



# **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS**

## **NAPS/USPS Consultative Meeting Agenda**

**In Conjunction with the 2016 National Convention Executive Board Meeting**

**August 13, 2016 @ 9 AM - USPS HQ**

### **Agenda Items**

1. NAPS is requesting an update to agenda item #1 from the July 2016 consultative;

1. NAPS received correspondence from NAPS Central Gulf Area Vice President regarding USPS leadership in Region 2 instructing non-exempt EAS employees to schedule travel for EEO Counselor Training in Dallas TX from June 6-10, 2016 outside their normal schedule in an attempt to avoid compensation of the respective EAS.

The attached email, written by Dwight Plybon, has instructions for non-exempt EAS to fly outside their regular tour of duty. The reason given by Mr. Plybon was clearly stated; "So we can keep reasonable tabs on compensable time associated with this training".

USPS instructions by leadership in Region 2 are in conflict with the current travel policies and procedures as found in Handbook F-21. The provision for Travel Away From Home Overnight found in F-21.261.164.d states;

d. Scheduling of Travel.

Travel away from home overnight is to be scheduled by management on a reasonable basis *without a purpose either to avoid compensation for the travel time or to make the travel time compensable (Emphasis added).*

The respective EAS employees scheduled for EEO Counselor Training were also instructed not to claim the complimentary breakfast that was provided by the hotel during this week of training. NAPS notes that this is also a clear violation of the Policies and Procedures as stated in F-21;

7-4.2.1.2

When Traveling Between Average- and High-Cost Areas

Reminder: Be sure to reduce the per diem rate for any meals that you received at no cost or at a nominal fee. ***Complimentary breakfast provided by hotels are not claimed as a meal deduction. (Emphasis added).*** On eTravel system under expense type "Per Diem," click in the field labeled "# of Breakfast Provided," and enter number. Do the same in fields labeled "# of Lunches Provided" and "# of Dinners Provided."

NAPS is requesting that the EAS employees scheduled for EEO Counselor Training the week of June 6-10, 2016, receive compensation for all travel time they would have



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## **NAPS/USPS Consultative Meeting Agenda**

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**August 13, 2016 @ 9 AM - USPS HQ**

received if traveling within their established hours of service. In addition, NAPS is requesting the EAS in question receive reimbursement for the lost per Diem as a result of Region 2 Leadership's instructions not to claim the complimentary hotel breakfast.

***USPS Response: This agenda item is still under review and a response will be provided to NAPS.***

The NAPS organization contends that the issue is the Postal Service's non-adherence to and manipulation of the USPS travel policies and procedures to deliberately avoid paying EAS for travel.

***USPS Response: There are two different USPS HQ sponsors on this issue requiring the agenda item to be addressed in two parts.***

*Part 1: The F-21 states that travel is to be scheduled by management on a reasonable basis and the language of the correspondence from the Manager, EEO Compliance and Appeals clearly states "so we can keep reasonable tabs on compensable time associated with this training." The language of the F-21 is intended to prohibit managers from requiring that travel be scheduled at a time that is unreasonable in a business sense, only to avoid compensability OR to ensure compensability. The Manager, EEO Compliance and Appeals issued these instructions to ensure that the travel was consistent with that of F-21 261.164.*

*The correspondence also states, "If you are unable to make travel arrangements that comply with these instructions, you must contact your regional Manager to discuss your travel before booking flights or making any other arrangements." If management was intentionally trying to avoid compensable travel for these employees during this training, then management would have required employees to travel home after their scheduled tour upon conclusion of the training. The training concluded at noon on Friday and there was no restriction on travelling during work hours for that day. Non-Exempt employees were compensated for travel up to and, in some situations, after their scheduled end tour. USPS deemed, in this case, it was reasonable to travel on the schedule provided.*

*Part 2: The policy regarding meal deductions for complimentary breakfast was introduced into the F-15 around 1999 and was added to align with the policy of other government agencies. It was established to account for the complimentary breakfast that was typically offered by some hotels during that time period. This complimentary breakfast was commonly referred to as a continental breakfast and generally consisted of a donut, bagel, and beverage. Over the recent years, some hotels began offering full made-to-order complimentary breakfast and lunch to hotel guests which wasn't specifically considered when the language of F-15 7-4.2.1.2 was revised around 1999.*



