



BRANCH 111 N.A.L.C.
"THE WASATCH BRANCH"

Pavement Pounder

Midvale - Millcreek - Murray - Northwest - Orem - Sandy - South Salt Lake - Sugarhouse - Tooele - West Jordan - West Valley

October 2021

Publication 2021.10

FEDERAL BENEFITS OPEN SEASON November 8th - December 13th, 2021



FEHB Health

- Enroll
- Change plan/option
- Cancel enrollment
- Self/Self + One/Self & Family



Flexible Spending Accounts

- Enroll
- Reenroll (it's not automatic!)
- Increase/decrease your election with a new enrollment



FEDVIP Dental & Vision

- Enroll
- Change plan/option
- Cancel enrollment
- Self/Self + One/Self & Family

Things to Consider:

- My family's health, dental, and vision needs for 2022
- Whether my current plan will be available in 2022
- How my current plan's benefits and premiums change in 2022 -If I do nothing, FEHB and FEDVIP enrollments rollover automatically
- Whether the online comparison tools show a better plan for me
- How much money I could save with a flexible spending account

Visit **LITEBLUE.USPS.GOV** for more information

Maximum Hours

We've all been there. We work with a headlamp into the dead of night, dashing from porch-light to porch-light, grateful for Christmas-lights to guide us like airport landing-lights to the next house on the route. We have used our dome lights to get the next delivery ready, sometimes even using the headlights of our vehicles. We have worn insulated fabric over every square inch of our bodies during single digit temperature nights, trying to stay warm while we work the silent night away. We have tripped in the dark on snow covered roots while walking in unfamiliar yards while helping other carriers try to get back before midnight. The parcels and mail can seem never-ending during the Holiday season, and it can be the toughest part of the year for Letter Carriers mostly because of the sheer number of hours we may be asked to put in.

But it is those same parcels and Christmas cards that mean so much to our customers. I have often heard commercials and commentary about how appreciative people are for our service. And I know it is a cliché, but we should be grateful for the work because it means that our jobs are secure into the foreseeable future. While that may be little comfort to some, I will say that I am grateful that we are paid by the hour, unlike our fellow Rural Letter Carriers, whom I have also seen out into the late hours of the night.

With all of the above being true, it behooves us to know about what the contract says about our rights and duties when it comes to Maximum hours, especially since many of the rules change for the month of December. The ELM (Employee and Labor Relations Manual), is the controlling document in regards to maximum hours. The ELM states that with some exceptions, employees are limited to 11.5 hours of work and a lunch period (or 12 hours of work if there is no lunch period...though I would always advise taking a lunch if you are working this many hours!). The exceptions are the Overtime Desired List, consisting of those who have signed the 12/60 list, the 10-hour list, or the Work Assignment list, who are limited to 12 hours of work in addition to a half-hour lunch period. And there is a further exception in the month of December, when carriers who have signed the lists mentioned in the previous sentence are not limited to 12.5 hours in a day, and there actually is no hour limit at all.

All of this is a bit complicated, so I will break it down in the following two tables:

January through November Maximum Hours

CCAs: 11.5 plus a lunch (no limit per week)
PTRs: 11.5 plus a lunch (no limit per week)
Non ODL Carrier: 11.5 plus a lunch (60 per week)
WA Carrier: 12 plus a lunch*(60 per week)
10-Hour Carrier: 12 plus a lunch (60 per week)
12/60 Carrier: 12 plus a lunch (60 per week)

December Maximum Hours

CCAs: 11.5 plus a lunch (no limit per week)
PTRs: 11.5 plus a lunch (no limit per week)
Non ODL Carrier: 11.5 plus a lunch (no limit per week)
WA Carrier: No limit on either*
10-Hour Carrier: No limit on either
12/60 Carrier: No limit on either

***The contract says that Work Assignment Agreement recognizes that it is normally in the parties' best interests not to require employees to work beyond 10 hours per day, and managers should not require "work assignment" volunteers to work beyond 10 hours "unless there is no equally prompt and efficient way to have the work performed." However, if there is no equally prompt and efficient way to have the work performed, management is able to use the Work Assignment list up to the above noted limits.**

So what happens when management breaks the contract, and has Letter Carriers working beyond the maximum hours that have been mentioned above? National Arbitrator Mittenthal ruled that the 12 and 60 hour limits are absolutes. Excluding December, a full-time employee may neither volunteer nor be required to work beyond those limits. In fact, when a full time employee reaches the 60 hour per week limit, management is required to send the employee home, even in the middle of a scheduled day (and such an employee would receive the remainder of the eight-hour guaranteed pay for said shift). If and when daily or weekly maximum hours are exceeded, the contract states:

"In those limited instances where this provision is or has been violated and a timely grievance filed, full-time employees will be compensated at an additional premium of 50 percent of the base hourly straight time rate for those hours worked beyond the 12 or 60 hour limitation. The employment of this remedy shall not be construed as an agreement by the parties that the Employer may exceed the 12 and 60 hour limitation with impunity."

