



Tampa Letter Carrier

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2022

— Notice —

Until further notice, as has been our practice, everyone attending Branch Meetings is required to wear a facial mask...your cooperation is appreciated.

Around The Horn from The President's Desk



Tony Diaz
President
Branch 599

Brothers and Sisters, Retirees Dinner... a great night out!

Thanks to all the retirees who came out for Branch 599's Retirees Dinner. This year, the 2022 version of the Retirees Dinner was held on Sunday night, January 16. The menu and service were top notch. In all, 65 were in attendance to visit, dine, and reminisce at Maggiano's Little Italy, Italian-American Restaurant. Many retirees would have attended had it not been for COVID concerns. It was a night to see those recently retired (7 months) as well as those who have enjoyed over 35 years of retirement. This year there were two Presidents Emeritus in attendance, Orbe Andux who served from 1980-81 and Alan Peacock who served from 2011-13.

The mood was very festive as the Tampa Bay Buccaneers dominated the Philadelphia

Eagles a few hours before in a wild card playoff game.

Retirees have a long and proud tradition with Branch 599. Retirees have always been very active and have always been available throughout the history of our Branch ...always ready to serve and support the NALC.

Photos are on pages 6 & 7.

Investigative Interviews

Questions:

1. What is the true definition of an Investigative Interview (II)?
2. What is the purpose of an II?
3. How will my answers affect the issuing of any discipline?
4. Are IIs properly used?
5. Should an II be timely?

Answers: *Several answers may be repetitive.*

1. **Investigative**, [definition for Investigate is: to carry out a systematic or formal inquiry to discover and examine the facts of (an incident,

allegation, etc.) so as to establish the truth]; **it is intended for fact finding.**

Interview, [definition: a meeting at which information is obtained, a discussion, conference, examination]; **and it should not be an interrogation, again, it is intended for fact finding.**

2. What is the purpose of an II?

It is a fact-finding meeting to discover and examine the facts to establish the truth, get to the root cause of the issue.

3. How will my answers affect the issuing of any discipline?

Your answers are very important to the defense of your case and **should be vital** to the thorough and objective investigation that

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Branch 599
serving
Brandon
Plant City
Sun City
Tampa

Branch 599
Meeting
Thursday
February 3
7:30 PM

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Shop Stewards

<i>Station</i>	<i>ZIP</i>	<i>Steward</i>	<i>Station No.</i>	<i>Steward's No.</i>
Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward, Brian Obst 727.458.0679				
Brandon	33510/11	Osceola Williams Sr.	813.661.1636	210.445.1369
Brandon	33510/11		813.661.1636	
Carrollwood	33618	Tina Bausch	813.961.2962	813.892.2282
Commerce	33602	Cynthia Williams	813.242.4507	813.778.4373
Forest Hills	33612	JR Sanchez	813.935.2954	773.849.6229
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Becky Jones	813.935.2954	209.535.2449
Hilldale	33614		813.879.4309	
Hilldale Annex	33634		813.879.4309	
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Victoria Reeder	813.831.2034	813.525.1685
Interbay/Peninsula	33629	Clement Cheung	813.831.2034	813.758.5910
Palm River Annex	33619	Pam Benton	813.663.0048	813.475.0753
Plant City	33564	Todd Soular	813.719.6793	813.719.6793
Produce	33610	Matt Rodkey	813.239.4084	813.562.8744
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Cherry Berry	813.634.1403	585.230.0266
Seminole Heights	33603	Michael Smith	813.237.4569	813.326.0717
Sulphur Springs	33604	J.D. Lewers	813.237.4569	813.528.5519
TCA/Hyde Park	33606		813.873.7189	
TCA/Peninsula	33609		813.873.7189	
TCA/West Tampa	33607	Michael Williams	813.873.7189	813.541.8327
Temple Terrace	33617	Juan Andujar	813.988.0152	813.377.7266
Town 'N Country	33615/35	Brian Obst	813.884.0973	727.458.0679
Ybor City	33605	Maurice Rice	813.242.4507	813.334.3189

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

management is obligated contractually to conduct. You answer truthfully, answer to the point, and do not vary from the question. This is extremely important, as the language in essentially all issued discipline will state in some variation that during your II you failed to provide a satisfactory explanation to avoid the issuing of this discipline. Your defense (steward) will attack this statement with your proper/truthful answers. The language in the issued discipline is then untrue, for example, the carrier answered they scanned and delivered all of their parcels, they always scan everything. In addition, do not simply answer yes to questions during your II in regard to segments cited from USPS Handbooks and Manuals. For example, Question #1, Are you aware ELM 665.15, Employees must obey the instructions of their supervisors?