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS

## NAPS/USPS Consultative Meeting Agenda

In Conjunction with the 2016 National Convention Executive Board Meeting

August 13, 2016 @ 9 AM - USPS HQ

*The Postal Service's current policy regarding meal deductions is that any complimentary breakfast offered by Hotels to a postal employee while on official travel does not have to be claimed as a meal deduction. Any other complimentary meal provided by a hotel to a postal employee on official travel must be claimed as a meal deduction.*

In further discussion with NAPS, the USPS stated it was unintentional that this policy was misinterpreted. Employees do not have to claim hotel complimentary breakfast. This issue will be resolved by correcting the employee's eTravel related to the hotel complimentary breakfast.

2. NAPS would like to bring back to the table the application of the A3 process based on responses and subsequent conversation with USPS HQ and Field employees. At the July 2016 consultative the USPS responded to agenda item #4;

**USPS Response:** *Lauren Zalewski, Manager, Operations Industrial Engineering provided a briefing on the A3 process and Jenny Bennett, Manager (A) Retail Operations & Strategy participated. The A3 history was explained to NAPS as a problem solving tool in industry, where Toyota uses A3's to problem solve. It is about storyboarding a problem you are trying to solve. The A3 concept is trying to solve a problem using data to measure results. The A3 is used to determine a problem, implement a solution, and determine who is responsible to implement various steps of the solution process and measure results. The A3 is a template to organize the thoughts to a problem to resolve and measure results. This system/process is used in all industries. USPS has done training on the A3 project. There has been success in retail and outside of retail using the A3 process. The A3 process has been a successful tool in problem solving for the USPS HQ.*

NAPS asked who rolled out the A3 concept. It was explained that it came from the Operations Industrial Engineer and Continuous Improvement. It is a tool used in engineering to solve problems. NAPS also raised concerns that the A3 process is not the problem but how USPS leadership is communicating and using the process. NAPS stated the A3 process is creating more problems than fixing them. Higher level management doesn't seem to understand the A3 process. A manager directs a supervisor, who has had no training, to complete an A3 in an hour or two, when in reality to properly complete an A3 may take a week, or two or even a month due to compiling the data, analyzing the problem, the determining the steps to implement get the desired results.

The A3 process has become more of a directive from higher level management to complete an A3 just to make sure that manager can state "an A3 was done". Unfortunately, when it is not completed properly by a supervisor who has yet to receive A3 training, the supervisor is again instructed to redo the A3.



# **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS**

## **NAPS/USPS Consultative Meeting Agenda**

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**August 13, 2016 @ 9 AM - USPS HQ**

NAPS asked if the USPS is tracking quantifiable data and was told the USPS is having results in retail and operations. NAPS further brought up the fact that the time line needed to complete a proper A3 takes away from a supervisors' time to run their operation creating more problems resulting in the supervisor completing more A3's. Furthermore, NAPS expressed that the lack of A3 training and providing a reason why completing the A3 has value and is generating real results is not being filtered down to NAPS members in the field.

In response to this agenda item, NAPS has received calls from around the country on the abusive manner that this "tool" is being used by leadership. NAPS renews it requests that the A3 process is immediately terminated until such time where leadership can;

- a. Ensure that EAS employees tasked with this support duty are properly trained.
- b. Ensure that offices tasked with this support duty be given addition workhours, which are not currently calculated in the work day of an EAS Managing under SWCS.
- c. Ensure that the A3 process is re-implemented in a manner that is not punishment for the occurrence, but real engagement and support with the resources to address operational needs.

***USPS Response:*** *The Postal Service has six planned A3 training webinars scheduled to begin the week of August 15. The training will cover all geographical Areas and the intended audience is all Supervisor, Customer Services. Managers and Postmasters may also attend the webinars. Training will cover the A3 process, completion of an A3 worksheet and will include sample exercises like WTIL. The training will be recorded and NAPS will be notified once a web location is determined. If necessary, local management should contact their District LSS Coordinators for additional guidance and support regarding use of the A3 process.*

*As presented to NAPS during the July consultative meeting, the A3 is used to identify a problem and implement a solution. The process has been a successful problem-solving tool for the Postal Service. It was never intended to be a form of punishment.*

Board commented that the A3 should be done by higher level managers, not line supervisors. Supervisors have other duties to complete than an A3 just because a manager wants one done. The board also stated that there is to be a 30 day follow up after the completion of an A3, but that is not happening. NAPS expressed that a two-hour webinar is not enough time to learn the A3 process.