Even though the above remedy states it is just for "full-time" employees, Branch 111 has been very successful at obtaining the additional 50 percent remedy for all classes of employees who have exceeded their maximum hours. And as the contract states, in the event that there are egregious ongoing violations, we would have no qualms about asking for remedies above and beyond the 50 percent remedy. Nick Vafiades, the National Business Agent for Region 2 told me that one remedy they are seeking at the National Level is the "Right of Refusal", or in other words, the right to bring back the mail at the Maximum Hour Limit. Right now, a Carrier may do so if they are "too fatigued to continue", but with the "Right of Refusal" that would not have to be the case.

To have a maximum hour grievance be successful, we must file it within 14 days of when the maximum hour limit was broken, so please let your Shop Steward know whenever you work over (or are forced to work over) the contractual maximum hours.

**Michael Wahlquist
President
Branch 111, NALC**

Get Registered

www.ecomp.dol.gov

Recently I attended a training where it was made clear that we should register with OWCP. Registering can be done at www.ecomp.dol.gov. Registering can be done on your phone or computer. The process can be a bit tricky and might take a few minutes of time.

Start by finding the “Need an account?” link. A form will appear that needs to be filled out and it is recommended that you do not use a postal e-mail account.

If you have problems or questions while filling out the form, please feel free to contact me. (801)-244-0929

Also, during my training I found information about filing for benefits. Filing a claim for COVID-19 with OWCP is simple. You need to have medical evidence within twenty-one days of contracting the disease i.e., a positive Covid test result within the twenty one days. There are real concerns about long term effects, so please, if you have concerns, contact me.

Thank you and stay safe.

Bob Jewell

Branch 111 NALC Compensation Specialist

Jimmy Kerekes

Health and Benefits

Open Season dates always run from the second Monday in November through the second Monday in December. This year, the dates are Nov. 8 until Dec. 13. There are a lot of considerations when picking your insurance plan. I was able to find lots of great information at OPM. GOV. At the site there is a black bar with options, pick Insurance and then a drip box will offer you FEHB plan comparison tool. Here you can compare your existing plans to other plans and make your choices. I have gone through and compared some plans and created a flow cart finding all kinds of great choices.

I will have been to a seminar after October 17th. This will occur after the publications of this issue of the Pavement Pounder and there will be no Union Meeting in November, due to that date falling on Veterans Day.

I am here to help you with your questions, please feel free to contact me by phone call or text message with any questions or concerns.(801)-557-6033. I wish your family and friends a hearty

Happy Thanksgiving

NALC BRANCH 111
Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting
October 14, 2021

Convened at 6:33 pm

The meeting was also broadcast over Zoom for those unable to attend in person.

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Mike Simonsen

Moment of Silence: Doug Hardy and Doug McGregor.

Roll Call by Steve McNees

Minutes of the September meeting were posted. Without objection, they will be filed for future reference.

Reading of the Communications by Steve McNees

- Received notice of the Safety and Health Committee meeting, with attached agenda, to be held on Oct. 14, 2021.
- Received the minutes of the NALC Labor/Management held on Aug. 26, 2021.

Without objection, they will be filed for future reference.

Application for Membership by Mike Hansen

- Kyle Winter, Jacob Steiger, Emily O'Connor, Joby Clark, Bryce Petersen, Bryant Anderson, Carson Gittins, Bryan Oster, Alex St Lawrence, Jody Ehrmantrout, Alexander Bradshaw, Lynn Barlow III, Dallin Kirk, Christian Elison, Jose Arevalo, Manuel Pozzobon, Hector German, Erin Boettger, Andrea Marsh, Japhet Cintron, Mikael Newbold, Jeremy Thomas, Jelena Boeljanic, Cynthia Cross, Brandon Thompson

LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND by Josh Thibodeau – not present

MDA COORDINATOR by Jeremy Bailey

- The Regional Rap Session will be held in Salt Lake City next year.

DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS - Jimmy Fleming, excused

Jimmy's email address is: veteransaffairs@branch111.com

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen – excused

TRUSTEES by Kirk McLaughlin: Everything is looking good.

MBA, COMPENSATION by Bob Jewell

- Even if you aren't hurt, register on OWCP (ecomp.gov.dol) for future possible injury/compensation needs. If you have had Covid, you need to file a claim. We don't know what the long-term effects of Covid are going to be, so everyone is being encouraged to sign up now.

