

**MEMORANDUMS AND  
LETTERS OF INTENT**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN THE  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
AND THE  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS,  
AFL-CIO**

**Re: Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

**REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR THE  
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

**MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY**

Management has an obligation to reasonably accommodate Deaf and Hard of Hearing employees and applicants who request assistance in communicating with or understanding others in work related situations, such as:

- a. During investigatory interviews which may lead to discipline, discussions with a supervisor on job performance or conduct, or presentation of a grievance.
- b. During some aspects of training including formal classroom instruction.
- c. During portions of EAP programs and EEO counseling.
- d. In critical elements of the selection process such as during testing and interviews.
- e. During employee orientations, safety talks, CFC and savings bond drive kickoff meetings.
- f. During the filing or meetings concerning an employee's OWCP claim.

Reasonable accommodation must be approached on a highly individualized, case by case basis. The individual's input must be considered prior to making a decision regarding accommodation.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

This obligation is met by selecting an appropriate resource from the variety of resources available. In selecting a resource, the following, among others, should be considered, as appropriate:

- The ability of the deaf or hard of hearing employee to understand various methods of communication and the ability of others to understand the deaf or hard of hearing employee.
- The importance of the situation as it relates to work requirements, job rights, and benefits.
- The availability and cost of the alternative resources under consideration.
- Whether the situation requires confidentiality.

Available resources which should be considered include:

- a. Installation heads are authorized to pay for certified interpreters. Every effort will be made to provide certified interpreters when deemed necessary by an application of the principles set forth herein.
- b. In some states, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides interpreters at no charge. When a decision is made that an interpreter is the appropriate accommodation and a DVR interpreter is not available, other methods of securing an interpreter should be used.
- c. Volunteer interpreters or individuals skilled in signing may be obtained from the work force or from the community. The skill level of such persons should be considered.
- d. In some situations, written communications may be appropriate. The deaf or hard of hearing employee's ability to understand written communications should be considered.
- e. Supervisors, training specialists, EAP, and EEO counselors may be trained in sign language.

- f. Deaf or hard of hearing applicants should normally be scheduled for a specific examination time when an interpreter will be available.
- g. State or Federal relay services may provide a way for a deaf or hard of hearing employee to conduct postal business by telephone with other employees and customers.

Management will provide the following assistance for deaf and/or hard of hearing employees:

- a. All films or videotapes designed for the training or instruction of regular work force employees developed on or after October 1, 1987, shall be opened or closed captioned. To the extent practicable, existing films or videotapes developed nationally that will continue to be used by deaf or hard of hearing employees with some frequency, will be opened or closed captioned.
- b. Special telecommunications devices for the deaf will be installed in all postal installations employing deaf employees in the regular work force. Special telecommunications devices or telephone volume control devices will be installed for hard of hearing employees whenever a hard of hearing employee requests and needs such a reasonable accommodation in order to communicate by phone. These devices will be available to deaf and/or hard of hearing employees for official business and in the case of personal emergencies. As appropriate, Management will provide training to staff on the use of these special telecommunications devices.
- c. A visual alarm will be installed on all moving powered industrial equipment in all postal installations employing deaf employees in the regular work force or in any installation where such a reasonable accommodation is requested and necessary for a hard of hearing employee.
- d. Visual fire alarm will be installed in all new postal installations (installations for which the U.S. Postal Service, as of June 12, 1991, had not awarded a contract for the design of the building) where the Postal Service

installs audible fire alarms. The parties will discuss and seek to agree at the local level about the installation in such other facilities as may be appropriate.

### **JOINT LABOR-MANAGEMENT MEETINGS**

Discussion of problem areas with regard to the use of certified sign interpreters, enhancement of job opportunities for the deaf and hard of hearing, type of special telecommunications devices or volume control devices to be installed, installation of visual alarms or other systems such as tactile devices at other than new postal installations, and the availability of new technologies which may help deaf and hard of hearing employees perform a variety of tasks are appropriate matters for consideration at Joint Labor-Management meetings. Discussion of such matters at Labor-Management meetings is not a prerequisite to the filing or processing of a grievance.

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### **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO**

#### **Re: Article 7, 12 and 13 - Cross Craft and Office Size**

- A. It is understood by the parties that in applying the provisions of Articles 7, 12 and 13 of this Agreement, cross craft assignments of employees, on both a temporary and permanent basis, shall continue as they were made among the six crafts under the 1978 National Agreement.
- B. It is also agreed that where this Agreement makes reference to offices/facilities/installations with a certain number of employees or man years, that number shall include all categories of bargaining unit employees in the office/ facility/installation who were covered by the 1978 National Agreement.

Date: August 19, 1995