# **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS**

## **NAPS/USPS Consultative Meeting Agenda**

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**August 13, 2016 @ 9 AM - USPS HQ**

A board member who is LSS belt certified knows the challenges of completing an A3 and each USPS Area has their own process. In one USPS District, every day the highest WTIL failure must send in an A3 to USPS HQ. A board member stated the concept is good, but pushing them out at the “speed of light” is not working or effective when everyone is just cutting and pasting A3’s. NAPS noted that the USPS is not Motorola, Toyota, or GE as it is not a manufacturing company, but a service one.

Board members provided examples of how the A3 process is not being properly used by USPS leadership in the field. In one example, an office had to complete a separate A3 for 15 days in a row due to package scanning issues. The A3’s are being submitted for submitting purposes only. It is taking over the whole day. A board member stated it took three months for them to complete a valid A3, because of all the data that was required for the A3.

The supervisors on the workroom floor don’t have the time to do an A3 as they have other operational duties to complete to get the mail processed and delivered. NAPS HQ received calls from across the country about the A3 process. NAPS is appreciative of the A3 training being rolled out, but it appears A3’s have become the “Flavor of the Day”. In addition, the A3 process is being misused in the field. It was stated that A3’s are not bad, but the process is reactionary to something that happened a week ago. If there was a problem, the EAS are already working on a resolution on what happened, before an A3 is even started. USPS needs to avoid being reactive to issues and become more proactive with the A3 process.

3. NAPS is submitting an Involuntary Reassignment issue that has been consulted up the chain of command (local through the USPS Area office) as appropriate without a resolution.

NAPS contends that the “guidance” addressed in the Involuntary Reassignment memo provides no positive engagement due to its situational disregard by local and area leadership. NAPS is requesting that Postal HQ issue a directive to local leadership on withdrawing the involuntary reassignments cited in this agenda item and that USPS HQ work with NAPS HQ on a policy and procedure to address the issue of Involuntary Reassignment.

***USPS Response:*** *The Postal Service will not engage in this matter since it is an individual grievance of an employee. Title 39, 1004 c2B states, “Grievances of individual employees shall not be matters which may be included as agenda items under this paragraph. USPS stated it would discuss outside the consultative process this issue with NAPS HQ.*

NAPS stated this is a national issue because the USPS field leadership policy is not adhering to the USPS HQ policy.





# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS

## NAPS/USPS Consultative Meeting Agenda

In Conjunction with the 2016 National Convention Executive Board Meeting

August 13, 2016 @ 9 AM - USPS HQ

4. The National Association of Postal Supervisors (NAPS) is requesting the creation of an additional NSP training module to address the duties of "EAS route examiner". In addition, NAPS is requesting that this training module be given to all current EAS who could potentially be tasked with the duties of route examiner.

Customer Service Supervisors are instructed to perform daily city delivery route inspections outside of the bid work location. NAPS contention is that if this supervisor is detailed onto a team that performs walks outside the awarded office unless the supervisor volunteered for the assignment and has a PS Form 1723 on file, then it becomes an involuntary reassignment.

The creation of required training and incorporation of this training in the NSP would eliminate the details to offices who did not get their walks performed because they have no qualified supervisor to do it. This would also be a financial benefit to the Postal Service as they would have less mileage to pay for when the detailed supervisors have to travel to other offices.

***USPS Response:** The contents within the New Supervisor Program (NSP) were developed with basic managerial materials intended for use as a foundation for newly promoted supervisors. The Postal Service does not intend to incorporate specific, more complex, training materials within the program.*

*However, training material for "Street Supervision", along with a vast library of resources for delivery management, are available to all postal employees with access to the USPS Blue page under Delivery Operations. We can provide NAPS with the directions to navigate to the training.*

*The August 31, 2015 memo from the COO states that temporary involuntary reassignments may be made for training or developmental needs or to meet operating requirements. It also states that there should be practical limiting factors regarding such reassignments and provide guidelines management should consider in determining whether temporary involuntary reassignments will be made. The Postal Service disagrees with NAPS' contention that this is an involuntary reassignment.*