First answer recommended: Could you please provide me a copy of that section of the ELM for review and I will then be clearer as to my answer.

Management should then provide you the documentation to review: *665.15 Obedience to Orders*
Employees must obey the instructions of their supervisors. If an employee has reason to question the propriety of a supervisor's order, the individual must nevertheless carry out the order and may immediately file a protest in writing to the official in charge of the installation or may appeal through official channels.

Final answer recommended: Yes.

Example #2, Question: Are you aware ELM 665. 41, Employees are required to be regular in attendance?

First answer recommended: Could you please provide me a copy of that section of the ELM for review and I will then be clearer as to my answer.

Management should then provide you the documentation to review:

665.41 Requirement of Regular Attendance

Employees are required to be regular in attendance. Failure to be regular in attendance may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the Postal Service.

Final answer recommended: Yes.

While it is a good idea to know the two answers to those two questions, many carriers have never read either of these two cited segments of the ELM.

4. Are IIs properly used?

Absolutely not and that is what the basis of this article is about. The majority of Investigative Interviews are not used in the context for what they are intended to be (answers #1 & 2). They are not well thought out, they become an accusation, many do not have the correct information, in many IIs you may feel guilty before anything is considered. IIs are generally conducted because it is procedure, a requirement, they are basically a formality. Management does not usually care and does not listen to the carrier's account of the situation, and management rarely reviews the II to read what the carrier answered or any thoughts. In actuality, the discipline is already predetermined; normally nothing a carrier could have answered would have prevented the discipline from being issued anyway.

5. Should an II be timely to when the alleged misdeed was committed?

Yes, disciplinary actions should be taken as promptly as possible after a perceived or alleged offense has been committed. For instance, carrier Smith allegedly missed a parcel scan on March 4, and the II is being conducted

on March 13. First of all, no one can remember every stop, delivery, and scan with all the responsibilities in a carrier's day. So why wasn't this issue addressed immediately or soon thereafter? If the II is not conducted promptly, there is nothing corrective about the process, and should the carrier receive discipline, it is punitive in nature.

Stewards' responsibilities:

Stewards are asked to request to speak to the carrier in private before the II begins. The steward will share any information they may have with the carrier as to what issue the II will address, if known. The steward will remind the carrier to answer truthfully, answer to the point, and do not vary from the question. Do not offer anything extra; remember, you are trained to scan everything and you are a safe driver, and that is what you do daily. Stewards are also trained to be on the lookout for inaccuracies in the II. Do not take any information provided in the II for granted. Are the times and dates correct? Are the alleged missed office scans and missed parcels scans information all correct? Was the carrier in question even on the route that day? Is the route number correct? Was the correct scanner used? Are the segments cited from the Handbook and Manuals used in the questioning correct? Is the supporting documentation for those cited segments from the Handbooks and Manuals available to review before questions are answered?

Investigative Interviews are to be taken seriously!

Quick Hits:

Information you should know

A follow-up on my article last month

(Continued on page 4)

Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to Karen and family at the passing of her husband, William Bill Travis [retiree], January 10; and to Goldie Behymer [retiree] and family at the passing of her sister, Monica Jordan, December 21.

Rhoads and Torres Retired!



Walter Rhoads and Tony Diaz



Israel Torres and Tony Diaz

President Diaz presented **Walter Rhoads** [Seminole Heights] and **Israel Torres** [Sulphur Springs] with their retirement pin and gratuity at our January meeting.

NOTICE – Meetings are subject to change due to any upsurges of COVID.

- Shop Stewards Tuesday February 1 7:00 PM
- Executive Board Thursday February 3 6:30 PM
- Branch 599 Thursday February 3 7:30 PM
- Retirees Breakfast Tuesday February 8 10 AM

Bob Evans, 12272 Morris Bridge Road, Temple Terrace

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

(Continued from page 3)

titled, Managing Your Annual Leave Hours... here is another helpful tip...