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes

- OPM has changed things on premium rates (chart handed out and explained). There are several options for each plan including NALC. • The medical code on your pay check tells you which plan you are currently in. • Rates generally went up 3-5% which is less than last year. • Open season begins November 8th.

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist – not present

- Mike Wahlquist: organizing is going well. Justin has signed up all of the new CCAs.

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist (not present) – Russ Shosted

- He attended the safety meeting today. Mental health is an issue we all need to be aware of, at home and work. You should stand up for people in your office who are being bullied. If you are the bully – stop it! • If you are suffering, get help. Call EAP or the union hall if you don't know who to call. • Form 1767 (report of hazard or unsafe condition/practices) – there weren't many turned in. He didn't know if people are afraid to turn them in or are being discouraged. Notify the steward if they aren't easily available. • There have been 37 accidents in the last quarter. • There is a lot of disruptive behavior during stand-ups. Let's not be the one keeping someone else from hearing what is being said. Don't be condescending to those giving the standups. • Station Safety Committee meetings in Murray, Northwest, Holladay, Kearns and West Valley need to be completed by the end of this month, then turned in.
- The next quarterly Safety Meeting is Jan. 13th at 2:30pm. • Driver training: if you change vehicle types (ProMaster to a mounted route, etc.) you can request and get refresher training. You can also get driving in snow training. • Tire cables and chains have a speed limit of 25 mph. • You can request studded snow tires for ProMaster vehicles. • If stuck in the snow, call to have someone come and get you out. • Don't plow through snow banks (you don't know what can be in them). • If there are unsafe places to deliver (ice, snow, etc), let your supervisor know and correct the problem. • If you can't social distance, mask up.
- Reasonable accommodation – the USPS has an Ergonomic Initiative to help in different situations. Just ask if there is something that might help with your conditions.

⇒ Wounded warrior leave is available – an additional 40 hours above sick leave. Check out our website or just type in a web search.

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay – No report.

TREASURER by Mike Madsen

- Last month: Income, \$28,431. Expenses \$17,785. \$10,646 more than we spent. Request a breakdown if you would like one.

VICE PRESIDENT by Amie Gallo

- Steward training next week will be at Buca di Beppo (notices were sent out).

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen

- 1,796 grievances filed so far this year.

NO MEETING IN NOVEMBER because of Veterans Day.

Rap Session training was a great experience. Every class was put on a thumb drive to share at local training. • It is very important to register with ecomp.gov.dol. Click on register, enter your personal information, a pass word and you are done. Don't use a USPS email for this account. Now you are ready if you are ever injured. • Anyone interested in learning how to do the job of a branch officer is invited to call Mike Hansen to make arrangements. We are looking to train future branch leaders.

PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist

- At the Cottonwood stand-up this morning everyone was told, if you see something, say something. Challenge people without identification and/or notify your supervisor.
- EAP visits can be on the clock. You get 5 free visits per instance/issue. EAP is also available for members of your household.

NO MEETING IN NOVEMBER. That means double door prizes in December.

Calendars are in. The cost \$4 each. Remind your stewards to pick them up for you. They can be paid for on our website.

SPECIAL ORDERS: none

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: none

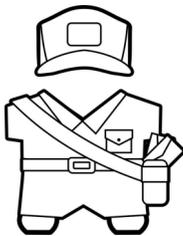
GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: none

- We have Jimmy Fleming (Branch Director of Veteran Affairs) to help veterans. CCAs and regulars need to know that he is available to help them. Give him a call.

FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE:

DRAW AND ADJOURN – 7:42 pm

- \$25 drawing winners: Steve McNees and Alan Nagata
- RETIREES – \$75 (Duane Wilcox was not present). Next month it will be \$125
- PROGRESSIVE A - \$50 (Rochelle Alvarez was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$100.
- PROGRESSIVE B - \$225 (Kristina Durrant was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$275.



Please bring any uniforms you may have that you'd be willing to donate.

We accept any uniforms in new or used condition, but please none in bad condition.

Uniforms Needed!

National Association of Letter Carriers
2261 South Redwood Road, Suite 14
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage Paid
Salt Lake City, UT
Permit No. 1981

Address Service Requested

Keep on Delivering.

The financial records of Branch 111 are available to anyone by appointment and a monthly record is always available at Branch 111 monthly meeting.

PRESIDENT

Mike Wahlquist

EXC. VICE-Pres.

Mike Hansen

VICE-PRESIDENT

Amie B. Gallo

TREASURER

Mike Madsen

SECRETARY

Steve McNees

SGT-AT-ARMS

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The
“Pavement Pounder”
is the Official Publication of
Branch 111 NALC
the
“Wasatch Branch”

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