part of the program.
- Ambassadors would participate in creating Job Safety Analysis (JSA) which is currently the function of Article 14 Safety and Health Committees.
- Ambassadors will be observing their coworkers, telling them they are being unsafe, and providing feedback and coaching to them, as well as reporting back to the supervisors on their coworkers' actions.
- Ambassadors will be trained on the use of the USPS Safety Toolkit which again is in the purview of the Safety and health Committees.

The APWU has initiated an Article 19 appeal to arbitration on the implementation of this program (Q15C-4Q-C 18055498). We believe the Service has violated Article 5 *Prohibition of Unilateral Action* (past practice of safety programs and failure to negotiate), Article 14 *Safety and Health*, Article 19 *Handbooks and Manuals*, ELM *Chapter 8*. Questions on the dispute should be directed to the Article 14 officers at headquarters, Lynn Pallas-Barber and Terry Martinez. Copies of all relevant documents were sent to the NBAs in the field.

We request that any local or state organization that has Safety and Health Committees immediately file a grievance that the Safety Ambassador program is a violation of Article 14 and the negotiated Safety and Health Committee processes as well as Article 1 *Union Recognition* - that the APWU is the exclusive bargaining representative for those we represent. Safety programs are subject of bargaining and the union must be included in the decisions about any safety program. Grievances should also be initiated where employees have been involuntarily required to act as ambassadors. No one is required to be an ambassador and they can decline the offer to be one. Any grievances on this issue held, pending the Article 19 appeal, must be held at Step 3 only, to provide better tracking.

The APWU believes strongly that your workplace must be a safe place to work. We believe bargaining unit member participation is important to a safe work place and that we all need to act together to make sure it is. As an individual and in groups you should be able to feel that you can act through using 1767s, workroom floor actions, and filing grievances. You should not have to go through a management-appointed intermediary in order to have a safe workplace!

As the Postal Service remains the most dangerous place to work of all federal agencies in the country, we must fight for our rights to have fair, reasonable, and successful safety programs. The *Safety Ambassador Program* does not fit that description as it was fully developed and implemented by management while completely ignoring your union.

**Tags:** APWU Programs, Bargaining Unit Work, Contract Enforcement, Grievance Procedure, Jobs, Safe Jobs, Safety & Health, Union Administration, USPS Policies & Programs, Industrial Relations, Safety and Health, OSHA Standards, Safe Jobs