Annual Leave in lieu of Holiday Pay

Full-time and PTR letter carriers who work their holiday, at their option, may elect to have their annual leave balance

credited with up to eight hours of annual leave in lieu of holiday leave pay. Such leave will be subject to all applicable rules for requesting and scheduling annual leave and shall be combined with annual leave and counted as annual leave for purposes of annual leave

carryover. Article 11, Sections 3 and 4 will be modified accordingly if the contract is ratified. *–Postal Record*

Look forward to talking to you again on the next *Around The Horn*

Unionism — Clock Ring Integrity

Working for the USPS, you are required to clock in to work for the tracking of your work hours. You are assigned a time card and instructed on the proper procedures for using the electronic time clock so your hours can be tracked, and this forms the basis for how you are paid. If you fail to clock in for work, there is no record of any hours you worked, and it follows that there is no record to establish that you are to be paid for any hours not recorded on the clock.

With that knowledge in hand, let us examine other times where one must use the time card and time clock to record actions at work and the importance of proper clock ring integrity.

The time clock does more than just record hours worked, it also shows where the hours were worked and what job function was being performed by the individual. Many people have asked me through the years, *What difference does it make—I'm on the clock already?* It seems that these individuals fail to realize the importance of assigning time worked to the proper job function so there is a true representation of what the individual is performing for work each day. By way of example, the tracking of overtime worked daily is able to be properly done based on the fact that individual clock rings, if properly entered, will show when carriers are working overtime off their own assignment. This is key to knowing if a carrier who is on the work assignment list is working overtime off their own assignment in violation of the contractual guidelines.

One of the most important reasons for ensuring proper clock ring integrity is maintained, is the carrier route evaluation. When the carrier routes are

evaluated, the clock rings are used to show how much time is spent in the office versus how much time is worked on the street. These items are designated by clock rings 722 for office time and 721 for street time. The carrier is required to enter changes when they change the operation they are performing so as to properly reflect the work being performed. Failure to properly maintain the clock ring integrity will provide management a distorted view of what the actual times for a route are and has a major impact on whether adjustments are required for any route assignment. Remember, when routes are required to be adjusted by route inspections, it is done with a random 7-week analysis of clock ring data for the individual route assignment. If the clock ring integrity for the random 7-week period is providing inaccurate data, the adjustment will be faulty, and this is usually detrimental to the carrier because any adjustment performed will be flawed.

The carrier's use of the form 3996 has a location for providing clock data for trips performed and it is located at the center of the bottom of the form. The carrier performing the trip should fill out this information when performing the trip and then enter the data into the time clock upon return to the office, thus showing the time worked on the assignment. Otherwise, the time spent working the trip will look like time performed on the carrier's main route, not the trip route. This will prevent the clock rings from showing the trip route being short the time worked and the other route having more time worked on it than it actually had.

Form 1260 is a written time card, in the event that the time clock is not

working properly or you do not have access to your time card (if you are working at a different

location than usual and you don't have your time card with you). Ask the supervisor for a 1260 and fill it out to properly reflect what you have done. The supervisor will assist with the proper filling out of the 1260. **IMPORTANT: ALWAYS TAKE A PICTURE OR COPY THE 1260 WHEN SUBMITTED, TO ENSURE IT IS NOT ACCIDENTALLY MISPLACED OR LOST.** If the card is misplaced or lost, there is no record, so you will have pay issues—be safe and protect yourself by getting this copy/photo to provide proof of what you worked.

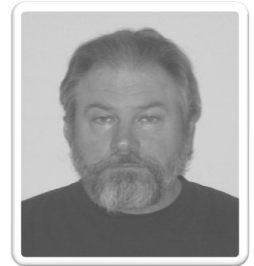
This is simply a basic primer on clock ring integrity; ensure your clock rings accurately reflect what you do each day and there will never be an issue.

One final thought, it is considered falsification of official records to allow anyone else to use your time card to clock you in or out of work for any reason. This is considered a termination offense and both parties to the offense can be terminated, so never let anyone else use your time card to clock for you and never clock for anyone else.

I hope this information is helpful to all members and I leave you, as always....

Knowledge is the Key.

Brian Obst
Vice President



Brian Obst
Vice President
Branch 599

We had a great time at our Retirees Dinner!





Presidents Emeritus
(former Branch 599 presidents)
Orbe Andux served from 1980-81, and
Alan Peacock served from 2011-13,
attended. Orbe (left) will be 90 years
old next month; he has been
retired since 1985.





A.R. Tony Huerta Branch 599

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