5. NAPS has received confirmation locally that the Western Area has submitted the requested additional information to address the agenda items from the May and July consultative and request a status update;



# **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS**

## **NAPS/USPS Consultative Meeting Agenda**

**In Conjunction with the 2016 National Convention Executive Board Meeting**

**August 13, 2016 @ 9 AM - USPS HQ**

2. NAPS is requesting an updated response to agenda item #7 from the May 2016 NAPS/USPS consultative where NAPS consulted and received the following response;

7. NAPS HQ has received a request for an update to the Salt Lake City District request for an EAS-17 Product Information Quality Analyst (PIQA) position that was submitted through the Western Area. Western Area leadership states that the request is pending review by HQ Organizational Effectiveness. NAPS is requesting a status update on this review.

*Response: Organization Design (OD) returned the request for a Product Information Quality Analyst position back to the Western Area for additional information and review. Once that is completed, the Western Area will send it back to OD for final determination.*

*USPS Response: USPS responded during the May 2016 consultative meeting that the position request from the Salt Lake City District was returned to the Western Area for additional information and review from HQ. Local NAPS representatives should contact the Western Area to confirm the status of this matter.*

***USPS Response:** The Western Area office has sent the position request back to HQ. We have been informed that the position is on hold until such time that Operations and HR has an opportunity to further discuss the position in detail and come to a final decision. We will inform NAPS once a final decision has been reached.*

6. NAPS has been made aware of changes to the NPA scorecard for Sales employees. NAPS does not concur with any NPA change made after final BOG approval of NPA. NAPS has not been consulted on this NPA change in accordance with 39 U.S. Code § 1004(b) which states;

*(b) The Postal Service shall provide a program for consultation with recognized organizations of supervisory and other managerial personnel who are not subject to collective-bargaining agreements under chapter 12 of this title. Upon presentation of evidence satisfactory to the Postal Service that a supervisory organization represents a majority of supervisors, that an organization (other than an organization representing supervisors) represents at least 20 percent of postmasters, or that a managerial organization (other than an organization representing supervisors or postmasters) represents a substantial percentage of managerial employees, such organization or organizations shall be entitled to participate directly in the planning and development of pay policies and schedules, fringe benefit programs, and other programs relating to supervisory and other managerial employees.*



# **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS**

## **NAPS/USPS Consultative Meeting Agenda**

**In Conjunction with the 2016 National Convention Executive Board Meeting**

**August 13, 2016 @ 9 AM - USPS HQ**

NAPS contends that there should be no changing of NPA goals, targets and indicators, weights or any other component of the PFP process once the NPA indicators have been consulted on with NAPS and approved by the BOG.

However, if NPA adjustments are needed, NAPS requests that no changes be made to NPA until such a time where a proper engagement is received in accordance with 39 U.S. Code § 1004(d), which state;

(1) In order to facilitate consultation and direct participation by the supervisors' organization in the planning and development of programs under subsection (b) of this section which affect members of the supervisors' organization, the Postal Service shall—

(A) provide in writing a description of any proposed program and the reasons for it;

(B) give the organization at least 60 days (unless extraordinary circumstances require earlier action) to review and make recommendations with respect to the program; and

(C) give any recommendation from the organization full and fair consideration in deciding whether or how to proceed with the program.

NAPS is requesting that there be no changes to the NPA goals for Sales employees from the final NPA weights and targets issued on January 11, 2016.

***USPS Response:*** *There has been no change to the NPA goal for HQ sales employees. Headquarters sales employees do not have unit scorecards and employees are evaluated on individual performance objectives and core performance dimensions. The Individual performance indicators and core performance dimensions are intended to improve customer service, generate revenue, manage costs and enhance a performance-based culture.*

There was dialogue regarding whether or not the Postal Service must consult with NAPS when changes are being made to NPA during the current FY. NAPS contention is that NPA goals and targets should not be changed after they have been initially established. NAPS addressed the current NPA changes to how Retail Revenue is measured. USPS HQ stated that the change did not impact EAS. However, USPS HQ will look at the change at the end of the year to review the potential impact.

Bruce Nicholson stated he appreciates the back and forth dialogue and the respect he receives from NAPS HQ. Bruce took time to thank each board member who decided to retire from the NAPS executive board. Mr. Nicholson also thanked President Atkins for providing him with the utmost respect.